

Twickenham Pool Site  
Development

**River Use Working  
Group**

**Report**

**28<sup>th</sup> October, 1999**

*River & Riverside Opportunities,  
Practicalities and Threats for the  
Development of the Pool site*

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS**

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## **CONTEXT**

The Twickenham pool site is located in an attractive area with a blend of historic buildings, ancient lanes and stunning river views. It is firstly a working riverside site that is much enjoyed by local people as a leisure facility, and secondly a town centre site. It can be an effective interface between the river and the commercial centre, and it can, and should, act as a focal point for the regeneration of both.

Under the umbrella of the UDP, LBRuT has three strategic initiatives that intersect at this point:

- To regenerate the town centre
- To increase tourism
- To implement the Thames Landscape Strategy

This working group has considered the riverside area and the improvements that will be needed to increase river usage. We have also looked at the ways in which the redevelopment of the pool site could attract tourists who will contribute materially to the regeneration of the town centre.

The working group is mainly made up of people who live and work in Twickenham, who know and value the area. The group is keenly aware of the uniqueness of our surroundings, and the irreplaceable riverside businesses and activities. Its aim is to protect and enhance them through a sympathetic development on the pool site that will benefit the whole community.

The group has looked at the variety of opportunities the development presents, the practicalities of each, and the perceived threats to the riverside from the development schemes that have been submitted to date.

## **THE RIVER USE WORKING PARTY'S OBJECTIVES**

The aim has been to create a practical plan for the development of the riverside area that will simultaneously:

1. Benefit Twickenham by supporting new and existing businesses
2. Emphasise the special qualities of the area
3. Be capable of assimilation into the proposed developments on the pool site
4. Enhance the quality of river-based businesses and life in Twickenham

5. Help sustain river-based activities particularly in the borough but also throughout the length of the Thames.
6. Make the most of the pool site as a leisure facility in the centre of the community.

## **THE WORKING PARTY'S CONCLUSIONS**

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This report shows how the redevelopment of the pool site can be accommodated within the existing context of a riverside village and how it can become a valued and lively part of the town centre. It also indicates how insensitive development could severely inconvenience residents in the whole of the surrounding area and possibly destroy the existing river-related businesses and boat clubs.

Its general conclusions are:

1. The pool is on a riverside site with links to the town centre. Any development should preserve its riverside identity.
2. This is distinctive riverside location that can attract many more visitors and tourists. Events such as the French markets, Twickenham Week and the Eel Pie Artists' open days have attracted thousands of people without causing traffic congestion or parking problems.
3. The 'beach' at Richmond has demonstrated the popularity of an open riverside. In Twickenham, a good, appropriate development can play a significant part in increasing the spend in the existing shops, restaurants and pubs. It can also help sustain the boatyards and other river-based businesses that form part of the essential infrastructure of the working river Thames.
4. The development should be consistent with the Thames Landscape Strategy and the need to sustain the environment. It should be architecturally in keeping with the surroundings, in terms of height, massing, and nature of building.
5. A priority for the pool site is to have buildings and spaces that enhance and relate to the river. A good test as to whether a proposed unit is suitable for the site is to ask if it would work as well in King Street or Heath Road, or in the redevelopment of the Post Office Sorting Office site in the London Road. If the answer is "yes", then the unit should be placed elsewhere.
6. There is no point in trying to create a high street-like shopping centre on the riverside.
7. For the Public Asset part of the development, a suitable mix of space and buildings includes a piazza, a water feature, and a riverside Centre containing a discovery centre that celebrates the river life, crafts and environment, addresses

the needs of the local population and acts as a focal point for tourists.

8. The commercial mix required to support the Public Asset should be as profitable as possible to reduce overall massing of buildings on the site. Other than one or two riverside restaurants, the commercial buildings should be located on the site away from the river.
9. There is a need to adopt an imaginative and flexible approach to parking and access to accommodate the needs of the existing community, the occupants of the new development and the increased number of visitors, many of whom will be pedestrian and some of whom will be disabled. The requirements for parking and access vary markedly with the time of day and day of the week.
10. Increased restrictions on access and parking are likely to result in the boatyards and other businesses and boat clubs being forced to close and cause great difficulty for local residents.

These conclusions have formed the basis of the recommendations listed below.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **1. TO IMPROVE THE AMBIENCE OF TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE**

- 1.1 Create a Piazza at the bottom of Water Lane and a Market Square within the development
- 1.2 Include a landmark building for the Riverside Centre
- 1.3 Create a central water feature to add elegance to the whole development
- 1.4 Upgrade the Embankment and riverside area
- 1.5 Build a pontoon to encourage river traffic
- 1.6 Have a few, well-regulated cafés, restaurants and bars
- 1.7 Have better, more friendly pedestrian areas
- 1.8 Adopt flexible parking arrangements that recognise the different demands for parking from residents, businesses and visitors, day and night.

## **2. TO INCREASE THE VISITORS TO THE RIVERSIDE AND TOWN CENTRE**

- 2.1 Create a distinctive Riverside Centre – for convenience in this report referred to as the Eel Pie Centre – that is the major public asset in the development.
- 2.2 There are three options:
  - 2.2.1 A riverside discovery centre with interactive displays for all ages, about the working river, the environment, and the area, with a programme of events to appeal to the whole of the local community.
  - 2.2.2 An arts centre, with a small, dedicated performing space, with dressing rooms, workshops, etc.
  - 2.2.3 A hybrid, with lower tech interactive displays and a flexible performing space.
- 2.3 Whichever option is chosen, the Centre should include space for a proper Tourist Information Centre, a café, a public convenience, space for displays about the Thames Landscape Strategy, and exhibition space for local artists.
- 2.4 The links to King Street and Church Street should be improved, with the whole development to be organic, friendly, and in keeping with the surroundings. The linkage to King Street should tie in to the natural connection to Church Street and the 'lanes of Twickenham'.
- 2.5 Although a small hotel is highly desirable to meet the need for hotel beds in Twickenham, a close examination of the practicalities shows that it is not achievable in this development.
- 2.6 The piazza should be designed so it supports only modest-scale events, and outside entertainments should be scheduled so that residents can enjoy rather than endure them.
- 2.7 Rowdy and antisocial behaviour as experienced on the Richmond riverside should be minimised or avoided by careful use of space, and avoiding the licensing pitfalls experienced in Richmond.

## **3. TO SUPPORT THE EXISTING LOCAL COMMUNITY**

The development should be architecturally in sympathy with the surrounding area by respecting the building heights, winding lanes, and the village nature of the Twickenham riverside.

The access for businesses, clubs, residents and emergency services should be retained and enhanced, through sensible traffic and parking policies.

- 3.1 Length of vehicle should be taken into account (e.g. boat trailers up to 50ft, fire engines, emergency helicopter); size of load (e.g. furniture removal van); length of stay required to load and unload (sometimes all day for removals, possibly longer for boat trailers)
- 3.2 Parking should not be placed at the areas most prone to flooding, at the end of Wharf Lane, Water Lane, and the foot of the Eel Pie Island bridge.
- 3.3 The 31 parking spaces replacing the 61 to be removed from the Embankment, should be included in the development away from flood areas.
- 3.4 Parking policy should be consistent throughout the area. The present mix of many types of parking is unwieldy and inefficient.
- 3.5 There is a need to avoid encroachment of access to Eel Pie Island. All of the plans at present put forward would place unacceptable constraints on loading and unloading goods, boats, and household furniture.

#### **4. TO SUPPORT THE THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

This can be done through good access and adequate parking, increased river use, and active involvement with the river centre, which is firmly in line with the objectives of the Thames Landscape Strategy. Specific recommendations are to:

- 4.1 Conserve the intimate scale and working character of the Twickenham and Eel Pie Island waterfront.
- 4.2 Secure possible connections between the centre of Twickenham and the swimming baths site.
- 4.3 Conserve and enhance the unique character of the Thames Landscape as defined in the Strategy.
- 4.4 Identify, conserve and reveal the main landmarks of the area, with concern for the frame and backdrop to the view. New developments should contribute fresh landmarks to work with the existing urban pattern.
- 4.5 Conserve the distinct characters of the different waterfronts.
- 4.6 To complement the scale, character and urban structure of the surrounding waterfronts.

- 4.7 Conserve the unique river edge of continuous pedestrian access, and consider the needs of people with mobility difficulties and the provision of alternative parking where necessary.
- 4.8 Conserve and enhance the riverside spaces for people to sit, watch and sunbathe.
- 4.9 Promote river tourist transport services, and linking services into the existing public transport and car parking network.

## **5. TO HIGHLIGHT THESE URGENT PRIORITIES**

The following are necessary to produce a viable, working, village riverside that is in keeping with the town centre:

- 5.1 Ensure that the public asset components of the development are in accordance with the wishes of the community through consultation.
- 5.2 Ensure that an appropriate balance is reached between commercial development, public asset buildings, and public open space. The development should be friendly and welcoming.
- 5.3 Ensure that the provisions of the UDP, not to have retail on the site, be followed for the majority of the pool site, and those shops that are permitted will be sited around the Market Square, where they will benefit from the access of the King Street link and the vitality of the market area.
- 5.4 Protect the village nature of Twickenham riverside and its surroundings.
- 5.5 Examine further the opportunities and problems that are presented by the potential uses and configurations of the Eel Pie Centre, and avoid reaching rush decisions in the face of commercial expediency.

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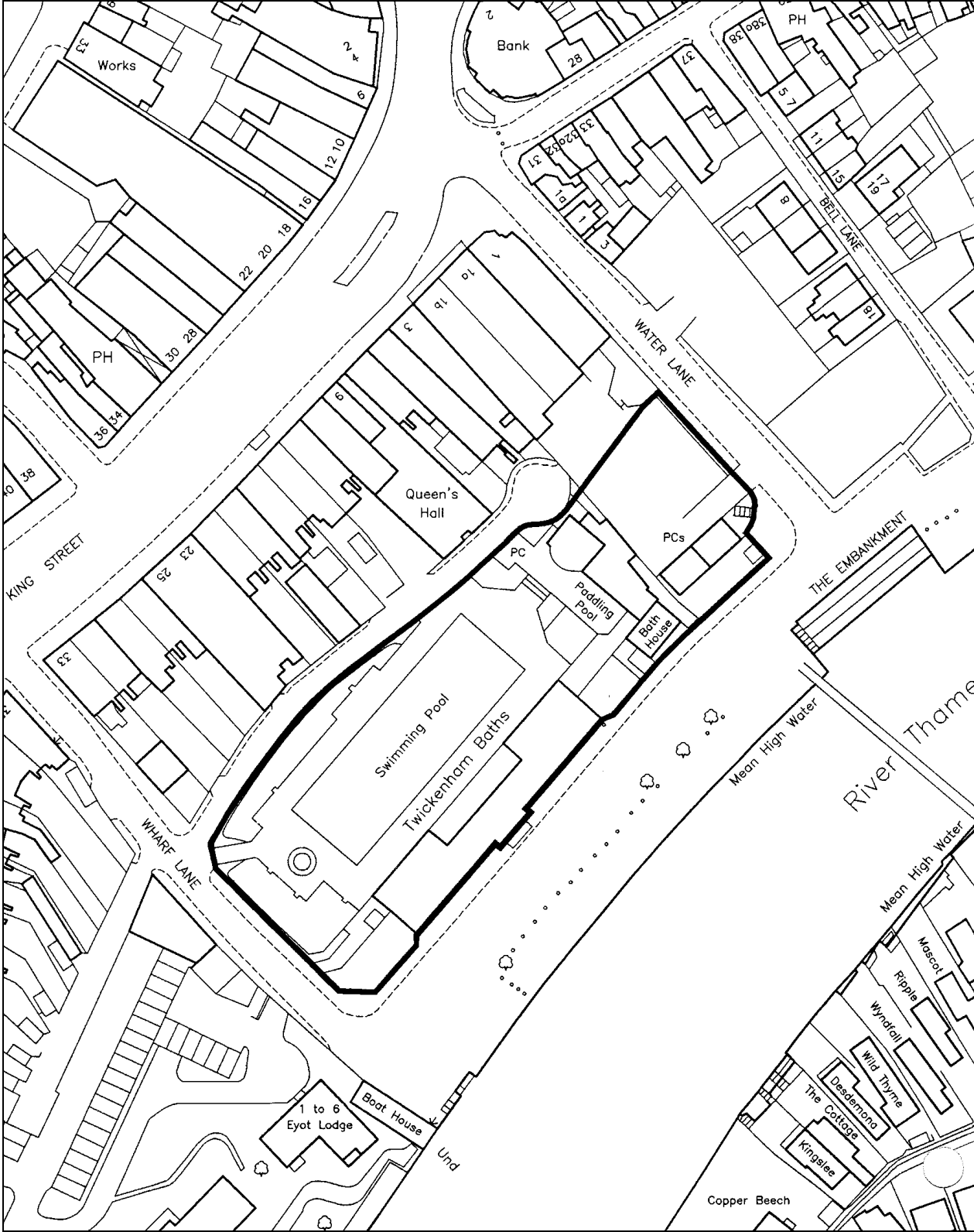
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Figure 1 -- The Twickenham Swimming Pool Site



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## **INTRODUCTION**

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The pool site is situated on the Riverside close to the commercial centre of Twickenham and the Riverside. It can, and should, act as a focal point for the regeneration of both the town centre and the riverside.

### **Physical Context**

The site lies within the local riverside community which is bounded by Wharf Lane, the service road behind King Street, Church Street, Church Lane and includes Eel Pie island. The area is a robust socio-economic system with some 400 residents, 40 shops/offices, 9 pubs & restaurants, 30 other small businesses ranging from light engineering to architects and artists, 5 boat yards, a church, an amateur theatre and 2 active sports clubs. The area, population and business units are split almost equally between Eel Pie Island and the mainland. The location is visually attractive with a good blend of historic buildings, ancient lanes and stunning river views. It is unique. It is very different from the beach at Richmond and requires a different approach to its development.

Visitors appreciate and enjoy the activity on the river arising from the activities of the boat yards. Few are aware of the importance of these yards to river boat activity throughout the length of the Thames. As a consequence of piecemeal development of riverside sites, many boat yards which support all of the craft on the river are going out of business. Eel Pie Slipways is one of the last boatyards on the river empowered to provide safety certificates for the big pleasure cruisers on the river.

At this point the Thames is tidal. This means that at low tide, boats regularly go aground, and at high tide the Embankment is flooded. Several times a year, the water covers the lower end of Water and Wharf Lanes and goes over the pavement alongside the pool. For this reason alone, any development on the pool site has different parameters than a development in a non-tidal area. (See figure 2.)

### **The Challenge**

By virtue of its proximity to the River, the site is first a riverside site and secondly a town centre site. The ideal to be aimed for is a synergy between town and riverside.

The working group notes the sustained commercial success of the Church Street traders who already attract significant and local trade to the area. There are opportunities to manage a significant increase in the tourists coming to the riverside area of Twickenham and that these will contribute materially to the regeneration of the centre.

The group has:

- agreed a set of proposals to show how the essential riverside connections can be incorporated in the overall design of the site
- focussed on opportunities and the practicalities of their implementation
- identified threats to the local community that could arise from the development, and ways in which they can be minimised or avoided
- collected practical information relating to the site and the nature and level of current river-based activity.

The principle of these are listed below.

## Opportunities

1. To increase tourists and visitors to Twickenham by :
  - A landmark design piazza for markets, open-air entertainment, in the Covent Garden style, art displays, etc.
  - A central water feature
  - An increase in river-based activities attracting participants and viewers
  - A Thames River-Life Discovery Centre with interactive displays, linking with working boat yards and the local environment, with a programme that addresses the needs of all sections of the community
  - A Tourist Information office which carries displays by local artists and provides space for river-based organisations such as the Thames Landscape Strategy
2. A pontoon or landing stage and new boat services
3. Environmental improvements and a renovated Embankment

All of these things are practical and can be achieved.

## Constraints

Any proposals for the site have to take into account a number of constraints:

1. **Physical.** It is a relatively small site with limited access, parts of which are subject to frequent flooding.
2. **Traffic, access and parking.**
  - At present there is a one way circulation of traffic from Water Lane across the Embankment to Wharf Lane. There are loading bays on the Embankment to service

the businesses, Boat Clubs and residents of Eel Pie Island, whose sole access is via a pedestrian bridge. Some of the loads require considerable space and may be present for several hours, e.g., furniture removal vans, trailers for rowing skiffs. There is insufficient width in Water and Wharf Lanes to make them two-way.

- The Council's current policy is for no vehicular access to the Embankment.
- The Council is proposing to replace 61 parking places on the Embankment with 31 in the new development, thus reducing the total number of publicly available parking places in the whole of the riverside area from 185 to 154.
- The number of place in the Holly Rd car park is 161. This compares with the 750 places in the Eden Centre and 1185 in the Bentall's Centre in Kingston.

## **Planning**

The Inspector's report from the 1990-91 Public Enquiry stresses the significance of the site as a riverside site and recommends that only 2-3 storey buildings should be allowed. The Unitary Development Plan for the site, which was arrived at after extensive public consultation, states the prime use of the site is to be for leisure.

Whilst taking cognisance of its strategic objectives for the site, the Council is obliged to obtain best value for the site, and it seeks to make the development pay for the public asset component.

## **The Public Asset – analysis of previous proposals**

The work throughout the summer has provided answers to a number of key questions, and guidance on important issues. There is still a level of uncertainty about how large an area of building should go onto the site; however, it appears that the maximum size of development that will be acceptable to the community and comply with the planning guidelines is in the area of 9,000 – 9,500 square metres.

The following table summarises the recent schemes for the pool site, in terms of the amount of commercial building compared to the amount of public asset.

### Comparison of development schemes:

Scheme	Commercial building		Public building		Total	
	Area, m <sup>2</sup>	%	Area, m <sup>2</sup>	%	Area, m <sup>2</sup>	Scale £
Competition (original)	4,125	56	3,185	44	7,310	
Lottery bid	7,865	81	1,845	19	9,710	
January, 1999	13,141	82	2,820	18	15,961	27M
April, 1999	10,700	78	3,054	22	13,754	
October, 1999	9,600	90	1,080	10	10,692	

Building areas are taken from the submissions by Alsop Zogolovitch and First Premise Ltd.

In a separate exercise, Prof Betteridge and architect Robert Bowcock together with Donaldson's, the Council's financial advisors, carried out a financial modelling operation using Donaldson's commercial model. This revealed that a lower cost development was feasible, with 4,400 square metres of commercial building producing sufficient revenue to provide 1,500 square metres of public asset building (equivalent to the Riverside Centre, set out in Section 3 of this report).

The model shows that the large costs associated with the developer's plans come from the perceived need to dig deep foundations to gravel level, plus underground car parking and facilities (the health club and/or the cinema).

Donaldson's model also shows that if normal foundations are dug, as in the Water Lane housing development, a large part of the costs are avoided: however, there is no space for underground car parking.

The financial return on buildings is set out in appendix 1.

# TERMS OF REFERENCE & MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING GROUP

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## **Terms of reference & objectives:**

Our original terms of reference were to 'investigate the implications of increasing river traffic by the introduction of a pontoon for increasing the number of visitors to Twickenham arriving by boat.'

The practicalities implicit in these terms required the working group to consider the attractiveness of the Twickenham riverside to potential tourists, and local people, and the facilities that both groups could expect to find there.

Consequently we have focussed our attention on four manageable objectives:

- To identify and evaluate ways in which a development on the pool site could stimulate and/or resonate with the river and riverside activities and lifestyles.
- To identify threats to the riverside community arising from the proposed development, and suggest ways in which these might be resolved.
- To make clear the practicalities underlying any proposal.
- To record the scope and extent of current river-based activities. (See appendix 2)

## **Membership of the working group (see also appendix 3)**

Members have a wide range of skills and experience in:

Building boats and pontoons, owning and managing small businesses, operating boat services, recreational boating, management of tourism, town centres, the environment and large business, town planning, urban design and strategic planning, local history and television programme making.

Members live and work throughout the Borough.

The common bond is their belief that an active, dynamic and vibrant river and riverside are essential to the regeneration of Twickenham, because it forms part of a long tradition - and it reflects a growing mood in Britain for the Continental style of relaxing outdoors and enjoying lively, open spaces.

## RIVERSIDE STRATEGIC ISSUES

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Although the riverside is separated from the shopping centre by the barrier of the buildings in King Street, and invisible to the passing traffic, to many local people it is an integral part of the town. The two areas are quite different, but any major change to the riverside will have an impact on the town, and vice versa. River usage is extensive and a great many businesses and residents will be directly affected by any development on the riverside. (See appendix 2)

These issues are of major concern:

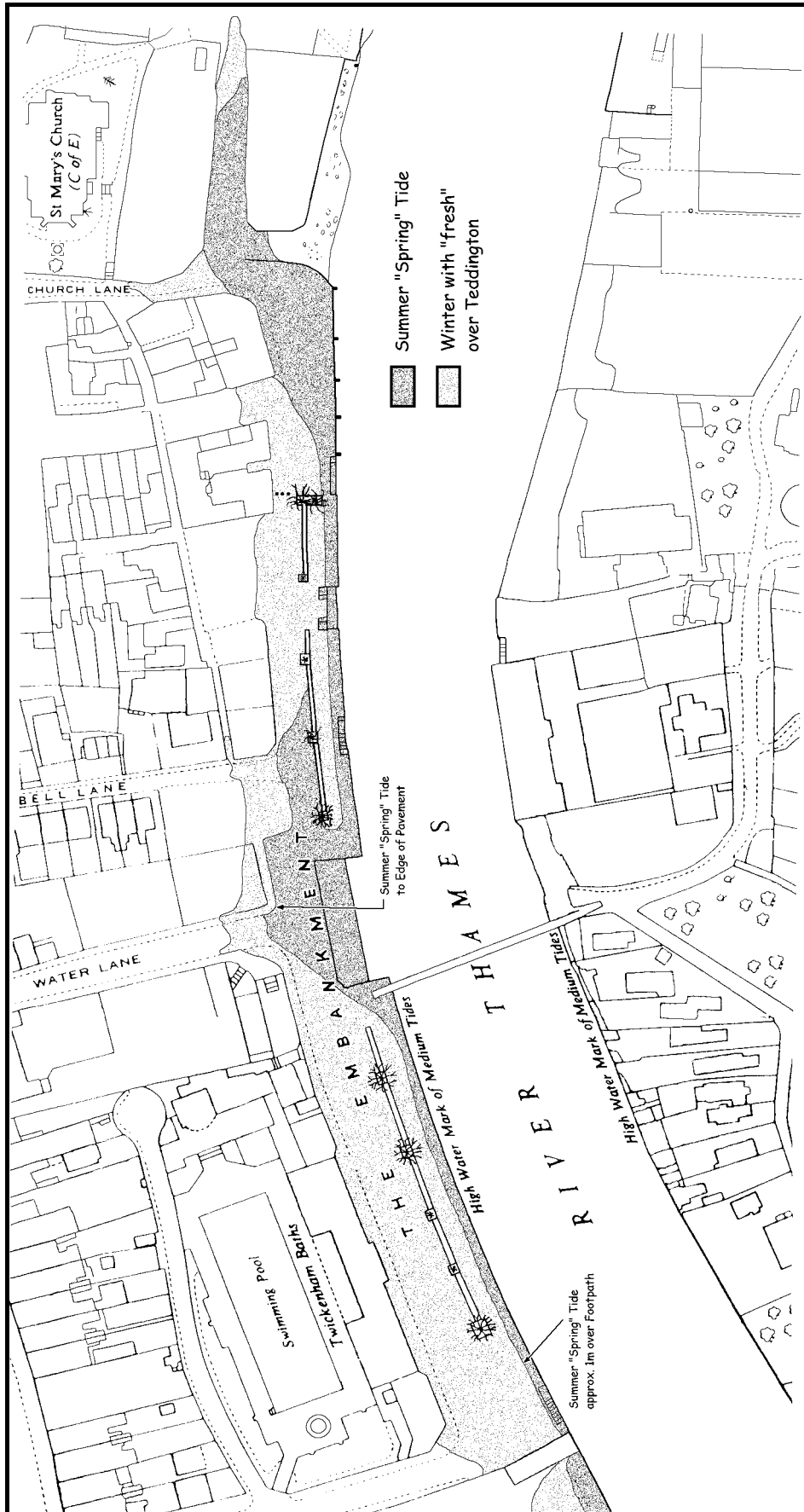
1. By its geographical and historical nature, the town now lacks a focus. The riverside has the potential to become the centre of the community.
2. The riverside can play a major role in regenerating the town centre. Although there is pressure for the pool site to become the centre of further commercial development, local opinion is strongly against having more shops and restaurants. The last survey of the shopping area (31<sup>st</sup> May, 1999) showed that the town centre had 23 empty shops, 9 charity shops, and 48 restaurants, out of a total of 275 premises. Marks & Spencer's announced move into Heath Road indicates that major retailers can be attracted to existing premises in the main shopping streets; further large areas like the old Forbuoys and Freeman Hardy Willis building are available, and need to be turned from eyesores into commercial magnets.
3. The development must not be overlarge or too dense. Any buildings on the pool site must relate to the riverside in terms of aspect, outlook, and use, and they must be in keeping with the scale and architecture of the town and the riverside.
4. Local businesses and clubs depend on access to the riverside along the Embankment and around the pool site for deliveries of goods all the way from bread to the restaurants to skiffs to the rowing club and sheet steel to the boatyards, in vehicles ranging from motorcycles to large HGVs. These supplies are the lifeblood of the area.
5. Historically, the pool part of the riverside has never been a commercial development. It is used by local people, many with children, for leisure. Whatever development goes onto the site must bring benefits to the area and its citizens.
6. Sustainability is currently a major issue: short-term or unnecessarily expensive development with an eye to future rezoning or multiple use is not valid.
7. Tourism could contribute substantially to the local economy, but the main tourist information point is located in the bustling Atrium at the Civic Centre. To have a centre for tourist information on the riverside will provide a hub for tourist



activity and a place for unified promotion of the borough's attractions.

8. The development must be within the requirements of the Thames Landscape Strategy, thirty-one of whose policies are directly applicable to the development. (See appendix 4)
9. Although many people use the riverside, there is limited public knowledge of the local environment and the measures being taken to protect it. The development should provide the means to increase awareness of the uniqueness of the riverside area.
10. Part of the local economy is based on the riverside, and it is vital to protect local industries and encourage training and education.
11. Any development on the riverside must take into account the tidal nature of the river in the area. The high tides have a direct impact on the placement of parking spaces, as the Embankment floods to a greater or lesser extent with the bimonthly spring (high) tides, and the spring and autumn high tides which are greater at the equinox. In addition, heavy rainfall upstream and certain weather conditions can produce unpredicted tidal levels. See figure 2, next page.
12. It is incumbent on all involved in the redevelopment of the riverside to create a safe and enjoyable place for local residents and visitors.

Figure 2 -- Tidal Flood Levels



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## CURRENT USAGE OF THE RIVER AND RIVERSIDE

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(see appendix 2)

1. Business and club activity on Eel Pie Island and Church Street: the roads around the site (Water Lane, the Embankment in both directions, Wharf Lane and the service road behind King Street) are constantly used by traffic to businesses and clubs and as parking for staff and customers.
2. Boats: the yacht club and the rowing club make extensive use of the river year round. The permanent moorings that run the full length of the Island are in constant use. The river is used for most of the year for pleasure boating, sailing and canoeing, and smaller tour boats use the channel during the summer.
3. Angling: the angling club has a historic right to moor their punts beside the Embankment, and to fish from it. At least eight punts are moored here year round.
4. Wildlife: the upstream and downstream ends of the Island are official wildlife sanctuaries that are nesting places and habitation for swans, geese, coots, crested grebes, herons, ducks and moorhens.
5. Current multiple uses of the site: the swimming pool site presently houses the charity, HANDS, the Riverside Playgroup, and a church group on Sundays.
6. The site also houses the only public toilets in the centre of Twickenham. They are much used.
7. Surroundings: the site is bounded one side by businesses, at the back of King Street, which are mixed with residential use. On the sides are residential areas, the Water Lane development and Thames Eyot. The site faces Eel Pie Island, a mixed use area.
8. River-centred activity: at the moment there is no river-oriented activity on the pool site itself. The grassed area at the end of Water Lane and the full length of the Embankment are heavily used throughout the year by walkers, joggers, families feeding the ducks, fishermen, picnickers, and residents and visitors enjoying the river.

# THE TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE DEVELOPMENT: INTRODUCTION

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The working group has explored a combination of ways in which the site can be developed so as to grace its riverside position, serve as a significant leisure facility for Twickenham and contribute to the commercial well-being of the town centre.

A number of themes are common to the options that are examined in detail in this section of the report.

- Improve the ambience of the riverside. The last few years have seen a growth throughout Britain of a “Mediterranean” style of living, with outdoor activities becoming more common and diverse. The Twickenham riverside is already much used by visitors who like the buzz of being by the river, but much can be done to make the place more attractive, such as having an open space that has multiple uses; an improved Embankment; facilities and events that appeal to all sections of the population; a safe environment that encourages use by day and night.
- Increase the number of visitors. The riverside can help attract visitors to Twickenham and help those who arrive for other purposes to spend more time and money in Twickenham. In this regard, improvements to the ambience and new riverside resources such as a Riverside Centre, restaurants and bars and a pontoon for river users are important.
- Support the Thames Landscape Strategy. This is a strategy for conserving the Thames landscape and environment between Hampton and Kew. It has a lot to say about Twickenham and its working riverfront, and many of its recommendations are incorporated in our proposals.
- Support the local community. There is no merit in a riverside development that has the net effect of destroying the existing local community. Unless the issue is sensitively dealt with, there is a real possibility that the traditional boatyards, a long-established rowing club, and the shops in Church Street could become luxury flats and “life style” shops.

The working party has concentrated on public open spaces and assets, leaving the developer to propose enabling commercial utilities. The group has identified the opportunities and evaluated them. The studies of each has been carried out more thoroughly than reported in the interim report of June, 1999. However, it has not been possible to reach firm conclusions about what was then referred to as the “Living Thames Centre”. Much detailed work has been done in developing the vision and concept, but more is required to determine the size, content and viability of the Centre.

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

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The Working Group has considered a range of possibilities that together could significantly improve the whole riverside area, make it more attractive to visitors and retain and develop its ambience.

The riverside area is distinguished by its mixture of river views, ancient lanes, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century houses, pubs, specialist shops, working boatyards, rowing boats, canoes, anglers and tripper boats. It has long been a magnet for visitors. However, there is a need to update, refresh and renew.

The following proposals provide a theme for the development on the pool site and will help integrate the new components of the scheme with the established parts of the riverside area. They are consistent with the Council's Unitary Development Plan, particularly the T1 proposal. It is reasonable to consider the working group's suggestions as part of the public asset. They are relatively low cost, so their funding requires less commercial development on the site, thus permitting greater amounts of open space for public use.

The proposals look at:

1. Increased river usage via a pontoon
2. A piazza, market square and water feature
3. The Eel Pie Centre (working name)
4. The Embankment
5. The commercial development

### **1. INCREASED RIVER USAGE**

The river is busy with pleasure craft in all but the worst months of the winter. It is heavily used on summer weekends and during holiday periods. If the Twickenham riverside were welcoming and offered a landing stage for small boats, visitors would come here to moor, shop, and visit.

#### **1.1 A pontoon**

The design brief for the riverside development stipulated a floating pontoon alongside the Twickenham Embankment. Some river and boating knowledge is necessary to specify a pontoon that will meet requirements.

We have been guided by the numerous objectives in the Unitary Development Plan, notably ENV29, ENV30, and local strategy T14 and Thames Landscape Strategy Policies (appendix 4), which relate to the conservation of boatyards, the character of different waterfronts and

industrial waterfronts, and the preference for public hire of craft over private ownership, plus the need for a public landing place.

Twickenham's distinctive river scene should be enhanced, and while pontoons are usually functional structures they can also be aesthetically pleasing. A well-designed pier or observation platform could be an attractive architectural feature to enhance the Embankment.

**We propose that two floating pontoons, separated by a small pier, could be built close to and upstream of the Eel Pie Island bridge. One would take visitors' craft and the other would be for boats for public hire. Two mooring piles could also be installed for the use of larger craft, like narrowboats.**

### **1.1.1 Location**

(See figure 3)

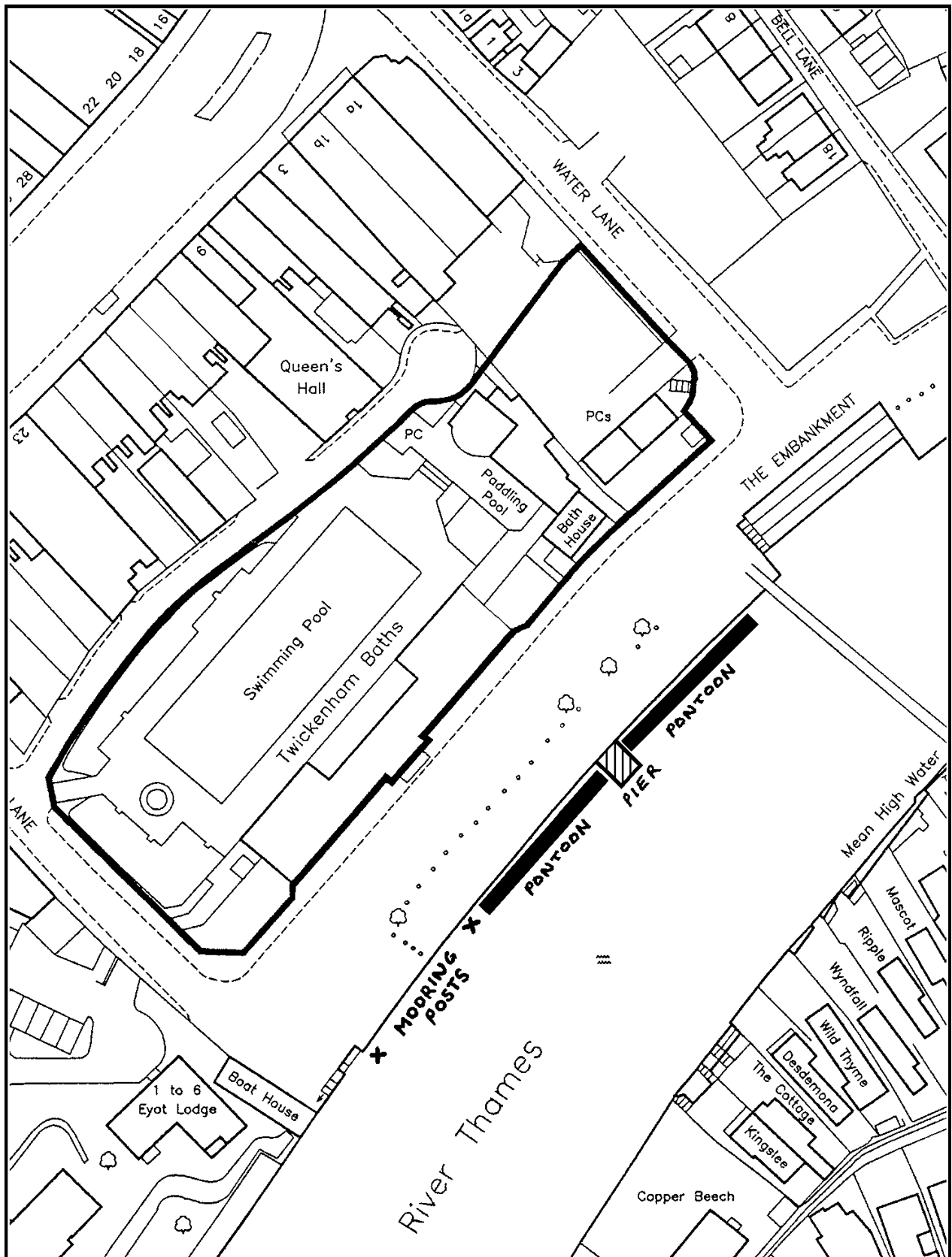
In researching this section of the report, two possible locations for a pontoon were considered, one at the upstream end of the site alongside the pool, and a second downstream, at the double watermen's steps by the Barmy Arms. These are the only places that offer sufficient depth of water under most tidal conditions, without incurring a need for dredging. Though the downstream location does offer a wider channel, any navigation by sizeable boats must take into consideration the height and prominence of the Eel Pie Island bridge, plus the variations in water level according to the state of the tide.

There was considerable debate about the factors governing a pontoon:

- the need for it
- the possible uses
- the sizes of boats that could be accommodated
- the amount of traffic
- the effect it would have on existing users of the busy channel between the Island and the Embankment

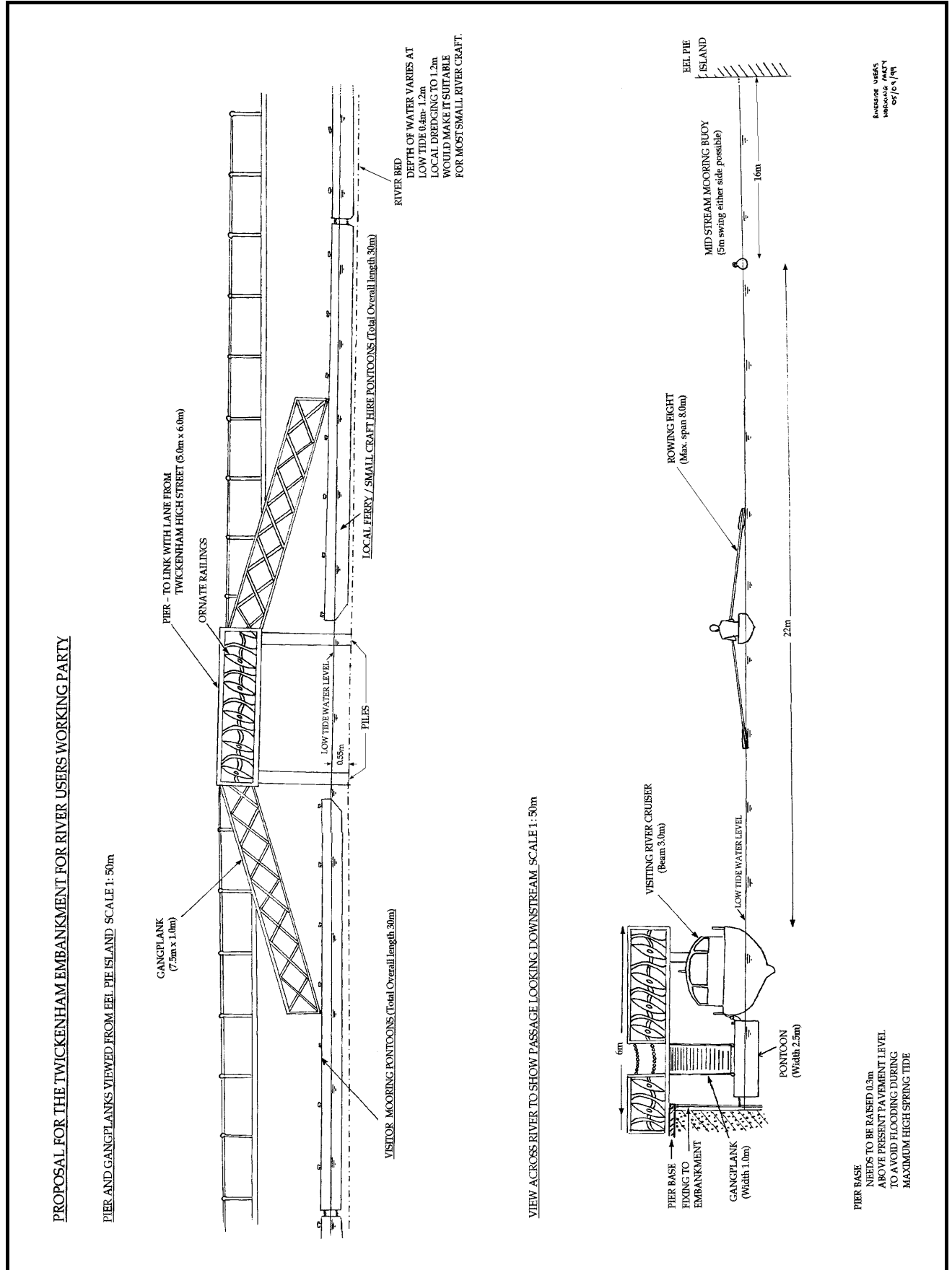
Taking all these into account we suggest that the most feasible location for a pontoon is at the upstream end of the site.

Figure 3 -- Location of the Pontoon



hmspgdh1.tif

Figure 4 -- The Pontoon



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### **1.1.2 Description**

(See figure 4)

At the upstream end would be two floating pontoons for visitor mooring, of a total length of 30 metres, 2.5 metres wide. They would slide on vertical rails attached to the Embankment wall, and they would be reached by a gangplank, 7.5 metres long, 1 metre wide.

The top of the gangplank would be attached to a pier which links to the Embankment. The pier is 5 metres wide and 6 metres deep. The ideal position for it is facing the centre of the pool site and the Eel Pie Centre. There is an opportunity here for custom-made ironwork by local sculptors.

Downstream of the pier would be the second set of pontoons for local ferries and small craft hire. The total length would be 30 metres and they would also be accessed by a gangplank.

The total width of the structure would be approximately 6 metres, and the length 65 metres. There would be no need for facilities on the visitors' moorings as they would only be intended for short stay. The hire pontoon will require an electric point for charging batteries for electric craft, and perhaps also a water tap. Storage and small office space could be in the Eel Pie Centre. The current cost for fully equipped pontoons of this type is estimated to be £600 per metre.

In addition, two mooring piles would be installed further upstream from the pontoons. They could moor a 25 metre barge or the like, capable of taking the ground. If they were made of greenheart, these would cost £2000 apiece, installed.

### **1.1.3 Benefits**

The pontoon would seem to offer almost infinite possibilities to enrich the river and commercial life of Twickenham.

- a. The pontoon will provide an outlet for boating businesses on the island by providing a place for hiring small rowing boats, canoes, or electric launches.
- b. Small and medium-sized tour boats could call here to pick up and drop off passengers, and bring in tourist revenue. Local people would gain a boat service from Twickenham into, say, Richmond and Kingston.
- c. The pontoon could be used by the local ferries that were run on an experimental basis during Twickenham Week, around the island to the Surrey side and upriver to Teddington and down to Richmond.
- d. There is a continual passing trade of holiday makers and people out on boats for the weekend, who are looking for nice places to stop. The pontoon would provide leisure moorings that will benefit the local economy by bringing boat owners into the town centre. The busyness of the short-term

moorings at Kingston indicates that there is a need for this kind of space, and people who come to look around an attractive riverside will also go into Church Street and the town centre to shop. This will draw people into the town centre without putting additional strain on traffic or parking

- e. They could be the base for river-related courses for RYA and BCU qualifications, and for other training programmes connected to the boatyards and local colleges and clubs.
- f. The marionette theatre could moor here, and it could be the centre for river events during Twickenham Week, and for rallies for groups like the Electric Boat Association and the Inland Waterways Association.
- g. Boats coming from the Grand Union Canal at Brentford need places to moor overnight, prior to passing through Teddington Lock. Again, boat owners will shop and go to restaurants and pubs if there is hospitable mooring space.

#### **1.1.4 Practicalities**

- a. The pontoons will require management, in the interests of the town and of boat users. There will be mooring fees to be collected from visiting craft, and it may be necessary to have someone on hand to ensure that the facilities are properly used.
- b. Channel width: the channel is relatively narrow, and the island side is lined with permanent moorings. The width varies, depending on the tide and the weather and how boats swing on mornings, and it is narrowest at low water. From observation and measurements taken from Port of London Authority surveys, there is not less than a 25 metre width (or 22 metres, allowing for the width of the pontoon) which is sufficient. We do not envisage any difficulties in operation that cannot be overcome.
- c. In the early mornings, late afternoons and at weekends, the channel is busy with skiffs from the rowing club. A rowing eight is 20 metres long with an oar span of 7.6 metres. With an experienced cox on a fine day, a channel width of 9 metres is sufficient. However, with an inexperienced cox, a strong tide or gusty wind, a skiff can need an additional 2 to 2.5 metres of channel.
- d. There is some concern that the pontoons could be used at night by the big disco steamers, though the companies which run them have shown little interest in docking in Twickenham because of the problems with the depth of water, the difficulty of manoeuvring in the narrow channel, and the height of the Eel Pie Island bridge.

- e. Any change of existing practice will require regulatory approval of the Port of London Authority and the Environment Agency, and a licence from the PLA will be required for any piles and pontoons.
- f. The needs of the disabled will have to be addressed.

### 1.1.5 Possible Drawbacks

- a. Pontoons will need regulation, maintenance, and policing, to deter theft, vandalism, and long-term mooring.
- b. Increased traffic will affect the rowing club and the yacht club: sharing the river increases the strain on the resource.
- c. There is an possible risk to public safety, especially for the disabled: the pontoons must meet established safety regulation.
- d. Effective river management will be required to prevent incidents due to the increased river traffic. It might be necessary for the one way upstream regulation for the channel to be encouraged, possibly with signposting.
- e. There is a possible threat to wildlife in the nature sanctuaries at both ends of Eel Pie Island. (See appendix 5 for the letter from John Hatto, London Wildlife Trust.)

## 2. PUBLIC OPEN SPACES: THE PIAZZA, MARKET SQUARE & WATER FEATURE

Creatively used open spaces for entertainment, relaxation, and family fun.

Market squares and piazzas are features in the centre of many communities in the UK and on the continent. When the open space is empty it gives style and elegance to the buildings around it, and yet it is easily transformed into a lively, crowded environment that's the trading, social and leisure centre for the neighbourhood.

The riverside development in Richmond has proved immensely popular. In Twickenham, the outstanding success of the recent French Markets shows the popularity and potential of markets that complement the town's existing shopping facilities. Covent Garden also illustrates the enduring popularity of street entertainers and their capability for attracting crowds to adjacent shopping areas.

**The site slopes on average 2.59 metres (8.5 feet) from King Street to the Embankment. This change in levels offers enormous potential for imaginative design and the chance to provide a uniquely attractive setting.**

The creative use of open space throughout the development is also a challenge for the architect. It is possible to have a piazza which serves as

a market place, or two separate spaces. For the sake of clarity we have treated them as separate and adjacent entities.

## **2.1 The Piazza**

The popularity of the Twickenham Festival and other local arts initiatives shows that there is abundant interest from the community and visitors from outside in displays, shows, and performances, and a piazza on the riverside in the centre of the area is an ideal venue.

### **2.1.1 Location**

The preferred location is at the corner of Water Lane and the Embankment, a busy place that links with Church Street and King Street, and to the east end of the Embankment, the Barmy Arms and Mary Wallace Theatre, and the present sculpture park at Champion's Wharf. It gives public access to the best views of the river, upstream to Radnor Gardens, across to Eel Pie Island and the working river, and downstream towards York House Gardens and Richmond. As well as becoming the focus for the site, it will reinvigate both the riverside and the town.

- a. It should be central to the area, a focus of activity that flows out into the adjacent open spaces.
- b. It should be friendly, and spacious.
- c. It should be open air, not covered.
- d. It should be able to support a variety of approved activities but yet be unsuitable for antisocial activities, e.g., drug and alcohol abuse, and sleeping rough.
- e. The alternative location suggested will not work: the Wharf Lane end of the site, in the shadow of Thames Eyot, is too isolated and too dark, with poor sun and poor sight lines, and limited views of the river.

### **2.1.2 Benefits**

- a. Tourist Department statistics indicate that throughout the year, there are approximately 50,000 visitors to Twickenham. Tourists contribute something like £24 per head per visit, sometimes more. During the rugby season, the matches bring as many as 500,000 people to Twickenham, many of whom arrive in the early hours and wander around with little to do until the pubs open or the match starts. Many groups include school children and families.
- b. Surveys of the use of the Embankment and the small grassed area at the bottom of Water Lane indicate that there is a constant demand for leisure open space, and the piazza is a natural focus for any activity on the Embankment and the river.

- c. Throughout the day, the piazza can accommodate:
  - Planned entertainments such as those that are managed by the Leisure Services Dept, children's theatre, art shows, and demonstrations.
  - Street entertainers and impromptu musical performances.
  - Viewing platforms to watch the passing scene, birds, and river events.
  - Picnics.
  - An ice cream stall, snack bar, and other meeting points.

### **2.1.3 Arts interest**

As well as performance space, there is room for displays of the visual arts. Linked to the Eel Pie Centre, the piazza could provide space for shows by some of the 300 amateur artists in the area, plus professional work. The thriving community of local artists currently faces a shortage of display and sales space, and a showcase for their wares would receive enthusiastic support.

### **2.1.4 Neighbourhood acceptability**

Our preliminary soundings of residents of the Embankment, Thames Eyot and Eel Pie Island indicate that piazza activities are welcome and would enrich the ambience of the area. The only caveat is that musical entertainments should be small in scale and held during the day.

### **2.1.5 Traffic generation and parking**

Many of the people arriving at the piazza would be doing so by foot, public transport, or boat. They would not demand on-site parking facilities.

The servicing requirements are light, and they will tie in with other servicing for the site and the area.

### **2.1.6 Possible drawbacks**

- a. There may be safety issues if the varying levels of the site are not used sensibly by layering or terracing.
- b. Policing could be a problem, though on the busy corner policing would be mainly by passers-by, on foot or in cars.

## **2.2 The Market Square**

The success of the recent French markets, with over 10,000 visitors in the three days of the market in June, and similar crowd levels at the market in the previous December, indicates that there is a strong public interest in and appetite for street markets. Local shops have reported a considerable

increase in sales around the times of the markets, so the concept has already proven beneficial to the town.

### **2.2.1 Location**

The ideal place to hold markets is in a square on the north side of the site, accessed by the link through from King Street, the service road, and the piazza and the circulation areas on the rest of the site.

This would give a friendly open space that can be surrounded by the cafés and retail outlets on the site.

The entrance on the north side of the square would be via the link to King Street, which could be lined by small units, display space or kiosks. This entrance must be at least the width of two of the existing shops in King Street to provide light and a feeling of spaciousness. An entrance that is only one shop wide will produce a corridor that will detract from the site and be unpopular with many residents.

### **2.2.2 Benefits**

- a. Markets could provide a significant income stream to the Council, at a relatively low cost to service and administer. This should be sufficient to cover the cost of management and to provide a surplus to LBRuT.
- b. An open space mainly surrounded by buildings will provide a focus for shopping in the winter months.
- c. It could be used as performance space, in addition to the piazza.
- d. On rugby days and in the run-up to Christmas, it could provide an additional trading opportunity.

### **2.2.3 Interest**

There are a great variety of markets available: art, books, postcards, clothing, crafts, stamps and coins, jewellery, junk (ie flea), and antiques.

A selection of these specialist interest markets provides year-round continuity, and introduces a variety of visitors to Twickenham.

The nearest big market is in Kingston, but it is mainly fruit and vegetables. There are no other markets locally that offer an assortment of stalls and places to poke around.

### **2.2.4 Neighbourhood acceptability**

There is considerable local support for markets on the site, though there is opposition to a fruit and vegetable market which would affect local retailers.

### **2.2.5 Traffic generation and parking**

Market traders would need to park their vans during the course of the market, but this could be accommodated if a flexible view were taken with respect to parking in the area.

### **2.2.6 Possible drawbacks**

- a. The square has to be of sufficient size to accommodate a market. Typically this might mean 25 stalls of 3 metres by 2 metres with a 3 metre path between them, to meet fire regulations.
- b. Unless the entrance from King Street is at least the width of two of the shops, and unless the whole area is well-lit at night, it could turn into a miserable tunnel and a haven for rough sleepers, and a litter trap.
- c. The location is bisected by the service road behind King Street, which provides access for the businesses and flats, plus service vehicles and the emergency services. Traffic along the service road would have to be controlled by lights, with priority given to pedestrians using the Market Square.

## **2.3 The Water Feature**

This could be the focus or centrepiece for the development, and link the site to the river. The concept is flexible, and the 'naked ladies' in York House Gardens are one of the tourist attractions in Twickenham.

The design of the fountain could be by competition, which would attract attention to the borough.

### **2.3.1 Location**

This could be either in the market square or the piazza.

### **2.3.2 Benefits**

Fountains are enduringly popular, and could be a landmark feature of the whole development. They connect to the river visually and thematically, and they are a potential source of pleasure for all visitors.

### **2.3.3 Practicalities**

The costs still need to be worked out, and a possible scheme to use water pumped from the Thames and recirculated in a closed system needs to be investigated further.

### **3. THE EEL PIE CENTRE (PROVISIONAL NAME)**

This represents the major public asset on the site. It is primarily for community use, though it can also draw visitors from outside the borough, and tourists.

#### **3.1 Concept**

The Eel Pie Centre is a landmark building that becomes the focus for the whole area and celebrates the river by integrating the history, townscape, landscape, the river-related industries, wildlife and human life of the Thames between Kew and Hampton, in a natural centre on Twickenham's riverside (Walpole's "seaport in miniature").

The building provides an ideal opportunity for imaginative design, and it should fulfil the competition brief's requirement for a demonstrably sustainable building in its construction and content.

The overall size and layout of the building will depend a great deal on the uses to which it is put, plus the sources of funding available for the different facilities.

**At the time of writing there had been insufficient time to explore these, which greatly curtails our contribution and the options which we can put forward.**

**Until it is clear whether sources of funding are available, and until the size, shape, requirements and equipment for the centre have been established, it is best not to rush ahead with plans for it, as all these factors will have impact on the costs and the architectural and structural practicalities such as ceiling heights for a cinema or performance space.**

#### **3.2 Contents**

- A discovery and interpretation centre with interactive displays for all ages to learn about the river
- A tourist information centre
- A friendly café for families, local people and visitors
- A small shop selling river-related items and books
- Display areas for local artists to show their work
- A 150-seat performance space/cinema with support space
- Community space and meeting rooms
- An attractive, well-maintained public convenience



### **3.3 The Discovery Centre**

This is a family oriented, education-based centre that interprets river activities and river history, archaeology, landscape, wildlife, the boat-building industries, recreation, etc, in this part of the Thames, as well as wider aspects of water use, management and conservation.

It could include live demonstrations, artefacts such as historic boats, and interactive sections, and an observer centre with CCTV for watching birds, bats, and river life. It should stress the continuity of the river and current issues, as well as the unique historical connections of Twickenham with the 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape movement through Pope and Walpole.

See appendix 6 for subjects for the interpretation element of the Centre.

#### **3.3.1 Feasibility**

The consultants Roger Tym and Partners were commissioned by the Council to investigate the viability of a discovery centre which could form the key to the success of the development.

- a. They reported that discovery centres are fast growing in popularity. They are flexible in format, and though they are often regarded as being oriented towards children, they can and do appeal to a wider audience.
- b. They concluded that a centre of the nature described would be right for Twickenham.
- c. Many discovery centres recoup a 50% to 90% return on their expenses. Though the format of discovery centres that Tym looked at is outside the likely return from this development, there are other ways of raising funding, increasing flexibility, and reducing costs. The report provided a financial analysis which is forming the basis of further investigation as to the practicalities and the viability of the discovery centre.

#### **3.3.2 Benefits**

- a. An interactive discovery centre raises awareness of the river and its importance within the community. It is modern and forward-looking, drawing attention to what is here.
- b. It gives a focus to the riverside, and compliments, rather than competing with, the planned Twickenham museum. It provides insights into the world around us, and through its interactive nature, it involves people of all ages in river life.
- c. It fulfils a valuable function locally: there are no museums of river life in the area; there is no accessible visual record of the river as it was 100 years or even 50 years ago. There are no displays or demonstrations of how river systems work, and how our environment came about, and the way it is likely to change in the future. It is vital to preserve this heritage before

it is lost forever. By displaying it in a family-friendly discovery centre, we will reach a broad number of people, in an enjoyable atmosphere.

- d. It will draw attention to the need to preserve the hard-pressed traditional industry on Eel Pie Island upon which the whole well-being of the Thames depends – the boatyards. There is great economic pressure to turn these into housing, but it is vital that they are preserved:
  - The riverside nature of Twickenham distinguishes the town and gives it its identity
  - If the boatyards are destroyed, not only will we lose a valuable part of our heritage, but the river traffic will be threatened: Eel Pie Island has one of the last remaining boatyards on the whole of the Thames licensed to carry out the mandatory checks and provide the safety certificates on the big pleasure boats on the river.
- e. The riverside is busy with families, local people, and visitors, on almost every day of the year, no matter the weather. Improved tourist information facilities and the improved ambience of the piazza, market square and town centre will draw people, and an interesting and vital discovery centre will attract them to return, time and time again.
- f. It's fun.

### **3.3.3 Practicalities**

- a. The capital cost will be part of the development. We need to investigate further possible sources of funding, commercial interests, and potential displays (e.g. the Living River from the Millennium Dome).
- b. Limited amounts of traffic will be generated, and it should be a flow throughout the day. Many visitors will come on foot or by public transport, or use the existing parking facilities, so the impact on traffic and access should be negligible.
- c. St Mary's University College in Strawberry Hill offers a Heritage degree course, and is a recognised centre of excellence. Staff and students are available to assist in the creation of a viable centre which conforms to best practice.

## **3.4 Tourist Information**

The Twickenham riverside is a natural centre for tourism. Many of the visitors arrive on foot or by public transport, and we hope to increase the numbers who arrive by boat. Visitors at present are aware of and charmed by the specialist shops in Church Street and enjoy the hospitality of the local restaurants and pubs. They absorb the atmosphere of the Embankment but few are aware of the working boatyards and craft studios

of Eel Pie Island or the extent and variety of wildlife. Part of the role of the centre is to open these up in a controlled way, so as to preserve as well as display.

About two thousand people per annum from all over the world already walk the riverside from St Mary's Church to Marble Hill, and Marble Hill House alone has around 12,000 visitors per annum.

In order to make a visit to Twickenham memorable, to publicise the town's assets and draw people back for repeat visits, there is need to provide more helpful facilities for tourists. A modest but high-quality tourist centre is required, and the Eel Pie Centre is the ideal location for it.

Currently, tourist information is provided in the atrium of the Civic Centre, a busy place with inadequate display space, that is difficult to find for the casual visitor. The centre we propose as part of the Eel Pie Centre would be open seven days a week, to meet the needs of local people and visitors to the borough. It could possibly be partly staffed by volunteers, and its cost could be met through the existing tourist information provision.

It could handle bookings for local events, and manage controlled access to the working environment, e.g. guided walks, visits to boatyards, etc, boat time tables, boat hire, and ferries.

It would also have information about the other attractions for visitors in the area:

- Strawberry Hill
- Radnor Gardens
- York House Gardens
- Orleans House Gallery
- Marble Hill
- Ham House
- Kew Gardens
- Hampton Court Palace
- River walks on both sides from Kew to Kingston
- Events: regattas, clubs, fêtes, volunteering activities

### **3.5 The Café**

This would be family friendly, and serve people who just want a tea or coffee plus the visitors to the centre.

It could be a traditional tea-room, or a coffee bar with snacks and ice creams.

### **3.6 The Shop**

This could sell river-related items, maps, books about the area and its history, tide tables and ephemera, like the shop under the arches at Richmond bridge.

In conjunction with the display space, it would help provide a commercial outlet for local artists and crafts persons.

It could also sell chandlery, walkers' and boaters' requirements, goods from local groups and societies.

### **3.7 Display Areas**

These would service local artists, and work in conjunction with the display space in the piazza. The local amateur and professional artists and craftsmen and women will welcome display room on a permanent or a temporary basis.

### **3.8 Performance space**

This needs to be investigated further for sources of funding. There is a perceived demand for a small-scale (150 seat) performance space with its ancillary support space (storage, dressing rooms, administration office).

If sufficient revenue is available from outside sources to fund the discovery centre portion of the Eel Pie Centre, it is possible that the revenues from the pool site could be put towards a small arts facility.

### **3.9 Community space**

This could include a meeting room and a crèche or nursery school facility, and possibly office space for organisations like the charity, HANDS.

### **3.10 The public convenience**

This needs to be easily accessible from both the river side and the Market Square side of the development. It should be attractive and well-maintained, and large enough to handle the same levels of traffic as the current PC, and not the automated variety

It should have its own entrances rather than being accessible only through the Eel Pie Centre, and, like the facilities in Richmond, it should be open until midnight.

### **3.11 The Eel Pie Centre: benefits**

This is a river-oriented centre that relates to the living and working life of the community. It is a public asset, built on the site of an earlier public asset, and in keeping with that tradition. It provides an attractive central point, a focus, that the town currently lacks.

The Discovery Centre meets the need for lively family-oriented information on our past, present, and future as a riverside community.

The Tourist Information Centre provides accessible, user-friendly information where people need it, in the centre of town, in an ideal position to stimulate visitors to explore the richness of the area.

The other components of the centre, the café, shop, display area, provide outlets for the community, and colour, life, and variety.

The whole centre raises the profile of the town in its own eyes, and through it we create a heart in the community where one was missing before.

### **3.11.1 Interest**

Families, schools, locals and visitors in the displays in the Discovery Centre.

Local residents, tourists and visitors in the Tourist Information Centre.

If the building is pleasingly designed and in keeping with the surroundings, it will be welcomed by the community: there is demand for a café and artists' display space.

The 'riverside heritage' theme for the area has already been established, with the hard landscaping on the Embankment, and the architectural design of the houses in Water Lane. We should look to maintain this continuity of approach and scale that integrates the new with the old, and produces a rich and varied environment in keeping with the riverside of today.

### **3.11.2 Possible drawbacks**

None.

## **4. THE EMBANKMENT**

We have taken the whole of the Embankment into consideration when looking at the issues around this proposed development, because it is a vital part of the riverside.

The downstream, Church Lane, end of the Embankment has always been part of the structure of the Lanes of Twickenham, and the whole of the promenade is an important and highly used public open space. It is one of the most easily recognised parts of Twickenham, and one of the most enjoyed by visitors and local people.

We have not addressed the traffic and parking issues in depth in this report; however, noting the amount the area is used, and the variety of purposes it serves, the parking should remain flexible.

To a great degree it is currently self-policing through constant vehicle and foot traffic. It is important to keep this vitality to preserve public safety and security.

The previous draft of this report said that the Embankment, which was last upgraded in 1975, is seriously in need of attention. Refurbishing the Embankment should have a high priority, and it should be in keeping with the development in colours, finish, and street furniture. Attached (see appendix 7) are ideas for the renovation of the area.

The costs of this refurbishment have yet to be assessed. **However, these are overall improvements, some of which should be covered by the cost of redevelopment and some which should come under the auspices of various Council departments.**

## **5. THE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

There is local recognition that there must be some commercial element in order to fund the development of the pool site. The site is not a large one, and there is concern about the size, density, and the nature of the proposed development, and that it is in keeping with the riverside area.

In June, the Working Group noted that the options that matched best with increased riverside usage included:

- A modestly sized hotel
- Flats
- A mixture of specialist and brand name shops around the Market Square.
- A cinema

### **5.1 The Hotel**

The earlier draft of this report suggested that a small three-star hotel could be built on the site, to support tourism as an alternative to flats, pubs and restaurants. With 40-50 rooms for business and family use, it could also offer facilities to the public, including a dining room and coffee shop overlooking the piazza, conference space, possibly a health club, and a roof-top bar.

The idea had considerable support among local people, and the shortage of hotel rooms is recognised as a handicap to effective growth of tourism in this part of the borough. Donaldson's, the Council's financial consultants, advise that a hotel on the site would not be viable, for several reasons:

- a. The area is too small to accommodate a hotel of sufficient size.

- b. The severe problems of access and parking would curtail the interest of major hotel chains who might be willing to look at other places in the area, e.g. the sorting office site in the London Road.
- c. Hotels offer a low economic return relative to the space required, similar to health and fitness centres and cinemas.

## 5.2 Flats

Although there is intense commercial pressure to build flats on a prime riverside site, the feeling in the local community is that the swimming pool site is first and foremost a leisure facility for public use, and not for housing.

If there has to be some housing development within the site in order to pay for the public asset buildings, it should be at the corner of Wharf Lane and the service road, without underground facilities and the consequent expense of building them. The building should be in keeping with the surroundings, in terms of roof lines, levels and massing, and the way it uses the site. Good examples locally are the houses in Water Lane and the flats around the Flood Lane car park. Bad examples are the developments on the skating rink site and Tough's boatyard.

## 5.3 Shops

As stated earlier in this report, under Riverside Strategic Issues, item 2, roughly 10% of the shops in Twickenham are empty or have become low rental charity shops. Though the developer's stated intention has been to attract 'magnet' shops like GAP and Rymans, Twickenham is already well served by three major shopping areas, Kingston, Hounslow and Richmond, which have adequate parking, and a wide variety to offer.

Retail operations are so marginal that it is unlikely that major chains will want to come to a riverside development which has the twin drawbacks of limited parking and no footfall (passing trade) from King Street.

**The provisions of the UDP not to have retail on the site should be followed for the majority of the pool development. Those shops that are permitted should be located around the Market Square, where they will benefit from the access of the King Street link and the vitality of the market area.**

## 5.4 Cinema

The idea of having a cinema in the centre of Twickenham is popular, though there is doubt whether the necessarily inward facing nature of the building would be the best use of the riverside and river views.

There are several constraints on cinemas:

- a. In order to be viable a cinema needs to have three screens, to produce the best mix of programming. These need not be huge, or a multiplex: one auditorium would need 150 seats, and the other two around 100 each, totalling 350. The fit-out costs make two screens unfeasible, and a single screen would require heavy and continuous subsidy (or enormous and dedicated community involvement).
- b. The minimum ceiling height required is 9 metres, approximately 3 storeys. This could be adjacent to or part of the Eel Pie Centre, but it would require a great deal of forethought and planning. It could also be built into the slope at the King Street side of the site.
- c. Cinema operators are wary of the lack of parking in the immediate area, and though they are encouraged by the lack of facilities from St Margaret's as far west as Kingston.
- d. They are also worried about the lack of 'footfall' – presence in the high street – which would occur with a riverside cinema: a person driving or walking along King Street or the Heath Road would be unaware of its existence.

## 5.5 Restaurants

There is strong local antipathy to more restaurants in Twickenham. The May survey showed that there were 48 in the town centre (the area bounded by the dip under the railway near the Green, the railway station, Oak Lane and the river). It is a volatile section of the retail trade and there is a constant changing of ownership, all too frequently resulting in demotion to fast food outlets.

Although many people would welcome the café in the Eel Pie Centre and **one** riverside restaurant, there are concerns about problems with all restaurants on the site.

**The downgrading of Richmond riverside at night has occurred partly because the quality restaurants originally on the site have changed use to bars which draw the 18-25 age group. The current problems with rowdiness in Twickenham town centre late at night and the congestion in pubs and bars on rugby match days give rise to local concern that the same could happen on the Twickenham river front.**

## 5.6 The health and fitness club

It remains to be established whether the health club provided in the developer's proposals will be run by the Richmond upon Thames Leisure Services Department for general public use, or if it is intended to be exclusive for residents of the flats.

Guarantees have been given that the gym and judo club will be preserved when Queen's Hall is renovated, and there is question whether more health clubs are needed in the area.



## THREATS TO THE RIVERSIDE FROM THE SCHEMES PROPOSED TO DATE

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1. **Economic:** to access, traffic, and parking. Local businesses and clubs depend on access to the riverside along the Embankment and around the pool site for deliveries of goods, ranging from bread to the restaurants in Church Street to skiffs to the Rowing Club and sheet steel to the boatyards, in vehicles from motorcycles to large HGVs. These supplies are the lifeblood of the area.
2. **Public safety and policing:** to a certain extent, the Embankment area is self-policing, from passers-by and cars, and there is a general unwillingness to install security cameras. Any plans to close the Embankment or to curtail traffic along it could endanger public safety, particularly at night.
3. **Overlarge, dense development:** this is a conservation area because there is need to protect the unique nature of the riverside. Any building on the pool site must be in keeping with the scale, ambience, and nature of the surroundings.
4. **Over-commercialisation:** the schemes proposed to date have not related to the riverside in terms of aspect, outlook, or use. Any development should be in keeping with the needs of the town and the riverside.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT'S DESIGN

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This set of proposals taken together constitute a vision for a reinvigorated riverside area that will have a positive effect in the regeneration of the Twickenham Town Centre. They also have implications for the design of the development.

In the draft of this report in June, 1999, we demonstrated the credibility of our proposals by submitting a diagram showing how the new development could work, in terms of building size, shape, and masses, and the effective use of open spaces. A second diagram showed how the design could fit into the concept of 'the Lanes of Twickenham.' For reference, they and the explanatory notes are attached in appendix 8.

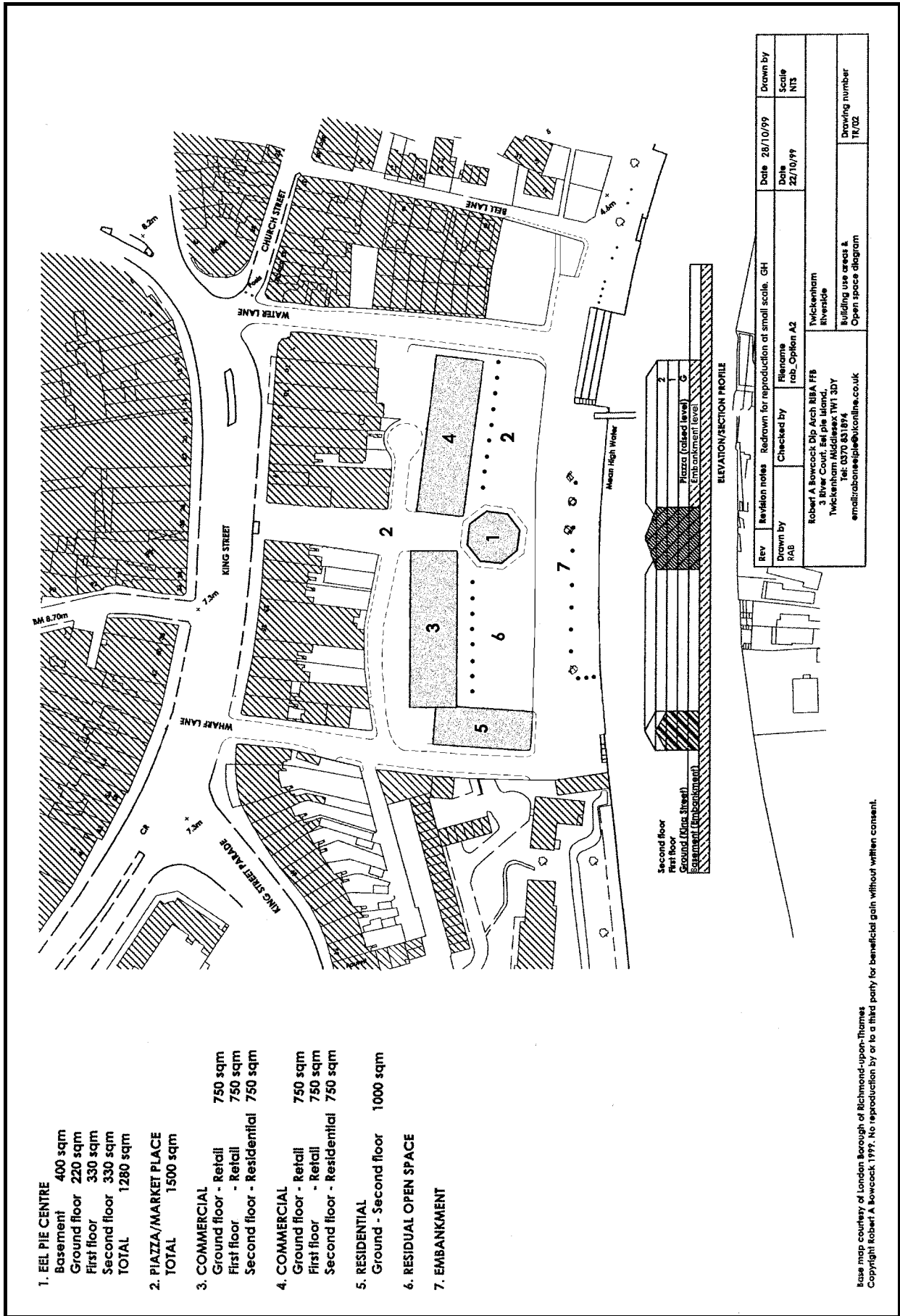
As the hotel is not viable, attached is a possible design that is in keeping with the riverside and the needs of the community (see figure 5). Although the buildings are shown as blocks which indicate space usage, not architectural detail, they demonstrate how a sympathetic development could work.

Points inherent in the design are:

1. There is minimal massing of low-rise building, but the commercial element is sufficient to support the Eel Pie Centre.
2. It is river facing
3. It is in proportion with the surrounding buildings
4. It preserves the 'lanes of Twickenham' feeling while providing ample public open space
5. As shown, it lends itself to using the levels on the site
6. There is no underground development, therefore no need for expensive excavation.

**All these factors brought together can produce a development that would revitalise the riverside, add to the commercial regeneration of the town centre, and produce a lively, interesting focal centre for the community. As has been proven, there is no need for overlarge commercial development on the pool site.**

Figure 5 -- Robert Bowcock's September design



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## **IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAFFIC AND ACCESS**

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Most concern about the site is over the potential restriction of access for emergency services and businesses, and parking for residents.

The present proposals make restrictions on parking and access that are unacceptable to the local community. If imposed, there is a real possibility that the boatyards and the Rowing Club could go out of business, and put an end to Twickenham's uniqueness as a river community.

The access for businesses, clubs, residents and emergency services should be retained and enhanced, through sensible traffic and parking policies.

1. Length of vehicle should be taken into account (e.g. boat trailers up to 50ft, fire engines, emergency helicopter); size of load (e.g. furniture removal van); length of stay required to load and unload (sometimes all day for removals, possibly longer for boat trailers)
2. Parking should not be placed at the areas most prone to flooding, at the end of Wharf Lane, Water Lane, and the foot of the Eel Pie Island bridge.
3. The 31 parking spaces replacing the 61 to be removed from the Embankment, should be included in the development away from flood areas.
4. Parking policy should be consistent throughout the area.
5. There is a need to avoid encroachment of access to Eel Pie Island. All of the plans put forward so far by the developer would place unacceptable constraints on loading and unloading goods, boats, and household furniture.

## **THE WORKING PARTY'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

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For convenience, these have been given in the Executive Summary.

## **APPENDICES**

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Appendix 1: Scale and financial return on buildings

Appendix 2: Current riverside activity

Appendix 3: Membership of the working group

Appendix 4: Copy of the letter from Thames Landscape Strategy

Appendix 5: From London Wildlife Trust

Appendix 6: Eel Pie Centre displays

Appendix 7: The Embankment

Appendix 8: The June Proposals

## APPENDIX 1: SCALE AND FINANCIAL RETURN ON BUILDINGS

Building	Scale m <sup>2</sup>	Financial return	Planning match
Riverside centre	1,200 – 1,500	Near to break even	UDP, Thames Landscape Strategy, T1
Arts centre			UDP, T1
Pontoon	—		UDP, Thames Landscape Strategy, T1
Improve Embankment	—		UDP, Thames Landscape Strategy, T1
Toilets			UDP, Thames Landscape Strategy, T1
Cinema	1,500	Break even	Leisure
Health & fitness	1,500	Break even	Leisure
Shops	/unit*		None
Restaurants	/unit*		UDP, T1
Residential	/unit*		UDP, T1

\*rough guideline: obviously considerable variation is possible.

M<sup>2</sup> = square metres

## **APPENDIX 2: CURRENT RIVERSIDE ACTIVITY**

### **1. Clubs**

- Rowing Club – 100 active members, 300 members overall
- Yacht Club – 12 cruisers on moorings, around 40 sailing boats
- Angling Club – 8 punts, 30 members
- Others

### **2. Businesses**

- 6 Boatyards
- 80 moorings, most in constant use
- Hammerton's Ferry at Marble Hill – 50 boats moored on pontoons plus 12 rowing boats for hire, a lighter, and the ferry across to Ham House.
- Church Street & Water Lane – 40 shops, restaurants and businesses
- 3 Pubs
- 16 craft workshops on Eel Pie Island
- 2 architects' practices on the Island
- 1 Church
- Others

### **3. Residents**

- Thames Eyot complex – 90 flats
- King Street Parade – 26 flats
- King Street – 32 flats (approx)
- Church Street – 28 flats (approx)
- Bell Lane – 12 houses
- The Embankment – 19 houses
- Water Lane – 9 houses and flats
- Eel Pie Island – 40 houses and flats (approx)

## **APPENDIX 3: MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING GROUP**

- Prof Jack Betteridge (Chair) Eel Pie Island resident
- Robert Bowcock DipArch RIBA FFB, Architect, Eel Pie Island resident
- Donna Clack, Thames Landscape Strategy
- Peter Francis, river enthusiast
- Yvonne Hewett, Thames Eyot resident
- Colin Hunt, Twickenham Rowing Club
- Helen Montgomery-Smith, Eel Pie Marine
- Jenny Pearce, Planner, LBRuT
- Elizabeth Wood, Embankment resident and boat owner

With

- John Armstrong, River Thames Society
- Ron Berryman, River Thames Society
- Christine Byron, Netscape
- Ken Dwan and Ted Leppard, Eel Pie Slipways Ltd
- Jackie Ellis, former LBRuT Tourism Officer; replaced in September by Eve Risbridger
- Robert Hancock, river enthusiast
- John Hatto, London Wildlife Trust
- Janet Knox, Twickenham Town Centre Manager

For discussions on the arts centre:

- Nigel Cutting, Head of Leisure Services, LBRuT
- Loveday Shewell, Arts Advisory Group
- Judith Strong, Arts Advisory Group
- Jane Dalton, former Curator, Orleans House Gallery, LBRuT



## APPENDIX 4: LETTER FROM TLS

COPY



### THAMES LANDSCAPE STRATEGY HAMPTON TO KEW

Co-ordinator: **Donna Clack** BSc DipLA MLI

c/o The Royal Parks, Holly Lodge, Richmond Park, Richmond TW10 5HS  
www.richmond.gov.uk/thameslandscape email: [tls@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:tls@richmond.gov.uk)  
tel: 0181 940 0654 fax: 0181 332 2730

Head of Property and Construction  
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
Civic Centre  
Twickenham  
TW1 3BZ

ref 4001/02  
2 February 1999

#### Proposed development of Twickenham Riverside

With regard to the proposals for the above, I would like to draw your attention to the following specific policies and project of the Thames Landscape Strategy:

- Pol 7.1 Conserve the intimate scale and working character of the Twickenham and Eel Pie Island waterfront.
- Pol 7.6 Conserve the tree farmed setting of Twickenham Riverside .....
- Pol 7.8 Secure possible connections between the centre of Twickenham and the swimming baths site.
- Pol 7.9 Encourage provision of passenger loading facilities in front of Twickenham Baths site.
- Proj 7.8 Set car parking back from the edge of Twickenham Embankment and improve the layout and seating of the public spaces.

The site was identified by the Strategy as being under significant pressure for re-development and thus the main landscape factors for consideration are:

- Historic and working character and intimate scale of the waterfront.
- connections to town centre
- public access and use of the waterfront
- car parking to be kept back from the water's edge.
- possible incorporation of further civic facilities, such as a re-located Twickenham library.

In addition, there are several Strategic Policies which related to the proposal:

- Policy LC 1: New development and new initiatives within the Strategy area should be judged against the paramount aim of conserving and enhancing the unique character of the Thames Landscape as defined in the Strategy.
- Policy LC 5: Identify, conserve and reveal the main landmarks of the area, with particular concern for the frame and backdrop to the view. Where appropriate, new developments should contribute fresh landmarks and foci to work with the existing urban pattern.
- Policy LC 6: Conserve the distinct characters of the different waterfronts. New developments should be inspired by their context, complement the particular style, colours and materials of each waterfront and contribute to the public enjoyment of the river edge spaces. Wherever possible the established diversity of riverfront uses should be retained as part of a varied and vital community.
- Policy LC 18: Guide re-development of built recreation sites to complement the scale, character and urban structure of the surrounding waterfronts and make the most of the amenity, river-related recreation and nature conservation potential. New vistas and access routes should be incorporated into redevelopment.
- Policy LC 20: Conserve the unique river edge of continuous pedestrian public access, restricting vehicles and wherever possible removing car parking from the waterside. Consider the needs of people with mobility difficulties and the provision of alternative parking where necessary.

cont'd

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Patron: **Sir David Attenborough** CH FRS

- Policy RL 1: Conserve and enhance the riverside spaces for people to sit, watch and sunbathe. Encourage riverside cafes, pubs and restaurants in the built waterfronts.
- Policy RL 3: Way-mark and promote the walks identified by the London Walking Forum, the Thames Path and the West London Waterway Walks Project, making new links to encourage local circular walks in line with English Nature guidelines. Sign routes from town centres to the river Encourage the re-instatement of old ferry connections, where interested operators can be found.
- Policy RL 18: Promote river tourist transport services, improving publicity, where appropriate re-building piers and jetties to increase access, and linking services into the existing public transport and car parking network. Control tourist boat noise and wash levels to minimise the impact on river banks.

Donna Clack  
Co-ordinator, Thames Landscape Strategy

## **APPENDIX 5: FROM LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST**

### **Richmond upon Thames River Biodiversity - Ham/Twickenham Reach**

The tidal Thames is London's biggest nature reserve, providing a large and continuous ecological corridor which in many places in Richmond upon Thames also includes important river bank habitats. Over the years water levels and the river channel have changed dramatically through reclamation of the natural floodplain and river bank engineering. However, there are now significant pressures to ensure developments now work with nature rather than force the river into a concrete lined channel.

On the Twickenham side much of the bank is walled, with only a couple of areas of natural bank. On the other side of the river Ham lands provides extensive marsh land and floodplain. It is an increasingly important site for wildlife, particularly with the continuing decline we are seeing in our gardens and across much of the country's farm land.

Eel Pie Island is one of the islands identified as significant, from a wildlife point of view, by the Environment Agency's Consultation Document on the "Thames Tideway", published in 1997. This document highlights the need of undisturbed land adjacent to the river as "critical to the lifecycle of many species of wildlife."

This reach of the river is particularly important of bats and a range of birds.

The River Thames & islands and Ham Lands are designated "Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation". Ham Lands is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

### **Threats**

Thus the increasing river traffic generated by the pontoon is likely to pose a threat to wildlife, particularly the casual users of hire boats who are more likely to attempt to land on unspoilt river bank sites.

### **Notes**

Wildlife on the River: I understand that EA consent is required for works within 16 metres of the flood defences, any new pontoon would require this consent. They can set requirements relating to the design and size of the structure and will want to know:

If the structure or boats bottom-out

Is there a need for dredging to provide a berth

What impact will increased use of the river have on wildlife and how will these impacts be mitigated/compensated for.

The results of an ecological appraisal and possibly an inter-tidal invertebrate survey.

There may also be a requirement depending on site and size of structure for a hydraulic model to assess impacts on the river flow regime in the area.

John Hatto 31 May, 1999

## **APPENDIX 6: EEL PIE CENTRE DISPLAYS**

Many displays could be interactive, and all are educational and fun.

### **Local History – the river and environment in this area**

- Historic buildings and landscape; the purchase of Marble Hill, gift of Glover's Island (and loss of Cambridge Park) – a lesson in public works
- Railways and the spread of housing
- The growth of water leisure, regattas, Venetian fêtes, listening to the band, Eel Pie Hotel, the Stones, Phil Collins, Robert Wyatt
- Rowing, and how (and how not) to do it
- audio and video with authentic voices and reconstructions.

### **Water circulation**

- Working models to show cycle of rainfall – drinking water – Mogden sewage works – diseases in water – keeping the river clean. Practical work using microscopes.
- Flooding – effect of building on floodplain – London sinking – global warming – the Thames Barrier – the story of Richmond Lock – Teddington Lock – purpose of locks
- Tides – interactive computer model to show moon, sun and equinoctial effects – relating this to the tides at Twickenham, demonstrations of flooding.

### **Conversion of energy**

- Water mills, tidal barriers, wave machines to generate electricity – energy in Teddington weir (live video link) – solar energy – water as heat store – effect on climate.

### **Conservation of water and energy**

- Importance of water conservation/energy conservation – how this building conserves energy/water – transparent and visible systems or working models.

### **Conservation Policy**

- Thames Landscape Strategy, SSSIs, conservation areas, Thames Policy Area, etc.

## **Wildlife**

- Identification of birds, fish, etc – different breeding and social habits of geese, coots, swans, grebes, herons, mallards.  
Possible direct video link – e.g. camera in bat box or hide.

## **The living Thames -- history**

- The ice age – compare Twickenham then with now.  
Survivalist showing life as hunter-gatherer
- The English Channel, chronological settlement along the Thames, rain gauge, tidal themes
- Transport – fords, bridges, place names – going back in time
- River industry – moving goods, canal barges, fishing (conflicts)
- Future – London sinking, flood defences, Twickenham 100 years on

## **Other Displays**

- By the Thames Landscape Strategy – its origins, purpose, and subject matter; current projects and meetings
- By local groups and societies – sports and rowing clubs, amenity groups, local history groups
- By national and regional bodies – the National Trust, Historic Royal Palaces, Thames Water, and other major riverside property owners
- By river-related organisations – River Thames Society, London Rivers Association, Watermen's Company, the Great River Race
- By local river businesses – for job and training opportunities; for advertising their products
- By the Council – to show local issues, consultations, visitor attractions; planning applications on issues relating to the river.
- By the Thames Landscape Strategy partners: English heritage, the Environment Agency, English Nature, etc, of their own work and properties in the area.
- Possible sponsored displays by companies – to be explored.

For research projects, the centre could hold a database for river-related issues of history, archaeology, wildlife, containing relevant information for specialist organisations and academic courses useable at several levels, for school projects, residents and degree level research.

## APPENDIX 7: THE EMBANKMENT

See attached drawing (figure 6) detailing the location of possible improvements. The cost of some of them should come under the auspices of various Council departments, rather than the development.

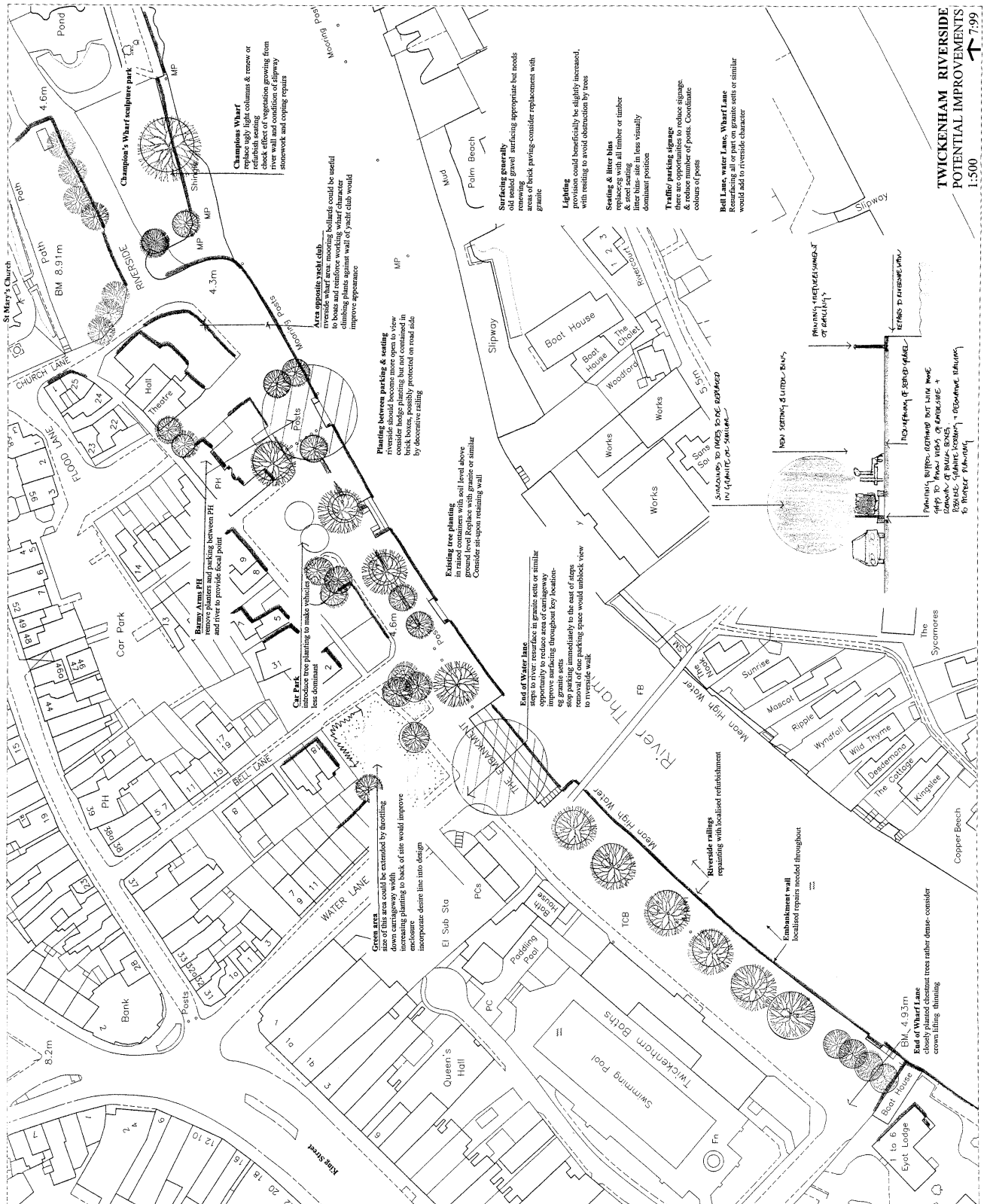
Working from Wharf Lane to the Church, they include:

1. Consider crown lifting/thinning the closely planted chestnut trees at the end of Wharf Lane.
2. Repairs to the Embankment wall needed throughout the site.
3. Riverside railings need repainting with localised refurbishment.
4. The end of Water Lane
  - resurface the steps to the river with granite setts or similar
  - improve surfacing throughout key location
  - stop parking immediately to the east of the steps
5. Existing tree planting is in raised containers with soil level above ground level. Replace with granite or similar; consider sit-upon retaining wall.
6. Planting buffer retained between parking and seating, but with more gaps to allow views of riverside and allow removal of brick boxes. Consider hedge planting, possibly protected on road side by decorative railing.
7. Possible granite kerbing.
8. New seating, replaced with all timber or timber and steel.
9. New litter bins, sited in less visually dominant positions.
10. Area opposite the yacht club: this is a riverside wharf area: mooring bollards would be useful to boats and to reinforced working wharf character. Climbing plants against wall of yacht club would improve appearance.
11. Champion's Wharf
  - Replace ugly light column and renew or refurbish seating.
  - Check effect of vegetation growing from river wall and condition of slipway
  - Stonework and coping repairs
12. Surfacing generally: old sealed gravel surface appropriate but needs renewing. Areas of brick paving – consider replacement with granite.

13. Lighting generally: provision could beneficially be slightly increased, with resiting to avoid obstruction by trees.
14. Traffic and parking signage; there are opportunities to reduce signage, and reduce number of posts. Co-ordinate colours of posts.
15. Bell Lane, Water Lane, Wharf Lane: resurfacing all or part in granite setts or similar would add to riverside character.
16. Redesign the steps by the bridge to include a ramp for boat launching, and reduce the height of the steps.



Figure 6 -- Improvements to the Embankment



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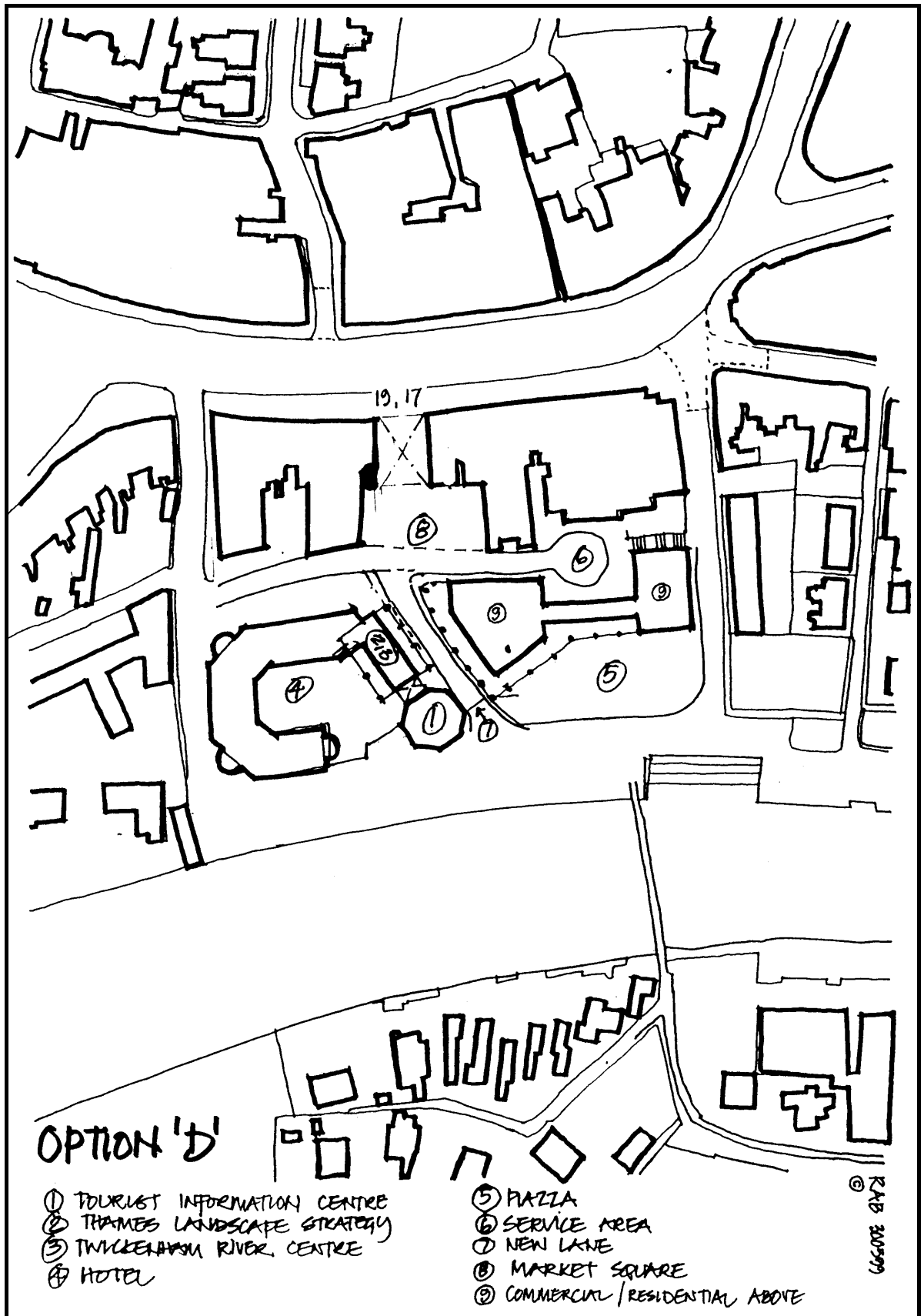
## **APPENDIX 8: THE JUNE PROPOSALS**

These examples are as submitted to show what can be done with the pool site if it is creatively and sympathetically designed. (See attached diagrams, figures 7 and 8)

### Notes:

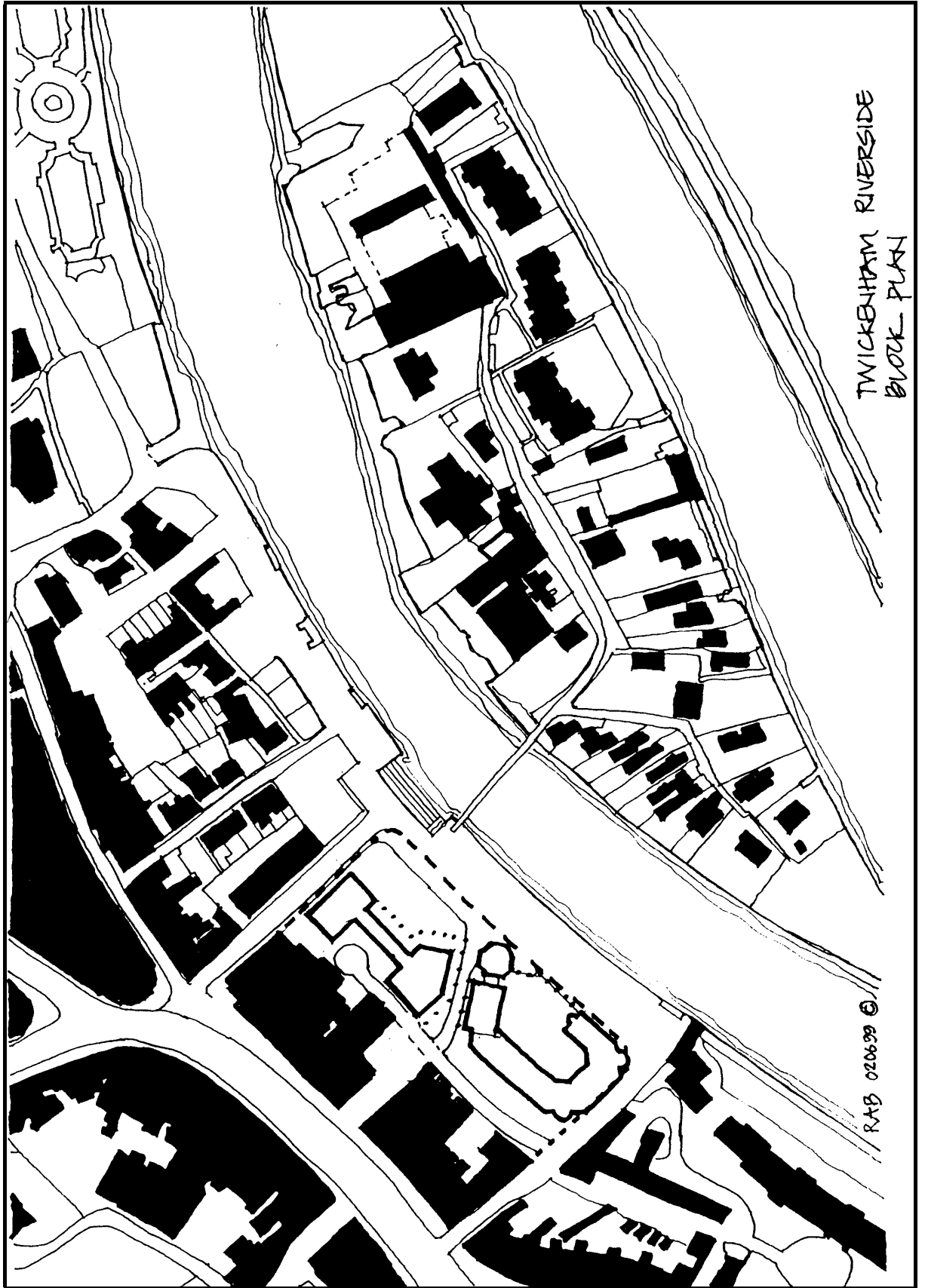
1. The T1 Brief still applies to the area, and all of our proposals can be accommodated within it. The designs accord with the Inspector's report in terms of the size of the development, and they have a strong riverside link. They can only be done in the context of the riverside.
2. The design provides a good ratio between publicly acceptable commercial development and open space, whilst still working in the context of a river community linked to a town centre.
3. There are several possible locations for a fountain, and the whole creates vital, open areas that will draw local people and visitors alike.
4. The design is traffic and parking friendly, since it is intended to draw people into it, to walk through. Because it's on several levels, it makes the most of the natural slope of the land to give the best possible views of the river and the surroundings.
5. The town centre link into King Street is shown as 2 shop widths. This is a minimum width, and could be wider.

Figure 7 -- A possible configuration for the site, from the June report.



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Figure 8 -- The site with a hotel, from the June report.



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