

2.0 SITE ANALYSIS



2.1 SITE LOCATION

2.1.1 Twickenham Station is located fronting London Road to the northern edge of Twickenham Town Centre. Figure 2.1 (below) provides details relating to its wider context. The site is bounded by the River Crane to the north, Mary's Terrace to the South and London Road to the west. The station footbridge across the railway line forms the eastern boundary of the site. The boundary of the site is shown on figure 2.2.

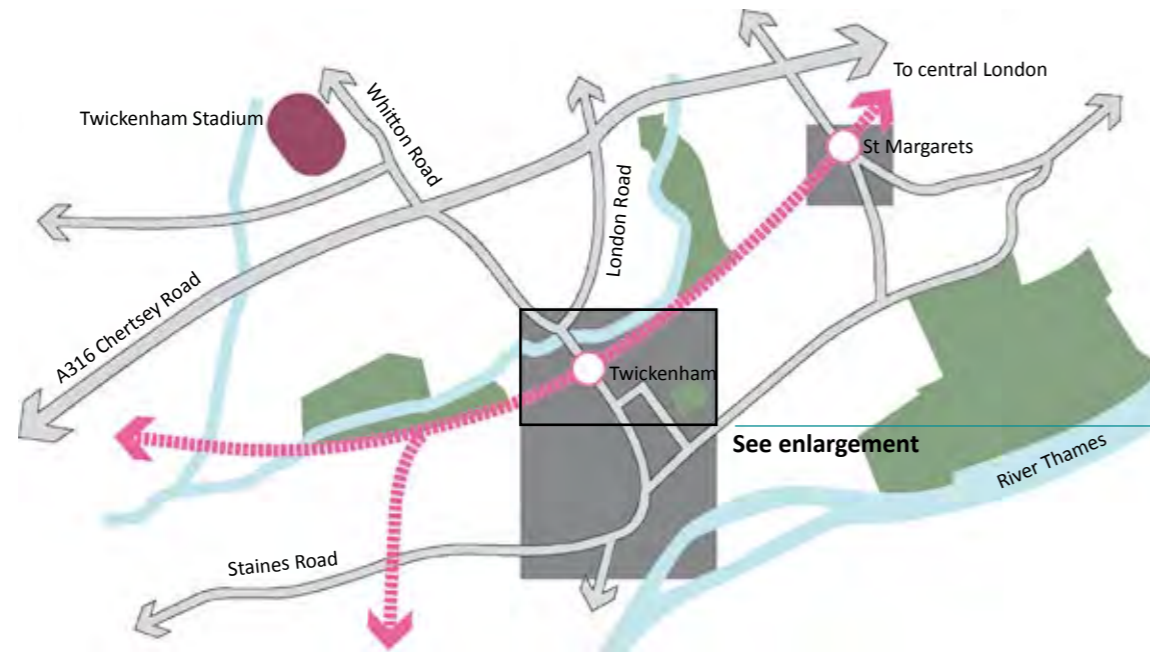


Figure 2.1
Site context plan

- Town Centres
- Open Space
- Rivers
- Landmark Buildings
- Railway Line
- Main Roads

Figure 2.2
Site location plan

- Site Boundary



The existing station entrance on London Road



The existing platform arrangement

2.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.2.1 The site at present comprises the station ticket hall and forecourt, a 44 space car park, a cycle parking area, some vacant land and the bank to the River Crane. In addition, the site also includes part of the railway track and the air rights above this.
- 2.2.2 The station forecourt area on London Road is pedestrianised and includes some hard landscaping measures and limited seating areas. The main station entrance provides a poor frontage to London Road.
- 2.2.3 To the north of the station entrance is an isolated covered cycle parking area (in need of improvement), accessible via the north west corner of the site.
- 2.2.4 The station car park is accessed via a set of stairs leading from London Road. There is at present no direct route for the mobility impaired between the car park and the station entrance. In addition, the car park does not provide an efficient use of land given the town centre location of the site. The car park contains a drop off facility and taxi rank.
- 2.2.5 The platforms, located to the south of the car park are accessed via high level gantries over the track from the ticket office that fronts London Road. The stairs that lead to the platforms are in need of refurbishment. Whilst some facilities exist for wheelchair access, no direct lift access is provided between the ticket hall and platforms.
- 2.2.6 A bridge half way along the platforms provides a means of interchanging between these and extends to the car park to cater for match day egress from the station.
- 2.2.7 The northern boundary of the site is formed by the bank to the River Crane which includes mature landscaping. Beyond the river are the residential properties fronting Cole Park Road.
- 2.2.8 An area of vacant land is located between the car park and the platform access gantries. The southern boundary of the site is formed by the brick wall that runs along the length of Mary's Terrace.



Figure 2.3
Photo location plan 1

- 01 Looking from the station ticket hall across London Road - the station entrance provides a poor frontage to London Road
- 02 View to the west, across the site from the public footbridge
- 03 View of the stairs to platform level from the ticket office
- 04 Looking along the River Crane
- 05 Existing covered cycle parking arrangements - in need of expansion and improvement

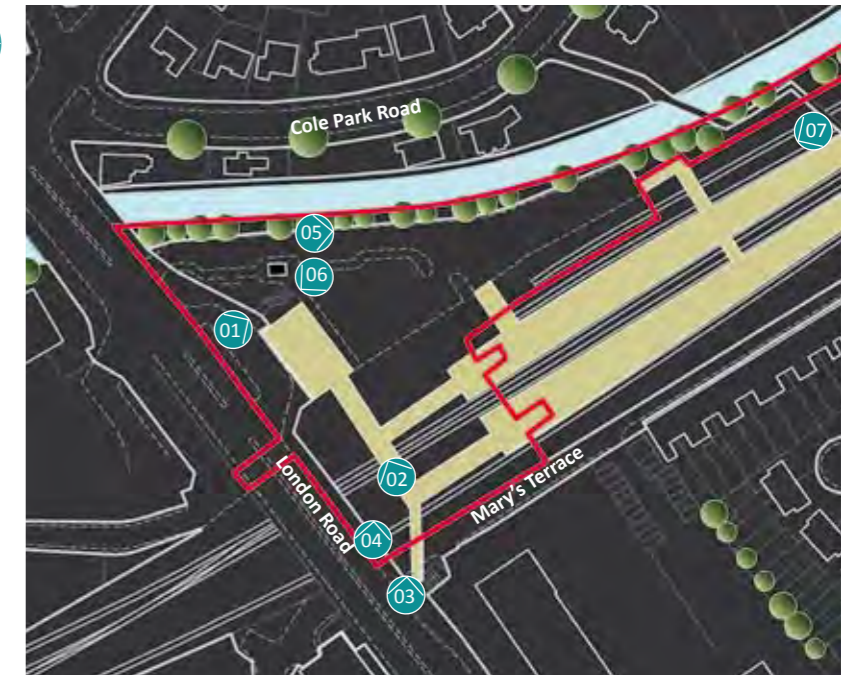




Figure 2.4
Photo location plan 2



- 01 Looking down the stairs adjoining the ticket office, accessing the car park from London Road
- 02 The existing pedestrian footbridge linking the ticket office to platforms
- 03 The caged area linking the station footbridge to the stairs to Mary's Terrace used for after hours access to the platforms
- 04 The exterior of the footbridge, seen from London Road - which does not contribute to the streetscene
- 05 View along the northern boundary of the site, with Mary's Terrace properties in the distance
- 06 View east from the car park, looking towards the stairs to London Road
- 07 View from public footbridge, across the tracks towards the ticket hall



2.3 SITE SURROUNDINGS

TWICKENHAM TOWN CENTRE

2.3.1 Twickenham town centre extends south from the site, along London Road. The main shopping area begins approximately 200 m to the south of the site with the Waitrose foodstore marking the beginning of the designated shopping frontage. Regal House acts as a landmark on the townscape and relates to neighbouring higher density offices buildings that have been built since the 1960s (other examples include Bridge House and Chatsworth House to the south west of the Station). These buildings have assisted in defining this part of the town centre as a location for taller, mixed use developments.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

2.3.2 Residential areas are located to the north, south east and south west of the site. Properties in these areas vary in age and style, although the dominant residential period is Victorian with a mix of smaller terraces (such as Mary's Terrace) and larger, detached properties (such as those along Cole Park Road). More recent infill development has occurred, throughout the area, which include developments along Amyand Park Road. The parade of shops and restaurants at the junction of Whitton Road and London Road acts as a local centre for the neighbourhood.

ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICE

2.3.3 The sorting office, whilst falling partly within the Town Centre boundary, has been classified as a separate Character Area, because it is a major proposal site for redevelopment. At present, it contains areas of hard standing and buildings of generally two to three storeys in height.



Figure 2.5
Photo location plan - site surroundings



- 01 Looking across the station towards Mary's Terrace and Regal House
- 02 Looking east along Amyand Park Road
- 03 Looking south along London Road from the corner of Cole Park Road
- 04 Looking south along London Road through the town centre
- 05 View from London Road towards the post office site



2.4 POLICY DESIGNATIONS

2.4.1 The Planning Statement accompanying the application should be referred to for a full assessment of relevant planning policy. However, it is clear that there are a number of policy issues that directly relate to the design of the development. These are indicated below:

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Site Allocation

2.4.2 Twickenham Station has been recognised by the Council as a suitable location for redevelopment for over 20 years. The current Unitary Development Plan adopted in 2005 (on which all planning applications are currently determined) includes a site specific policy for Twickenham Station (T17) which states the following:






“To improve interchange facilities and provide a mix of town centre uses to take advantage of the high level of public transport accessibility and to maximise benefits to the town centre. It is recognised that there is potential for both immediate and long-term interchange improvements in association with redevelopment of the site including improved pedestrian (including bus interchange opportunities) and cycle access including cycle parking, bus interchange information systems and environmental improvements to the forecourt. To improve information systems and access for people with disabilities. The site has potential for a mix of town centre uses including business, leisure and residential. Forty per cent of any residential element should be affordable housing; the remainder should be small units with no on-site parking. The site is not appropriate for significant retail uses which would draw trade from designated frontages and lead to the unacceptable elongation of the centre. Any proposal must allow for the provision of a riverside walk as part of the River Crane Walk, the reinstatement of Platform 1 and a link to the proposed pedestrian walkway to the rugby stadia. Car parking for commuters should be reduced. Proposals should take a comprehensive approach taking into account related town centre sites, particularly the Post Office Sorting Office (T3) and the Station Yard (T23), and the contribution of the proposal toward the enhancement of the area as a whole.”

2.4.3 In addition, Policy CP9 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2009) relates to Twickenham Town Centre and states that the redevelopment of Twickenham Station is seen as an opportunity to improve public transport interchange facilities and the local environment, including opening up links with the wider area and improving the environment along the River Crane corridor. Policy CP9 of the Core strategy also recognises that the town centres in the Borough have the potential for higher densities of development and that taller buildings may be suitable at Twickenham Station.

Conservation Areas and Buildings of Townscape Merit

2.4.4 St Mary’s Terrace properties are identified by the Council as a group of Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM), Policy BLT 4 of the UDP relates to the protection of their character and setting. Figure 2.7 indicates details of nearby conservation areas and BTM’s.

Figure 2.6
UDP designations

-  Twickenham area of mixed use
-  Site specific proposals
-  Green corridor
-  River Crane area of opportunity
-  Other site of nature importance

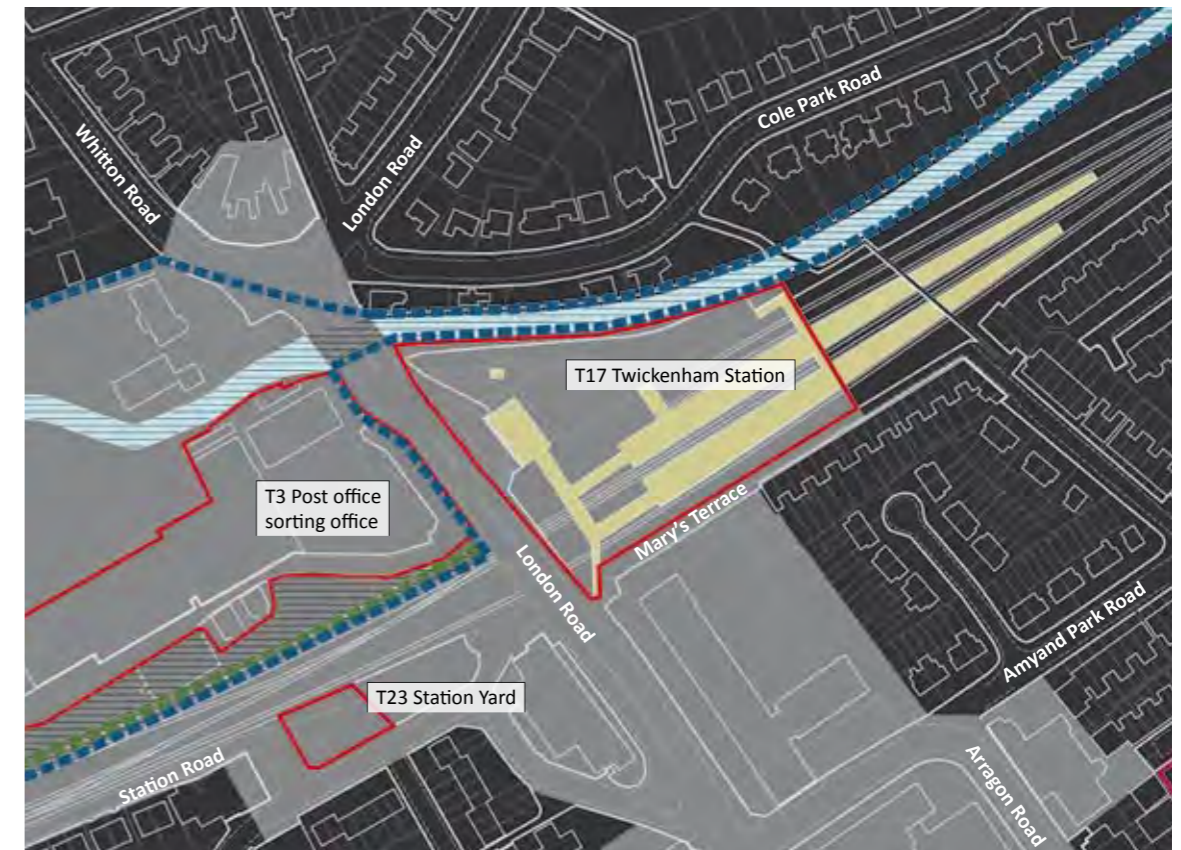





Figure 2.7
Conservation designations

-  Site Boundary
-  Conservation Areas
-  Buildings of Townscape Merit (BTM)



Tall Buildings

2.4.5 The Sustainable Urban Development Study, prepared for the Council in 2008 forms part of the evidence base to the LDF and outlines Twickenham as a suitable location for tall buildings (see figure 2.8). The document states that:

“The mixed-use area of Twickenham district centre has been identified as an appropriate area for higher density developments..... The study, taking into consideration the London Plan density matrix and a review of the context of the surrounding area, suggests a density of at least 55 u/ha and could be up to 260 u/ha on some sites, particularly those close to the station” (para 5.52).

2.4.6 It goes on to state that:

“There is an opportunity to create a cluster around the station area which would create a landmark and aid the legibility within the local area. Any future tall buildings should not exceed generally nine storeys in height in order not to break the horizon as viewed from the Arcadian view on Richmond Hill. Also a range of heights should be pursued to ensure more interesting and varied skyline” (para 5.53).

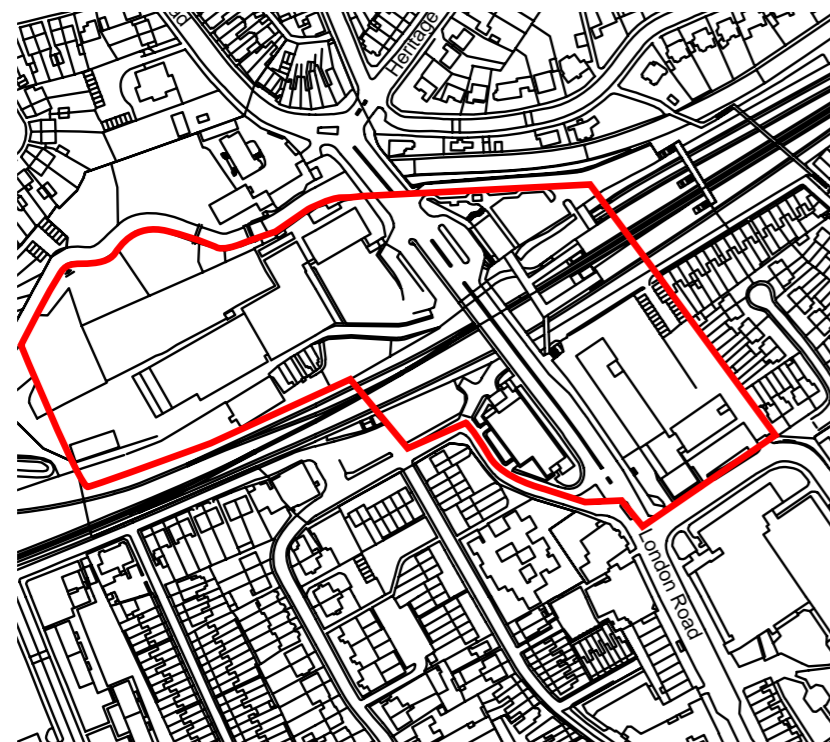


Figure 2.8
LB Richmond Sustainable Urban Development Study (extract)



Twickenham Tall Building Zone

Design Policies

2.4.7 UDP policy BLT 11 relates to design considerations and states that *“the Council will require a high standard of design in new buildings....while ensuring that schemes are compatible with the scale and character of existing development, its setting, and the setting of new development”.*

2.4.8 The wording of the policy goes on to state that the Council will take account of the following factors in considering applications

- scale of development;
- layout and access arrangements;
- relationship to existing townscape and between proposed buildings;
- height;
- form;
- frontage;
- building materials and colour;
- detailing;
- compliance with ecological design principles.

2.4.9 With specific regard to environmental principles, the supporting text to policy BLT 11 states that these should include:

- Increasing density (measured in habitable rooms per net hectare) in so far as is compatible with the surrounding area and the maintenance of high levels of amenity space.
- Development with reduced parking in appropriate locations.
- Energy efficient design, including building methods and materials.
- Renewable energy supply to avoid consumption of fossil fuels.
- Re-use of grey water, and individual/communal rainwater storage provision.
- Maximum provision of external cultivatable space on buildings; e.g. roof gardens, terraces, green roofs and integral conservatories.
- Orientation to maximise light and solar energy.
- Provision for individual/communal storage for recycling, and on-site recycling wherever possible.
- Provision for cycle storage.

2.4.10 With specific regard to accessibility, policy BLT 12 states that the Council will seek *“full access for all users including people with disabilities and others with mobility difficulties”.*

2.4.11 In addition, Policy CP7 B of the adopted Core Strategy states that:

“All new development should recognise distinctive local character and contribute to creating places of a high architectural and urban design quality that are well used and valued. Proposals will have to illustrate that they:

(i) are based on an analysis and understanding of the Borough’s development patterns, features and views, public transport accessibility and maintaining appropriate levels of amenity;

(ii) connect positively with their surroundings to create safe and inclusive places through the use of good design principles including layout, form, scale, materials, natural surveillance and orientation, and sustainable construction.

2.4.12 Lastly, the Councils latest draft of the Development Management DPD was published for consultation in October 2010. This document includes policies DC1 to DC 6 which relate to general design issues, layout, tall buildings, trees and landscaping, sunlight and daylight and balconies and roof terraces.

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Design Quality SPD (2006)

2.4.13 The document provides general guidance on the design of the built environment, with particular regard to the character, continuity and enclosure, public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity.

2.4.14 The site is identified within the document as being located within the Twickenham and St Margaret’s Character Area. London Road is identified within this as being *“fronted by continuous rows of Victorian and twentieth century mixed use parades which accommodate shops, flats and offices”* (page 42)

Twickenham and Surroundings SPD

2.4.15 The SPD was adopted on 27 October 2010. Maddox & Associates prepared representations on behalf of Solum Regeneration to the consultation version of the SPD stating that it was not in conformity with the adopted Core Strategy (the representations can be found at Appendix 1) as required by Section 13(8) of the Town and Country (Local Development) (England) Planning Regulation 2004. The Council made minor alterations to the SPD prior to its adoption but it remains the view of Maddox & Associates that the SPD does not conform with the adopted Core Strategy. This statement therefore focuses on the policies set out in the Core Strategy and affords little weight to the SPD.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

London Plan

2.4.16 Table 3A.2 of the London Plan relates to housing density and states that, given the PTAL level of the site at ‘5’, then up to 260 units per hectare should be provided on the site.

London Housing Design Guide (2010)

2.4.17 The Housing Design Guide provides development standards for the provision of new housing in London. These standards relate to a variety of issues including density, open space, accessibility, car and cycle parking.

2.5 PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.5.1 A planning application is currently under consideration by the LPA for the ‘podium’ element of the railway station. This planning application consists of a proposed concrete podium to be constructed across the railway line, which will form the base for the proposed development (that is now being applied for). The reason for the early submission of the podium application is to allow its construction to be carefully timed to fit in with track closures which have been booked for the Autumn of 2011.
- 2.5.2 There is no other relevant planning history associated with the site itself.

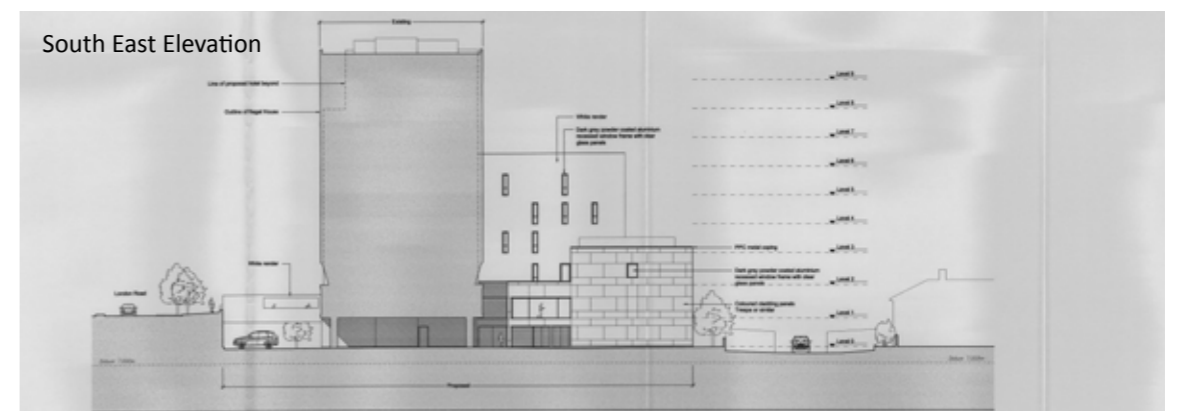
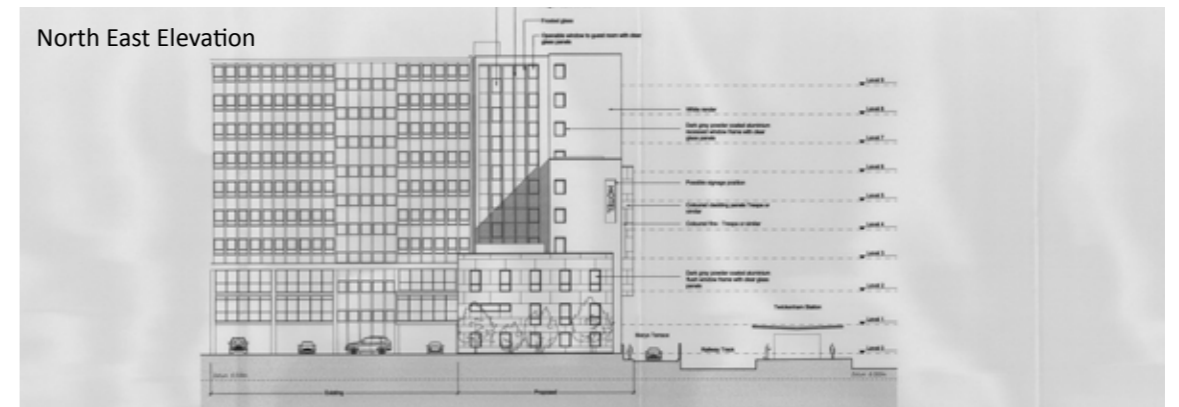
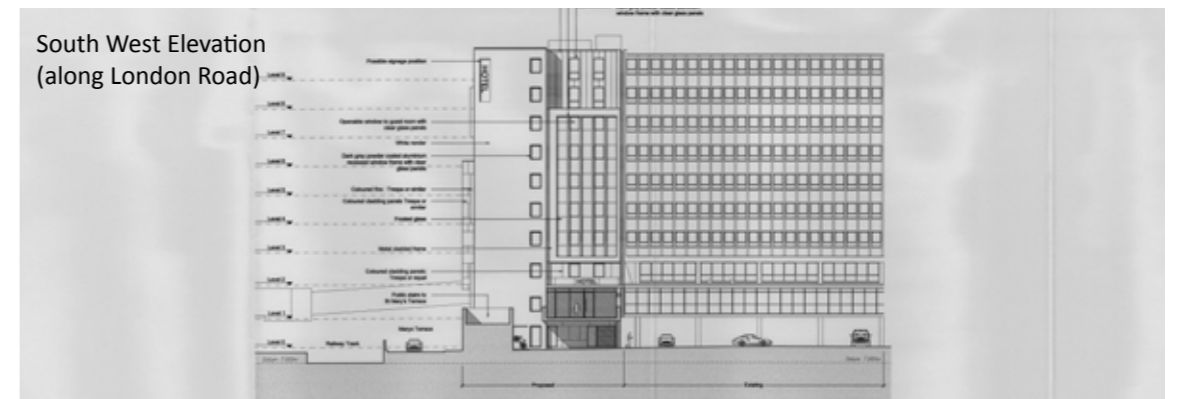
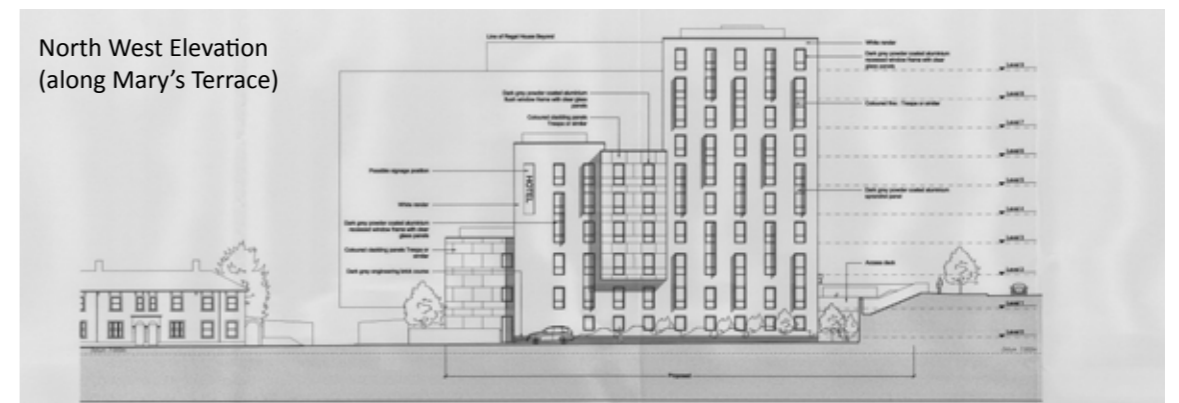
EXTENSION TO REGAL HOUSE

- 2.5.3 Planning permission was granted at appeal in early 2010 for the construction of an extension to Regal House. This extension will accommodate a hotel and be located at the northern end of the building adjoining Mary’s Terrace. The approved development will mirror the height of Regal House at 10 storeys, fronting London Road, and step down to 6 and then 3 storeys as it nears properties on Mary’s Terrace. Images of the hotel extension are shown in Figure 2.9.
- 2.5.4 Given the proximity of this development to the site, it is important that it is considered in relation to the proposed design of buildings on the station site.



Above: location of Regal House extension (coloured pink)

Figure 2.9
70 London Road - Elevations



2.6 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2.6.1 It is clear from the historic maps that the location of the station in its present form was not added until the mid 20th Century. Prior to this, the station was located on two sites, split by the railway on the other side of London Road, one element of which now forms part of the Royal Mail Sorting Depot.
- 2.6.2 The station was relocated to its current location to accommodate the growth of the railway and line extensions.
- 2.6.3 As is typical with London Suburbs, the introduction of the railway led to the expansion of Twickenham. In the early 19th Century, the town centre was formed by buildings fronting London Road and Whitton Road. Land beyond the station to the north was still either open land or in agricultural use.
- 2.6.4 Following the introduction of the railway, land to the south in particular began to be more intensively developed, so that by the end of the 19th Century, properties along Mary's Terrace has been constructed, although land beyond this to the south (where Amyand Park Road lies) had still to be developed. It was clear at this time that the residential streets to the south west of the site had already been laid out and developed. Cole Park Road and land to the north still remained undeveloped by the 1880s.
- 2.6.4 By the 1920s, there had been considerably more development to the north of the station. Cole Park Road had been laid out, and properties along this had begun to be developed. From this period onwards, more limited development occurred. Land around Amyand Park Road was developed later in the 20th Century, whilst parts of London Road were redeveloped to provide higher density developments (such as Regal House).

Figure 2.10
Historic Map 1805-1822



Figure 2.11
Historic Map 1874-1881

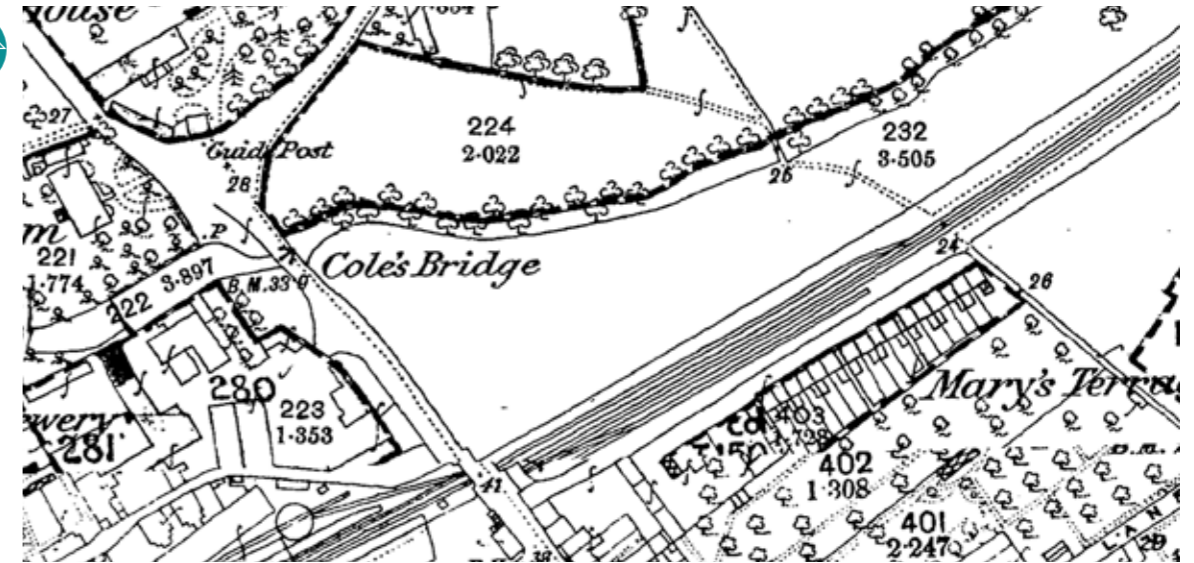


Figure 2.12
Historic Map 1920



2.7 LANDSCAPE AND TOPOGRAPHY

2.7.1 The River Crane runs along the northern boundary of the site, separating it from the residential properties along Cole Park Road. The river and its immediate surroundings offer a level of nature conservation interest. Direct access to the River, for the public is currently unavailable, from either side. The River can be crossed via London Road and via the footbridge on the public footpath to the east of the site. The river is surrounded on both sides by dense, mature landscaping that screens the site from the properties along Cole Park Road.

2.7.2 The remainder of the site has little landscape or nature conservation interest.

2.7.3 The topography of the site is generally level, although land slopes down from London Road in an easterly direction towards the station car park.

ORIENTATION

2.7.4 The site is aligned on a general east-west axis. Figure 2.13 shows the path of the sun. At present, Regal House casts a shadow over part of the site for some periods of the day, although this is predominantly over the railway lines rather than any land that is proposed to be built on.

VIEWS

2.7.5 It is recognised that there are important views of the site from the following locations (which have been agreed with the Council):

- View north from pedestrian crossing at junction of Arragon Road and London Road.
- View south from junction of Whitton Road and London Road.
- View west from junction of Beauchamp Road and Mary's Terrace.
- View west from footbridge over railway line, Amyand Park Road.
- View north west from entrance of St. Mary's Primary School, Amyand Park Road opposite Cheltenham Avenue.
- View south from between 2b and 2c Cole Park Road.
- View east from The Albany public house, Queens Road.
- View east from playing fields off Craneform Way.
- View east from footbridge over railway line, Marsh Farm Road.
- View south west from tennis courts, Moormead Park.
- View west from Terrace Walk, Richmond Hill.

2.7.6 The Visual Impact Assessment (prepared by WYG) provides full details of these views and the likely impact of the development upon them. However, it is clear from figure 2.14 that Regal House is clearly visible from Richmond Hill, due to its bulk and massing. The skyline from this view will be further altered once the extension to Regal House (see 2.5) is constructed.

Figure 2.13
Landscape and orientation







-  Site Boundary
-  Glimpsed views to site
-  Path of sun
-  Landscape barrier
-  Area of sloping topography
-  River Crane



Figure 2.14
The view of the site from Richmond Hill

2.8 BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The Station

2.8.1 The railway station facilities currently comprise a ticket hall and small kiosk. There are two ticket machines located outside of the station, and a further four inside. The ticket hall is linked to the platforms via a footbridge across the tracks. There are five platforms which run on an east-west axis, although only four of these are in use as platform one is redundant. An area of surface car parking is located to the north, with space for 44 cars, the car park is accessed via London Road to the west. Between the car park and ticket hall entrance are three covered cycle storage areas, providing parking for approximately 80 cycles.

Surrounding Land Uses

- 2.8.2 As indicated above, residential uses are located to the north and south of the site, with those to the north separated from the site by the River Crane and a substantial landscaping screen. Commercial uses are found to the north west of the site at the junction of London Road and Whitton Road.
- 2.8.3 Commercial uses dominate land to the south, with office uses in Regal House and Chatsworth House, whilst the retail core of the town centre is located just further south. Residential neighbourhoods are located to the east and west of the town centre. The Royal Mail Sorting Office is located to the west of the site.

Figure 2.15
Ground floor land uses

-  Site Boundary
-  Station
-  Residential
-  Employment/Office
-  Retail
-  School
-  Car Park
-  Town centre



Ground floor restaurant/bar uses at Regal House, with office accommodation above



Retail and restaurant uses at the junction of London Road and Whitton Road

2.9 CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE

- 2.9.1 The railway station does not at present positively contribute to the townscape of the town centre and is not fitting of its gateway status. The station, in its existing form, was completed in the 1950's and has changed little over the years. The station ticket hall, associated footbridges and staircases are generally of poor quality. The station forecourt recently underwent some public realm improvements which have resulted in a pedestrianised areas with some landscaping.
- 2.9.2 The surrounding townscape alters from a domestic scale to the north, to a much more 'urban' form to the south. Regal House is by far the most prominent building adjacent to the site, within the town centre, and perhaps within the Borough. Standing up to 10 storeys in height, the building can be seen from a number of short and long distance views and acts as a major landmark for the town centre.
- 2.9.3 Buildings further south, along London Road are typically up to around 6 storeys in height and vary in age, style and quality. It should be noted that Athena Press building located to the south of the site, along London Road rises to 9 storeys in height.
- 2.9.4 The residential neighbourhood along Cole Park Road is defined by typically two to three storey properties, built around the 1920s.

Figure 2.16 Building heights



Athena Press building, Queen's Road



(1) Location of the Athena Press building

2.10 MOVEMENT

RAIL AND BUS

2.10.1 The site is highly accessible, and has a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 5 (as defined in the London Plan). The Railway Station is operated by South West Trains (the Train Operating Company, or “TOC”) and provides direct rail services to London Waterloo, Reading and Windsor and Eton Riverside. Platforms 3,4 and 5 are in use, with platform 2 used occasionally on Match Days and Platform 1 being redundant. If the Heathrow Airtrack project is approved, it is anticipated that services will be improved in the future, with a direct service from the station to Heathrow Airport.

2.10.2 Two bus services run along London Road and stop outside the station (267 and 281) which provide frequent services to Hammersmith, Hounslow, Tolworth and Fulwell. Bus services along York Street, 400m to the south of the station provide access into Central London, Heathrow, Staines and Richmond.

TAXIS AND PRIVATE VEHICLES

2.10.3 There is presently a taxi waiting area, which is able to accommodate three cars alongside the access road into the car park. Taxis also use the bus lane on London Road to pick up passengers at quieter times of the day given its more immediate location outside the front of the station entrance. The site is well connected to the surrounding highway network.

CAR PARKING

2.10.4 There are currently 44 car parking spaces on the site, accessed from London Road. Controlled Parking Zones are in force to the north and south of the site. There are very small number of pay and display bays on surrounding streets. Figure 2.18 provides more information on surrounding car parking provision.

below: the existing car park, looking west through the site



Figure 2.17 Public transport

- Site Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Bus Routes
- Bus stops
- Train Routes
- Transport Nodes



Figure 2.18 Vehicle routes and car parking

- Site Boundary
- Twickenham CPZ
- Cole Park CPZ
- Car Park
- Main vehicular routes
- Secondary vehicular routes
- On Street P&D car parking



PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

- 2.10.5 The pedestrian environment within the station is in need of considerable improvement given the poor condition of many of the station buildings. The main entrance to the platforms is via the ticket hall on London Road, whilst a secondary entrance provides access onto the platforms at hours when the ticket hall is closed. This entrance is also located on London Road, adjacent to where the steps lead down to Mary’s Terrace and comprises a narrow, poor quality, covered footbridge. A third entrance is located to the east of the car park and is used in order to regulate capacity and footfall on event days at Twickenham Stadium only. Figures 2.19 and 2.20 indicate the current regular and event day pedestrian flows associated with the site.
- 2.10.6 There is considerable event day congestion at the station, given the lack of queuing areas and the general layout of facilities. This results in significant accessibility problems and delays for station users trying to access rail services on event days.
- 2.10.7 Routes through the site for disabled users are generally poor. Access to the car park from London Road for wheelchair users is not as direct as it is for pedestrians given the change in levels and the existing stairs. Lift access within the station to platform level is not provided.
- 2.10.8 Given the town centre location of the site, pedestrian links to surrounding areas are generally good. The public right of way to the east of the site does not however link directly with the site.

CYCLES

- 2.10.9 There are at present 80 cycle parking spaces on the site and during week days these are often full.

Figure 2.19
Pedestrian flows

- Pedestrian routes
- Bus stops
- Taxi rank
- Poor pedestrian links*
- Average pedestrian links*
- Good pedestrian links*

*see Fig 29 of Transport Statement

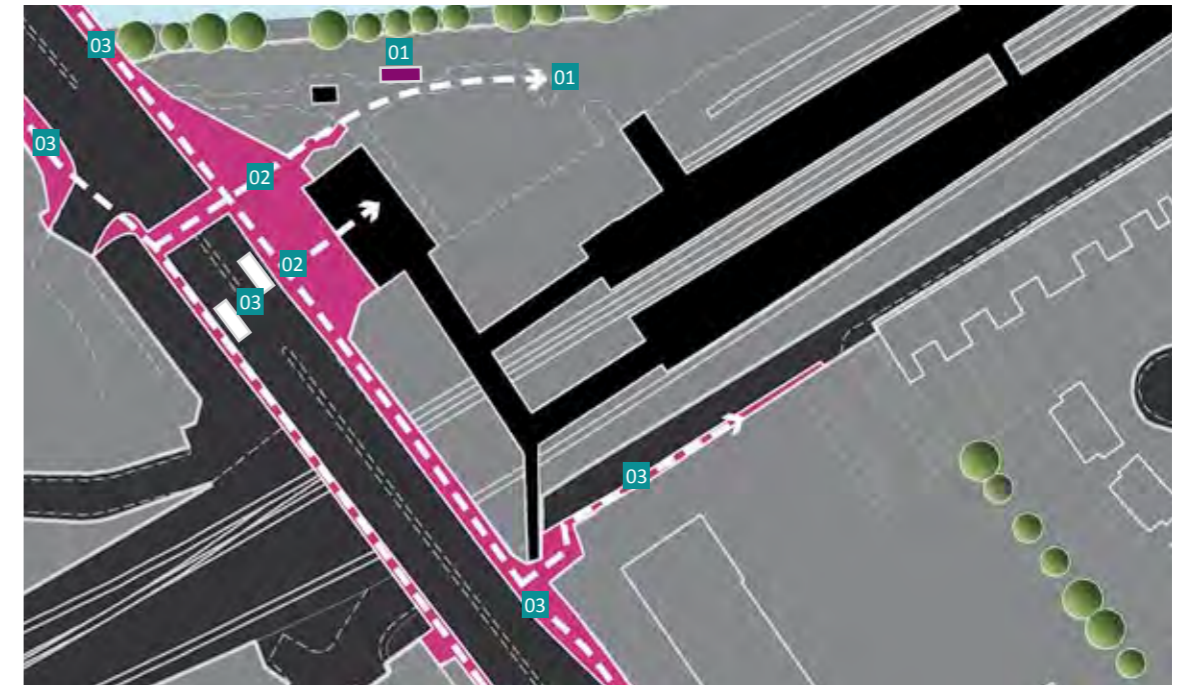
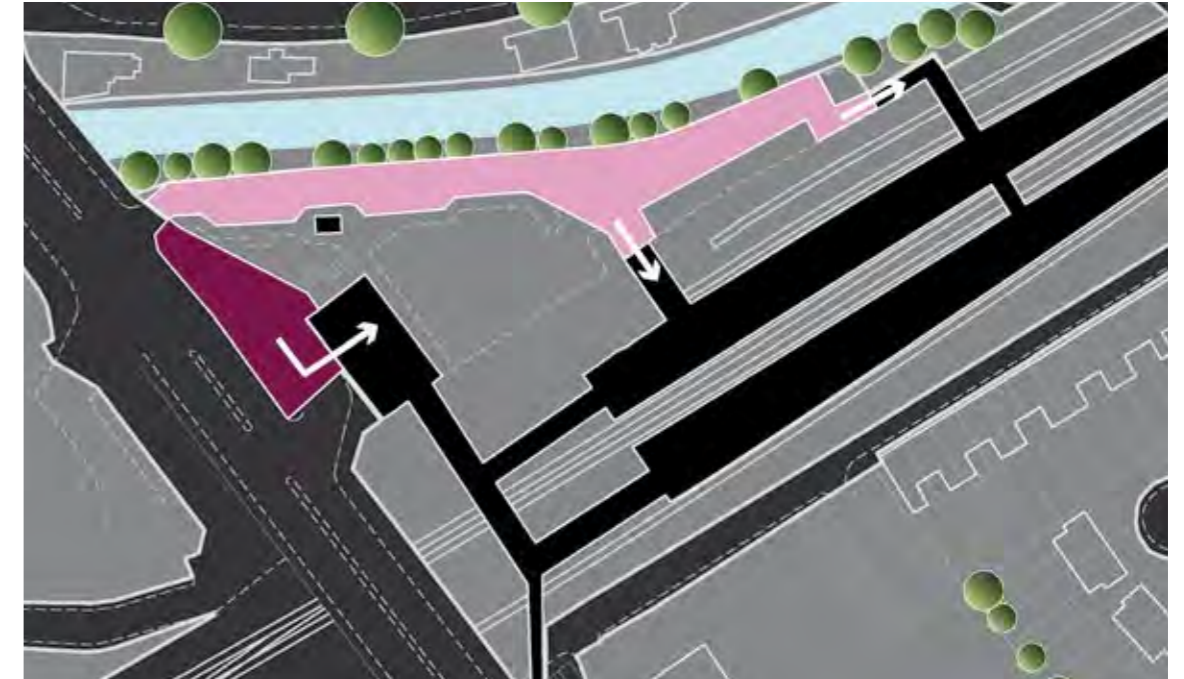


Figure 2.20
Event day pedestrian flows

- Eastbound (London) queuing route
- Westbound queuing route
- Entrances to station



2.11 CONTEXT SUMMARY

2.11.1 To summarise, the key issues in relation to the site context are as follows:

- An opportunity to redevelop a key gateway site and improve linkages with the rest of the town centre
- Poor quality public transport interchange facilities that are in need of improvement
- A highly accessible site by public transport, with a PTAL rating of 5.
- A site allocated by the Council for high density development
- A town centre site that is suitable for accommodating taller buildings
- There are sensitive local and regional views of the site which will need careful consideration
- The River Crane is currently inaccessible, but has some nature conservation interest
- The quality of the public realm across the site is generally of a poor quality
- The frontage of the station to London Road is at present poor and is not representative of its town centre location
- Compliance with relevant planning policies must be achieved through development on the site



Opportunities to improve linkages to the rest of the town centre



Existing poor quality buildings on the site



The existing poor quality of public realm that can be found on site



An opportunity exists to enhance the River Crane