

Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, Twickenham

Design & Access Statement

November 2012



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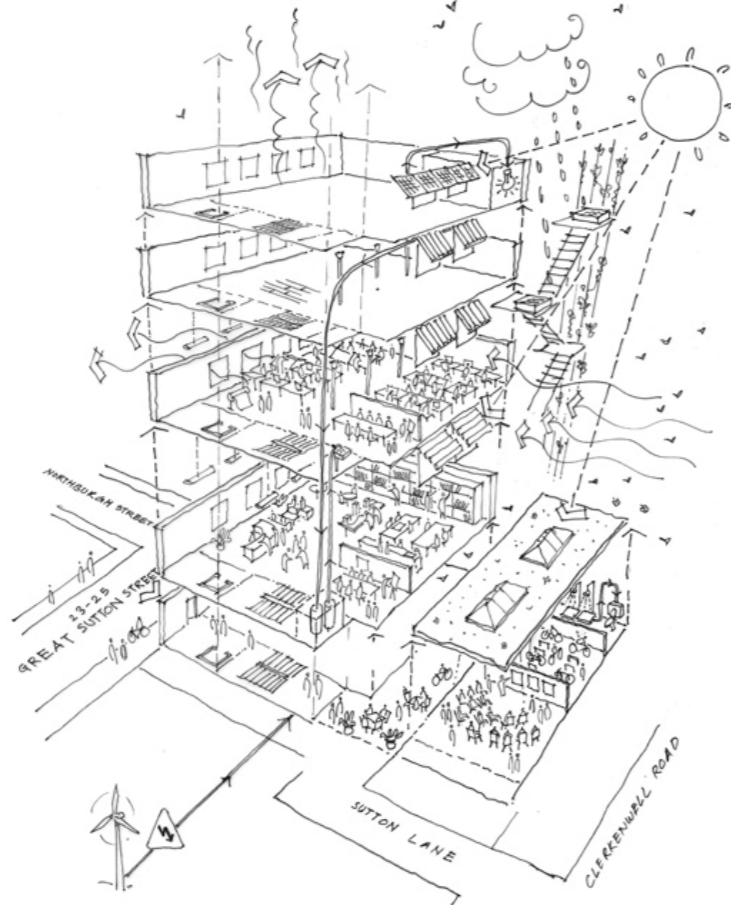
Sustainability & Innovation Award
CoreNet Global's UK Chapter Awards 2010

Commercial Building Category, Highly Commended
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Green Buildings and Facilities, Winner
Green Business Awards 2010

Sustainable Transport (Medium/Large Business), Winner
Giant Green Business Awards, Islington Council, 2010

Sustainable Building of the Year
City of London, Sustainable City Awards 2010



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Aerial View of Site



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Disclaimer:

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00545

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November 2012

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1. Introduction

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View of Site from London Road



Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a detailed planning application submitted to the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames (LBRuT) for the regeneration of the Former Royal Mail Sorting Office, Twickenham (the Site). The Site has been vacant since the Royal Mail Group departed in 2010 and it has strategic importance to Twickenham given its prominent location on the northern approach into the town.

The proposed development seeks to create a sustainable vibrant mixed use community in a landscaped, high architectural quality setting which will re-stitch the urban fabric, allow the opportunity for an improved riverside environment and provide a new high quality public realm. The design has evolved through extensive community engagement and reflects discussions with LBRuT and the requirements of the Development Plan. It will deliver new housing (including affordable housing); a mix of other uses to create vibrancy and vitality; an improved public frontage to London Road; access to the River Crane; a purpose-built Community Building; and a high quality urban public realm that connects the River Crane to London Road.

The detailed planning application proposes :

“Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment to provide a mixed use development comprising a 3 to 5-storey building accommodating 82 residential units, 2 restaurant units (Class A3) with basement car and cycle parking, associated plant equipment and courtyard area; a 2 to 5 storey Community Building with associated outdoor space; 28 houses with associated car parking and gardens; new public open space, landscaping and associated infrastructure and utilities.”

The application consists of the following documents:

- Planning Application Forms
- Planning Drawings
- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment and Travel Plan
- Sustainability Statement
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Environmental Statement
- Employment & Economic Case
- Design and Access Statement

What is a Design & Access Statement?

A Design & Access Statement is a written and illustrated report, accompanying a planning application. The statement shows how the applicant has analysed the site and its setting, formulated and applied good, inclusive design for buildings and public spaces, and demonstrates how the applicant or designer has consulted or will consult on the issues. The statement's scope and level of detail are determined by the nature of the development, the site and its context. The statement has a specific job to do in explaining the background thinking that led to the planning proposal being drawn up. It is not just a description of the planning proposal.

The Requirements for Design Statements

Design Statements are required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Section 42(1) of the Act introduces an amendment to section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, requiring the submission of a Design Statement; and section 42(5) prevents local planning authorities from entertaining an application which is not accompanied by a Design Statement – subject to some exceptions.

Introduction

Key Development Objectives

Key Development Objectives

The key development objective for the Site is to deliver a sustainable landmark development to the northern approach of Twickenham town centre. In order to be able to achieve this aim, detailed consideration has been given to the principles behind placemaking; massing and density; landscape; and sustainability. These are as follows:

Placemaking and Sustainable Communities

- Create a new 'place' with a legible and robust structure of streets, routes and spaces that respond to the surroundings.
- Deliver a development with a distinct character and identity that will help foster a sense of neighbourhood and community ownership.
- Integrate a viable range of mixed uses to help create an active and vibrant, well-managed destination.

Optimise Development Opportunities

- Generate a range of building typologies, character areas and architectural styles to respond to the immediate surroundings and appeal to a range of users.
- Provide a series of spaces that help define the scheme and are flexible and adaptable which promotes permeability and encourages their use.
- Optimise development of this previously developed Site, which has excellent public transport accessibility adjacent to the Rail Station.
- Make efficient use of the Site, concentrating development to allow for sizeable areas of landscape and open space.
- Deliver a scheme that considers its neighbours in terms of form, footprint and height where appropriate.
- Propose a design that has a range of appropriate building heights to articulate the skyline, creating visual stimulation and interest.
- Create an identity for the Site and its context within the town centre.

Landscape and Open Space

- Ensure that hard and soft landscaping are an integral part of the proposals with the existing landscape features being preserved, enhanced and used to give identity and character to the development.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity on the Site through habitat creation and preservation.
- Implement a series of landscaped open spaces that allow for play, contemplation and relaxation, that are well-designed and stimulating.
- Respond to the River Crane frontage in terms of the landscape character and adjoining spaces.
- Create a series of public and private landscaped spaces ensuring they are appropriate for their purpose and allow access for all.
- Create a clear visual and physical link between London Road and the river frontage.

Sustainable Design

- Deliver a sustainable range of accommodation that includes a mix of sizes, typologies and tenures from 1-4 bedroom homes.
- Adopt secured-by-design principles to create a safe, friendly environment that is free of anti-social behaviour.
- Residential accommodation to meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 and commercial units to meet BREEAM level of 'Very Good'.
- Promote an environment that allows equal levels of accessibility for all by adhering to relevant Building Regulations, providing wheelchair accessible dwellings and ensuring that all dwellings comply with July 2010 Lifetime Homes standards.
- Comply with the requirements of the LBRuT Sustainable Construction Checklist SPD.
- Reflect the principles contained within The Berkeley Group's Vision 2020 document in relation to quality of design, materials and flexibility of living.
- Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport through a variety of initiatives including electric charging points, substantial cycle parking and the creation of new pedestrian links.

Consultation

The masterplan has been developed over the previous six months of consultation and engagement with various stakeholders including the local community, the LBRuT, local resident groups, the Environment Agency and the project team.

This work has enabled the project team to incorporate the aspirations of the community and stakeholders, and the planning guidance given by LBRuT.

The flow chart below shows a simplified version of the design process and the people involved.

To the right is a list of all meetings and events that took place during the Community Engagement Process.

Meetings and Events

21 February 2012	Launch Event
29 February 2012	LBRuT meeting
14 March 2012	LBRuT meeting
23/24 March 2012	Community Planning Weekend (CPW)
5 April 2012	Vince Cable MP for Twickenham meeting
25 April 2012	CPW Report Back
16 May 2012	Cole Park Residents Presentation
23 May 2012	LBRuT meeting
29 May 2012	Atkins meeting
30 May 2012	LBRuT meeting
30 May 2012	Community Forum Event
11 July 2012	Community Forum Event
12 July 2012	LBRuT meeting
August 2012	LBRuT Secured by Design meeting

Forthcoming

December 2012	Public Exhibition & Continuous Community Engagement
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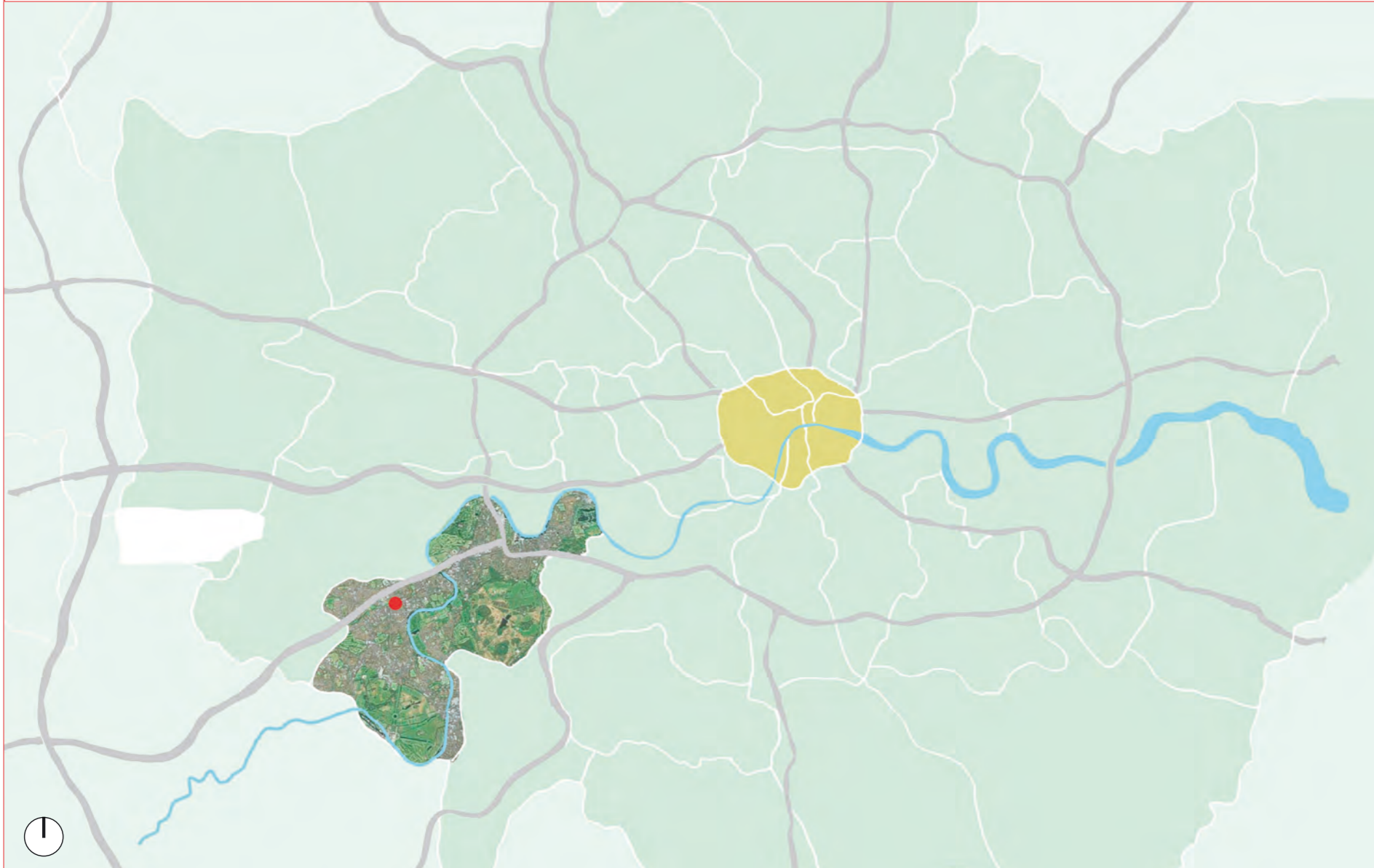
2. Context

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Project Location



London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

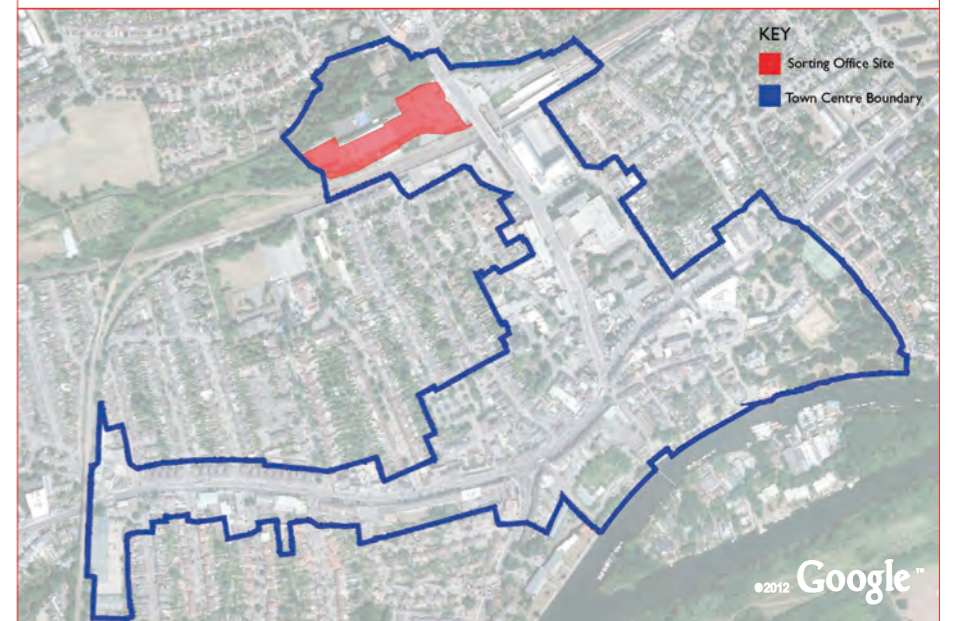


Overview

The Site lies within the LBRuT and is situated to the west of London Road (A310), directly opposite Twickenham Rail Station. The Site area is approximately 1.152 hectares (2.84 acres) and is currently occupied by a range of vacant industrial buildings which were previously used as part of a Royal Mail Delivery & Sorting Office.

Given their age and design, the existing buildings on the Site are of limited architectural interest and quality. The Site in its current form offers very little integration with the surrounding public realm and there is limited opportunity for public access given the layout of the existing buildings.

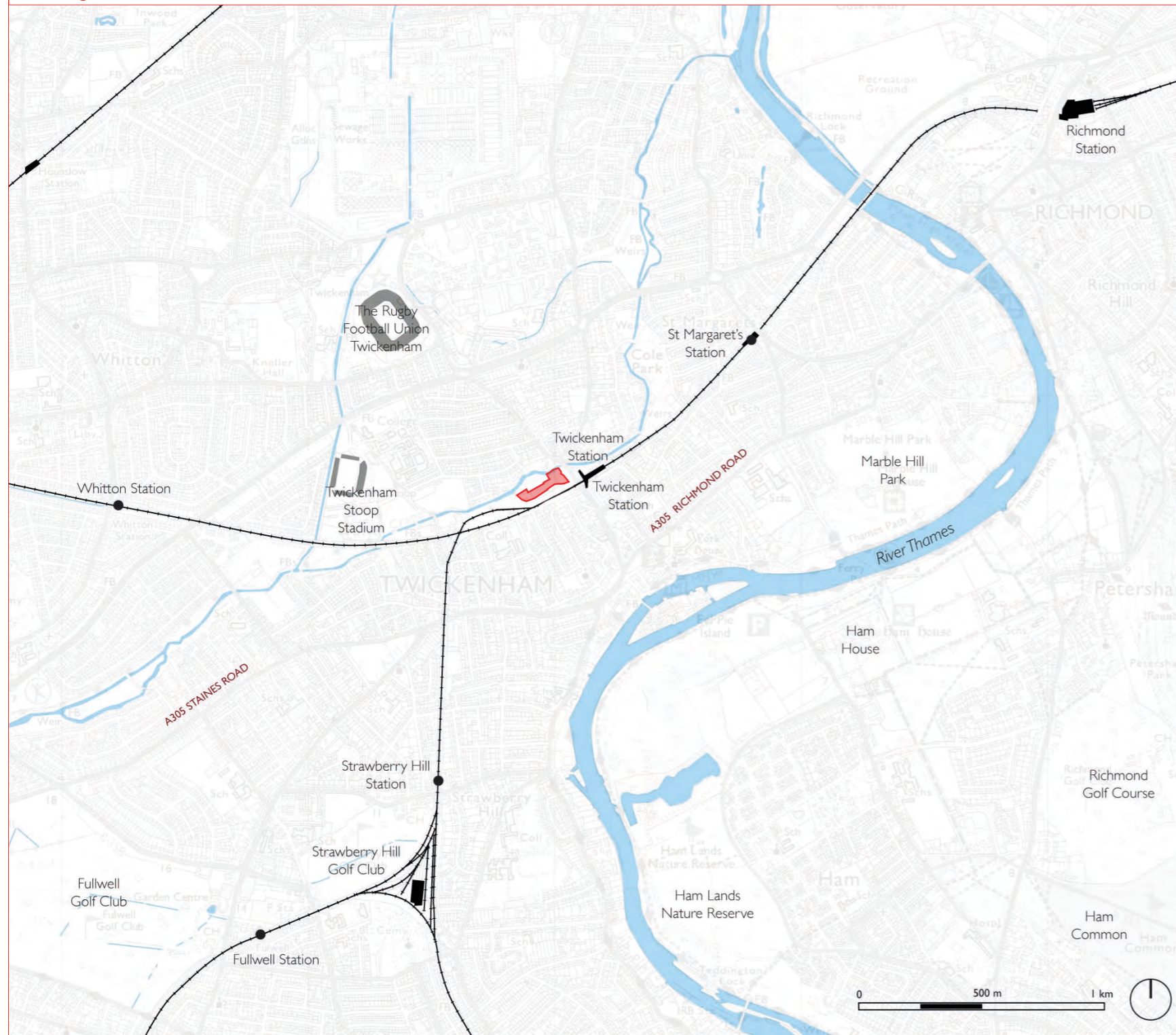
The Site sits within the town centre



Context

Twickenham Context

Strategic Location Plan



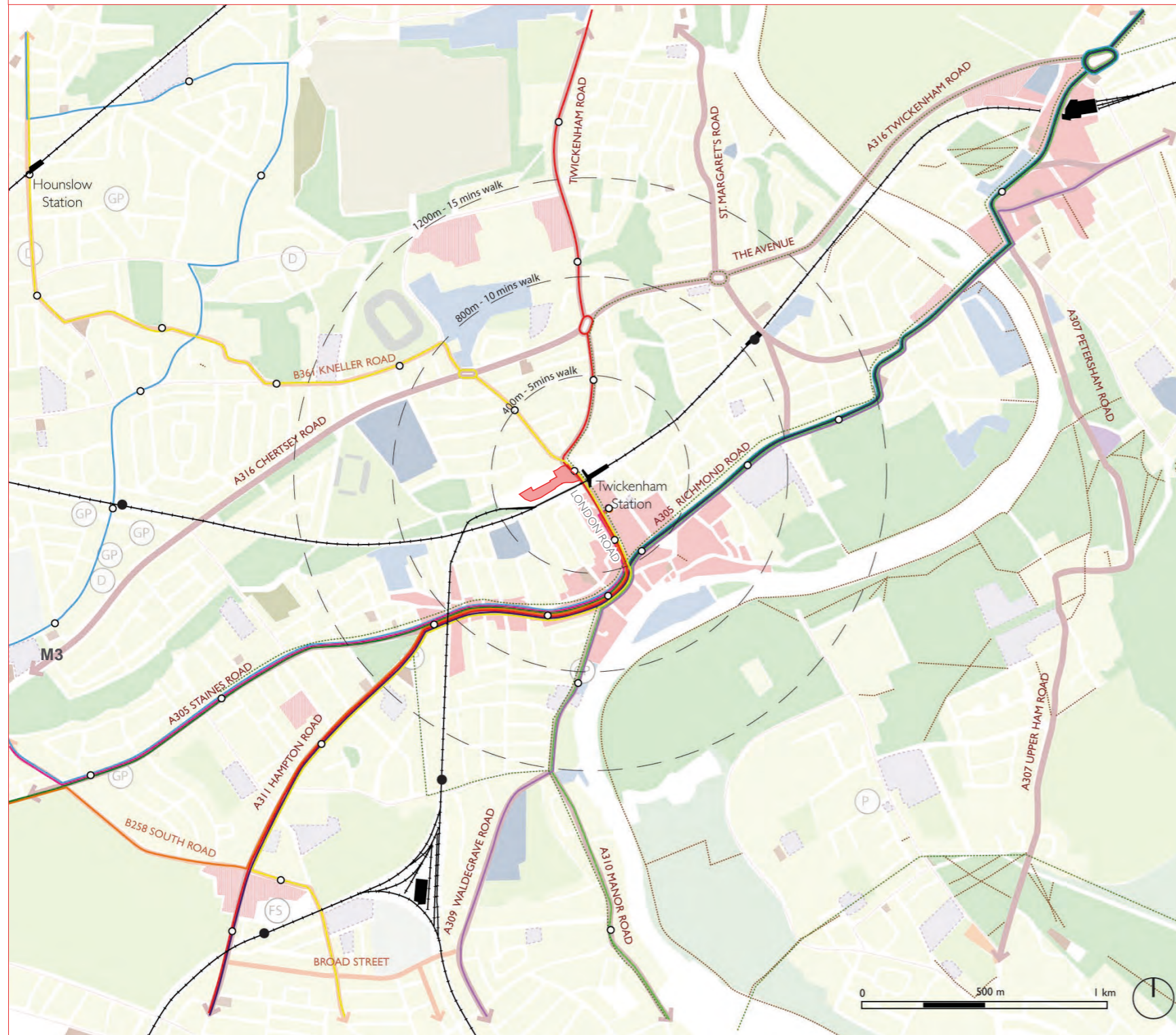
Strategic Location

Twickenham

Twickenham is a large suburban town 10 miles (16 km) southwest of central London. It is the administrative headquarters of the LBRuT and a district centre as identified in the London Plan. As part of the suburban growth of London in the twentieth century, the town expanded and increased in population, becoming established as the Municipal Borough of Twickenham; it has formed part of Greater London since 1965. The town is bordered on the south-eastern side by the River Thames and Eel Pie Island — which is connected to the Twickenham Embankment by a narrow footbridge.

Twickenham has an important and strategic location being the second biggest town centre in the borough. It is also the home of the RFU Twickenham Rugby Stadium, located to the north of the town centre which welcomes thousands of visitors on a number of days each year for international and club rugby matches and concerts.

Connections



The Site

The Site is located on the northern edge of Twickenham on London Road, the main arterial road running into the town from the north. It sits adjacent to Heatham House (a local youth centre), the River Crane (which runs from Hayes to Isleworth) and main line railway which connects London – via Twickenham – to Windsor and Reading. Twickenham Rail Station lies on the opposite side of London Road. Beyond are predominantly residential streets, built during the Victorian and inter-war years. To the south lies the town centre, focused primarily upon London Road and King Street. Church Street forms the historic centre of Twickenham and leads down to the banks of the River Thames. The A316 trunk road runs to the north and serves Twickenham rugby stadium and to the south-west connects into the M3 motorway.

Connections - Access to Public Transport

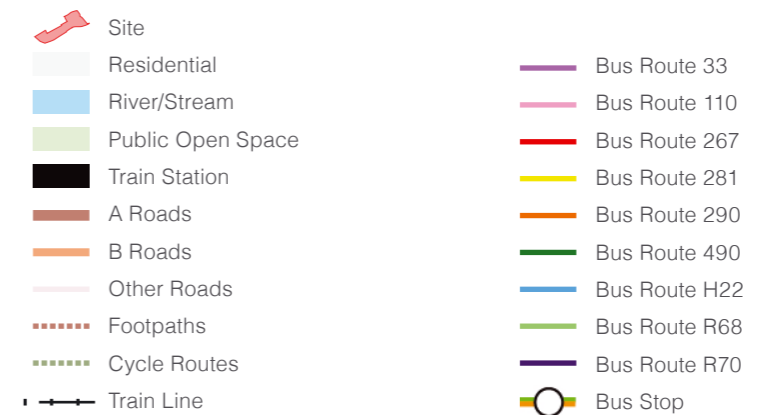
The Site benefits from having good access to local transport facilities including London overground and bus services. The majority of the Site has a PTAL rating of 5 and drops to 4 towards its western edge.

Overground Services

The Site is directly opposite Twickenham Rail Station which has frequent, direct services to Kingston, Reading, Whitton, Windsor and London Waterloo.

Bus Services

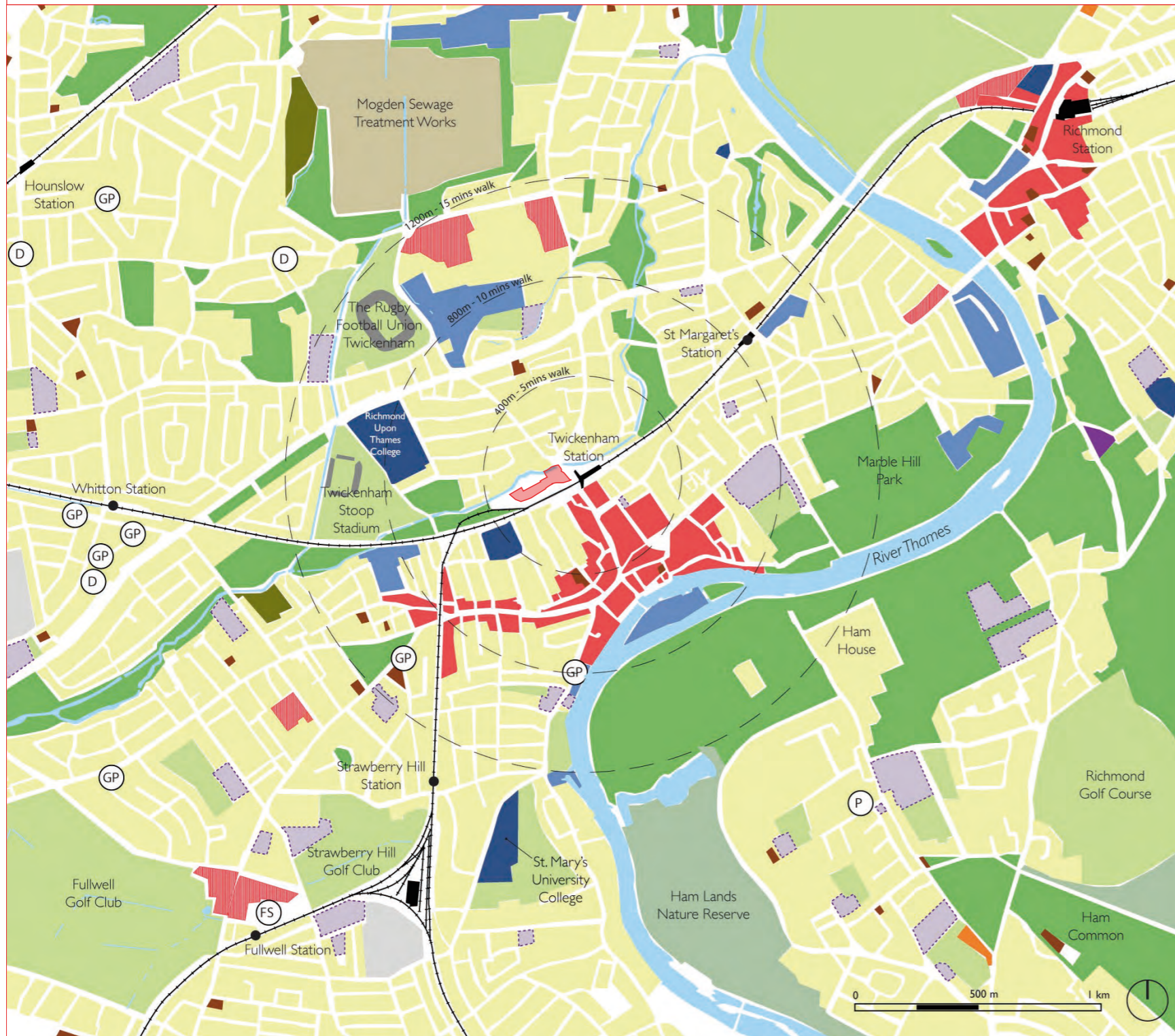
A frequent bus service can be found in Twickenham with services towards Richmond, Hammersmith, Hounslow, Heathrow Airport, Teddington and London (Piccadilly Circus). The bus stop directly adjacent to the Site has services 267 towards Hammersmith and 281 towards Hounslow.



Context

Twickenham Context

Local Facilities



Local Facilities

Twickenham has a wide range of facilities which are dispersed throughout the area.

Public Open Space / Recreation

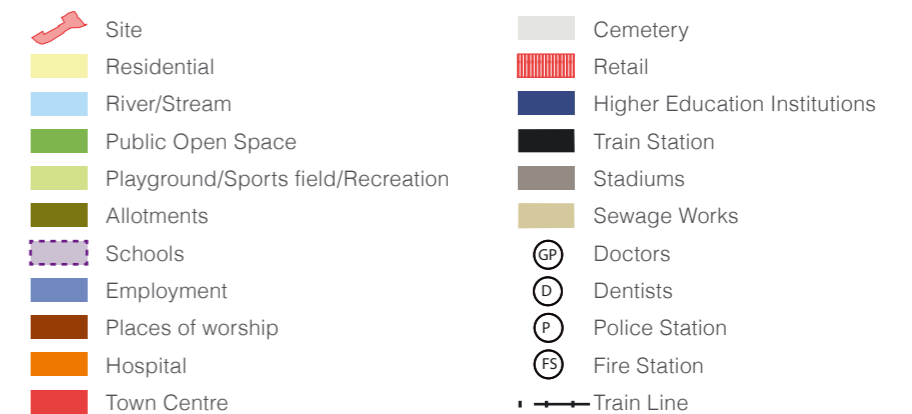
Twickenham and Richmond have access to a number of open spaces and sports / recreational fields, many of which are in close proximity to the River Thames and River Crane.

Transport

The area has good transport links with regular train and bus services into central London, neighbouring Richmond and beyond.

Health & Education

The area is well equipped with a number of good primary and secondary schools and a number of higher education institutions including Richmond Upon Thames Community College, located in close proximity to the Site. There are also a number of dentist and doctors' surgeries in the surrounding area with the nearest hospital less than two miles away in Richmond.



Urban Morphology



Urban Morphology

Using historical maps of the Site and the surrounding area (illustrated in detail in the Historical context section of this chapter), a layering of information on the growth of the area can be built up showing how the area has developed.

In 1871 there is already development concentrated on London Road south of the railway line. The Site was the location of the old Twickenham Rail Station and some built development is apparent around the junction of London Road with Whitton Road.

By 1914 the spread of development has increased to the north of the railway line, in particular Cole Park Road and around Whitton Road. In the mid 1900s housing has spread west of Whitton Road to the north of the railway line, reflecting the spread of Twickenham to the north, it being bounded to the south by the River Thames.

During the latter part of the 20th century, redevelopment in the area was focused on London Road and in particular the large sites around the Rail Station, including the Site.

- 1871
- 1914
- 1934
- 1975
- 1975 +

Context

Twickenham Context

Area Photographs

There are a number of large scale buildings within close proximity to the Site, most notably Regal House and Bridge House (both commercial premises), just south of the Site along London Road. Both are significant in height and footprint and together with Twickenham Stadium, dominate the skyline from afar. Historically, a series of character buildings have been established throughout Twickenham, many of which are now listed and occupy a range of different uses. These include Heatham House (immediately north of the Site) which is a youth centre; York House (on York Street) which houses the Council offices; Twickenham Girls Grammar School (on Clifden Road) now a community college; and the Albany public house (on Station Road on the opposite side of the railway tracks south of the Site).



1



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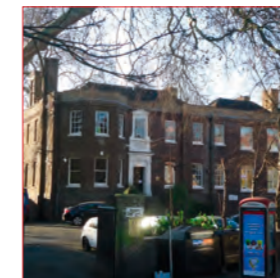
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5



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7



12

1. Boat Houses on Embankment
2. The Royal Oak Pub & Grill
3. Sign at entrance to Twickenham Rail Station
4. Neville House
5. Twickenham Riverside Embankment Sign
6. Former Twickenham County Girls' School (now Richmond Adult & Community College)
7. Heatham House (Grade II Listed building)
8. The Albany public house
9. Former Twickenham County Girls' School (now Richmond Adult & Community College)
10. Travelodge, London Road
11. Barclays Bank, Twickenham
12. Bridge House & Regal House, London Road
13. Twickenham Rugby Stadium
14. St. Mary's Church
15. Neville House, London Road (Grade II Listed building)
16. The Eel Pie public house
17. Crane Mead Court
18. View down Church Street



8



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11



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