

# Stage 2 Urban Design Study: Tall Buildings

Submission version

LDF evidence base

May 2011



## Stage 2 Urban Design Study - Tall Buildings

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## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This report presents the second phase in the development of a strategy for Tall Buildings in Wandsworth. It builds on the work which was undertaken as part of the Stage 1 Urban Design Statement (2009), which identified broad areas where tall buildings may be appropriate. The Stage 2 Urban Design Study - Tall Buildings, further tests and refines the assessment of those areas where tall buildings may be appropriate, to provide locational guidance for tall building development within these broad locations. This work will feed into the consideration of a site's appropriateness for tall buildings in the Site Specific Allocations Document (SSAD).

**1.2** In addition to the detailed analysis of areas that may be appropriate for tall buildings, this report considers the prevailing height of development in the rest of the borough, where tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate, in order to determine what will be considered a 'tall building' in different contexts.

**1.3** Finally, the report sets out detailed considerations for the assessment of tall buildings, to raise the standard of tall building development in the borough. This will guide policy to be included in the Development Management Policies Document (DMDP).

## Background

**1.4** Best practice guidance published by English Heritage (EH) and Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) advises that local authorities should carry out a detailed urban design study to inform the process of identifying locations where tall buildings would and would not be appropriate. Wandsworth's approach has been to formulate Core Strategy policy for tall buildings on the basis of a high level urban design analysis.

**1.5** The high level urban design analysis drew on a range of urban design material prepared by the Council and identified broad locations which may be suitable for tall buildings. The Stage 1 Study also supported the overall rationale that generally throughout much of the borough, tall buildings are likely to be considered inappropriate.

**1.6** The tall buildings policy was debated at the Examination, and the Policy as amended by the Inspector's binding report, and now contained within the adopted Core Strategy, reads as follows:

"Policy IS3

- d. *Tall buildings, that is those which are substantially taller than the prevailing height of neighbouring buildings and/or which significantly change the skyline, may be appropriate in the borough's town centres, Nine Elms near Vauxhall or Putney Wharf, Wandsworth Riverside Quarter, Wandle Delta, Ransomes Dock and Battersea Power Station focal points of activity (as illustrated on Map 16). Some locations*

*within these areas will be sensitive to, or inappropriate for, tall buildings. Applications for tall buildings will need to justify themselves in terms of the benefits they may bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and be of high architectural quality, respect local context and the historic environment. Tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate in other areas. Detailed criteria for the assessment of tall buildings, consideration of the appropriateness of tall buildings on individual sites, and the heights at which buildings will be considered 'tall' on individual sites will be contained in the Development Management Policies Document and Site Specific Allocations Document.*

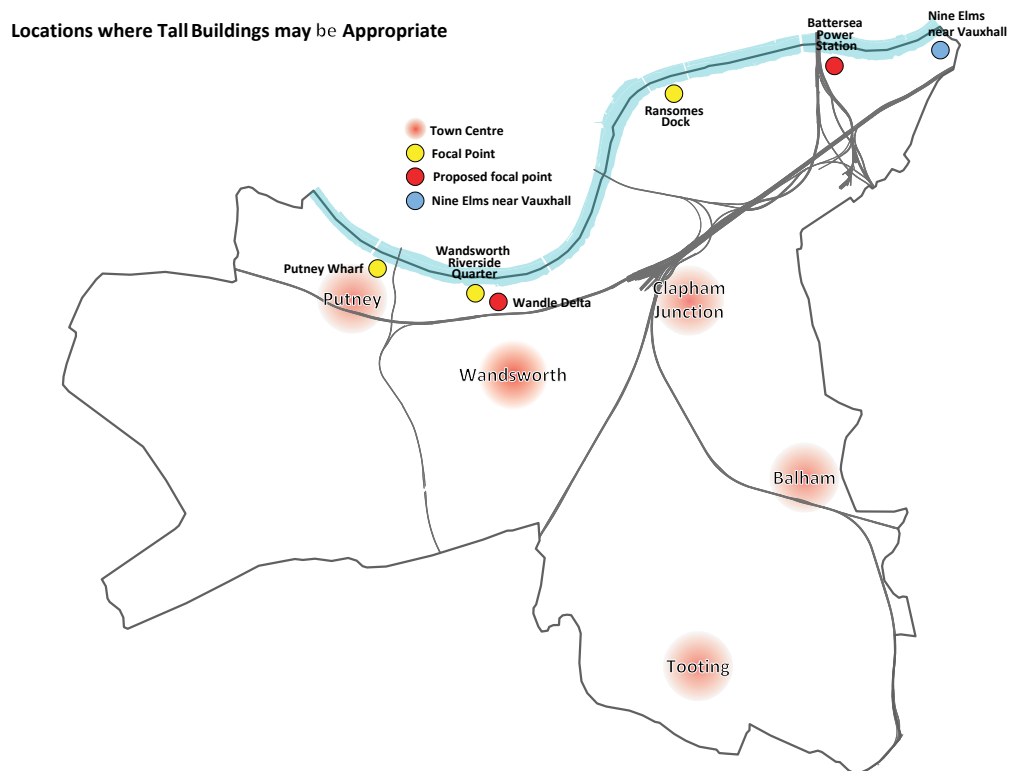
- e. *Views of the Westminster World Heritage Site will be protected in accordance with the London Plan and the London View Management Framework."*

**1.7** The broad locations identified in Policy IS3 are further assessed in section 2 of this report.

## Areas for further analysis

**1.8** The Stage 1 Urban Design Study identified the following locations as locations which may be suitable for tall buildings. There are some locations within these areas which may be sensitive to, or inappropriate for, tall buildings.

- Wandsworth Town Centre
- Clapham Junction Town Centre
- Putney Town Centre and Putney Wharf Focal Point
- Balham Town Centre
- Tooting Town Centre
- Nine Elms near Vauxhall
- Wandsworth Riverside Quarter Focal Point and Wandle Delta Proposed Focal Point
- Ransomes Dock Focal Point
- Battersea Power Station Proposed Focal Point



## Methodology

### Detailed Area Studies

**1.9** The detailed area studies of the broad locations identified above have been carried out using the following methodology:

- *Policy review* - The relevant Core Strategy policies have been reviewed and summarised in relation to each area. The London View Management Framework and Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea Opportunity Area Planning Framework have been reviewed for implications in relation to strategic views and building heights.
- *Street level audits* - Site visits of each of the broad locations were undertaken to analyse urban form and character and determine logical study area boundaries. The assessment included consideration of opportunities and constraints such as existing built form, listed buildings, conservation areas and other relevant considerations.
- *Analysis of aerial photography and GIS data* - Desk based analysis was used to complement information obtained from the street level audits.

### Borough-wide tall building characterisation

**1.10** Core Strategy Policy IS3d states that in the remainder of the borough (i.e. outside the town centres, focal points of activity and Nine Elms near Vauxhall) tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate. It is necessary to have an understanding of what constitutes a tall building in the remainder of the borough, and this report provides this information which is not only based on a characterisation of prevailing heights, but provides an analysis of how past developments which have proved to be an unsatisfactory model, could potentially be improved by redevelopment.

### Tall Building Assessment Guidance and Policy Recommendations

**1.11** The information obtained through both the detailed area studies and the borough-wide tall building characterisation exercise has informed development of the final phase of work, which includes application checklists and concludes with policy recommendations for inclusion in the DMPD and SSAD.



## 2 Detailed Area Studies

**2.1** This section contains a Detailed Area Study for each of the areas identified as potentially suitable for tall buildings. The analysis begins with a description of the locality and its policy context. A detailed urban characterisation then describes the historic environment, including listed buildings and conservation areas, landmark buildings, open space, topography, proximity to residential areas and other relevant information. Transport to and from the area is then discussed, followed by development opportunities. The final section draws on the information in the urban characterisation to consider the form of development appropriate for the area, and whether sites within the area are appropriate, sensitive to, or inappropriate for, tall buildings. This section contains two maps, the first identifying the key elements that have been taken into account in assessing suitability for tall buildings, and the second identifying individual sites appropriateness for tall buildings, and the height at which a building will be considered tall. The heights are expressed as storey heights, and assume an average storey height of 3 metres.

### Wandsworth Town Centre

**2.2** Wandsworth town centre is located in the northern part of central Wandsworth, just south of the River Thames between the town centres of Clapham Junction in the east and Putney to the west. The centre is designated as a town centre in the Wandsworth UDP (August 2003) and the Core Strategy, and is identified as a 'Major Centre' in the London Plan (February 2004).

### Policy Context

**2.3** Core Strategy Policy PL8 - Town and local centres, sets out the strategic policy for the five town centres and nine local centres in the borough. The policy promotes and encourages:

- The five town centres as the focus for shopping and complementary activities, including business, cultural, leisure and entertainment;
- Each centre to provide a distinctive range of facilities serving their local area, but not to grow at the expense of other centres;
- New shopping (A1) floorspace to meet projected future needs;
- A diversity and mix of appropriate uses, including shopping, restaurants and bars, leisure, recreation, entertainment, cultural, offices and other business use, educational, institutional, medical and healthcare, community and housing, and other uses contributing to vitality and viability;
- High density mixed use development, including residential. Wandsworth is an area where most change is anticipated.

**2.4** The supporting text to Policy PL8 acknowledges that each of the town centres has different opportunities for development to strengthen their distinctive roles. In Wandsworth Town, recent improvements to the Southside shopping centre will be enhanced by the eventual redevelopment of the northern part of the centre, and new complementary shops, restaurants and bars can be provided as part of the former Ram Brewery redevelopment. Opportunities to create better linkages within the town centre and beyond to the River Thames will be pursued, and the re-routing of through traffic away from the town centre will be promoted. The creation of the Wandle Valley Regional Park should bring about new pedestrian and cycle links and other environmental and regeneration benefits to the area.

**2.5** Core Strategy Policy PL12 - Central Wandsworth and the Wandle Delta, provides further detail on the strategy for Wandsworth Town. The policy promotes:

- Southside shopping centre as the main focus for shopping floorspace, especially for large floorplate 'multiples'. This includes further improvement of the centre, particularly at the dated northern end of the centre to attract retailers and strengthen its function;
- Development on the Ram Brewery site to deliver a high quality public realm, good quality housing and retailing that complements and integrates with Southside and provides an opportunity to create new public space of civic significance at the High Street. The development of the former Ram Brewery also enables enhancement of heritage buildings and increased public access to the Wandle and Thames rivers;
- Links between the town centre and the Thames riverside, focused on the river Wandle;
- Mixed use development on land previously set aside for employment use between the town centre and the riverside to help open up the Thames riverside and improve links to the town centre;
- Mixed use development on employment sites in the Wandsworth Business Village and former Young and Co's offices and at Buckhold Road, facilitating access to the town centre and King George's Park;
- A target of at least 2,000 new homes and 40,000 sq ms of new employment floorspace;
- Reconfiguring the road network if practicable to reduce the impact of traffic on the town centre;
- Safeguarding the heritage core of the town centre, protecting the conservation area from any possible harmful development, by ensuring development at the Ram Brewery, Southside Centre and within Hardwicks Square quarter will be set away from listed buildings and other sensitive buildings in the High Street.

**2.6** The policy also states that higher buildings, reflecting the status of the town centre while respecting existing landmark buildings, may be appropriate on some sites, subject to the qualifications set out in Policy IS3 and the criteria based policy on tall buildings to be included in the DMPD.

## Urban Characterisation

**2.7** Wandsworth town centre is one of the oldest and most important settlements in the borough. The town was developed along an important coaching route from the City of London to Southampton and Portsmouth, and attracted industry based on the power generating capacity of the River Wandle. Evidence of its historic development and street pattern remain and its attractive townscape and wealth of listed buildings mean that it is of both historical and architectural importance. It is a centre of contrasts with qualities that set it apart from other town centres in South London. The main issues affecting tall buildings are seen to be as follows:

- The northern part of the town centre lies within the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area (excluding the Southside Shopping Centre (1970's) and the Sainsbury's store (1980's)) and contains more listed buildings than any other conservation area in the borough. The number and quality of historic buildings in the town centre reflect its former wealth and there is a legacy of Georgian houses and terraces, fine churches and Victorian pubs.
- The historic core is juxtaposed with one of London's first covered shopping malls, Southside, and the Arndale Estate.
- Heavy traffic flows along Wandsworth High Street and Garratt Lane detract from the overall environmental quality of the centre and cause a barrier for pedestrian movement around the centre.
- The town lies in a valley at the lowest bridging point of the River Wandle, just a few hundred yards upstream from its confluence with the River Thames. The dominant feature of the town centre's topography is the sweeping curve of the ancient main road (current A3) rising up the valley sides. A marked sense of arrival is provided by the topography of the Wandle Valley, with Book House/Mount Nod triangle on East Hill and St. Thomas Church (listed Grade II) on West Hill, acting as gateway markers.
- The heart of the town centre is still dominated by the now redundant Ram Brewery complex, and there is still an extensive industrial hinterland to the immediate north and south of the area.
- Wandsworth High Street has subtle curves with progressively changing vistas along its length. All Saints Church (listed Grade II\*) is strategically placed at the focus of a concave bend. Where other roads meet the main route, corner buildings are prominent good examples and include the Town Hall and South Thames College (both listed Grade II), which combine to create a potentially imposing civic space, marking a change in character from East Hill to the High Street.
- The junction of Garratt Lane and Ram Street with the High Street also marks the change to the commercial core of the town. The Southside complex has a largely negative impact on townscape here, but the Ram Brewery (listed Grade II\*) presents an impressive facade that provides an important and unique identity and character to the town. The River Wandle should form an important element here, but is largely hidden from view.

- Other listed buildings in the core area include: Church Row (Grade II\*) in Wandsworth Plain; the Spread Eagle PH (Grade II) and; 140-142 Wandsworth High Street (Grade II).
- Listed buildings are also present just outside the town centre boundary, including 18th Century houses on East Hill and West Hill (Grade II\* and II).
- A number of important townscape buildings exist within and close to the town centre, including Book House, The Brewers Inn and Wandsworth Museum, and important groups of buildings, including Huguenot Mansions at the top of East Hill and opposite Book House and Mount Nod, and 106-124 Wandsworth High Street, with an interesting roofscape and good shopfronts. The numerous small alleys and yards off the High Street also have good groups of buildings associated with them.
- Public open space is provided at the Old Burial Ground located adjacent to the Sainsbury's supermarket and King George's Park, which is just outside the western boundary of the town centre.
- The existing buildings on the Ram Brewery and Capital Studios sites range in height from 2 up to 6 storeys and there are marked contrasts between the buildings at the southern end of the site and those towards the middle and further north. The brewery buildings that are listed (grade II\*) are concentrated at the south east corner on Wandsworth High Street and Ram Street. The remainder of the site is largely occupied by a mix of relatively modern, functionally industrial sheds, the exception being the listed stable block (Grade II) at the northern end of the Ram Brewery site.





## Transport

**2.8** Wandsworth Town railway station lies to the north east of the centre just outside the town centre boundary, providing good access into central London. The PTAL ratings of the town centre range include 4, 5 and 6a. The station is within Zone 2 and is operated by SouthWest Trains. Outside peak hours there are approximately 8 trains per hour to London Waterloo and several trains per hour to Weybridge, Richmond, Kingston, Wimbledon and Hounslow and stops in between.

**2.9** The centre does not have an underground station but is approximately 1km from East Putney Station. The centre is also served by eleven bus routes, two of which operate 24-hours, and three night buses.

## Development opportunities

**2.10** The Wandsworth Town Centre Partnership Vision and Agenda 2008-2010 identifies opportunities for the town centre including:

- Further investment and major change to Southside;
- Development of the Ram Brewery site;
- High levels of known investment in and around the town centre;
- A large increase in the resident population;
- A major consultation by Transport for London on traffic issues.

**2.11** Private sector investment will be the engine of the next stage of transformation of Wandsworth Town Centre. Large scale investment is known to be planned for:

- Wandsworth Business Village;
- The Ram Brewery/Capital Studios;
- Southside Shopping Centre;
- Wandsworth Riverside Quarter;
- South Thames College.

**2.12** The cessation of brewing by Young and Co and the sale of the Ram Brewery to a commercial developer presents a significant opportunity for the town centre but new development will need to ensure that it safeguards the listed buildings on the site and generally preserves the appearance of the Conservation Area. There is also great potential to increase public awareness of the River Wandle in this location and development of the Ram Brewery site should enable this.

## Findings and policy recommendations

**2.13** The assessment carried out in this report provides an understanding of the topography, existing building heights and the various heritage assets, which enables subdivision of the town centre into areas of differing sensitivity to tall buildings.

**2.14** Much of the town centre is within a conservation area and contains many listed buildings and the Core Strategy refers to the need to safeguard heritage assets from the possibility of harm. It also sits in the Wandle Valley with the Clapham and Wimbledon ridges rising on either side. This means that long distance views from many directions are restricted and generally limited to views from the south and from the Thames riverside. Within the immediate locality and the centre itself there are many sensitive views.

**2.15** Tall buildings are already a feature of the skyline of Wandsworth town centre but the prevailing height of buildings throughout the centre is relatively low, with the majority of buildings generally 4 storeys or less in height. This applies particularly to the main town centre core of Wandsworth High Street and Garratt Lane, where most buildings range between 2 and 4 storeys and this also applies to buildings in the side streets Broomhill Road and Wandsworth Plain.

**2.16** There are exceptions, however, with noticeably higher buildings, particularly on Wandsworth High Street. Some are positive additions to the townscape and include the recently completed mixed use developments at 2-6 Hardwicks Square with its 10 storey corner tower on Buckhold Road and the 6 storey block – part of the Old Paint Factory development - marking the edge of the town centre on Garratt Lane. Within the Hardwicks Quarter, to the south of Wandsworth High Street, buildings rise to 10 storeys and mark the regeneration of this former industrial area. A factor that contributes considerably to the success of all these buildings is the way they all work well at ground level, contributing positively to the public realm and providing active frontages.

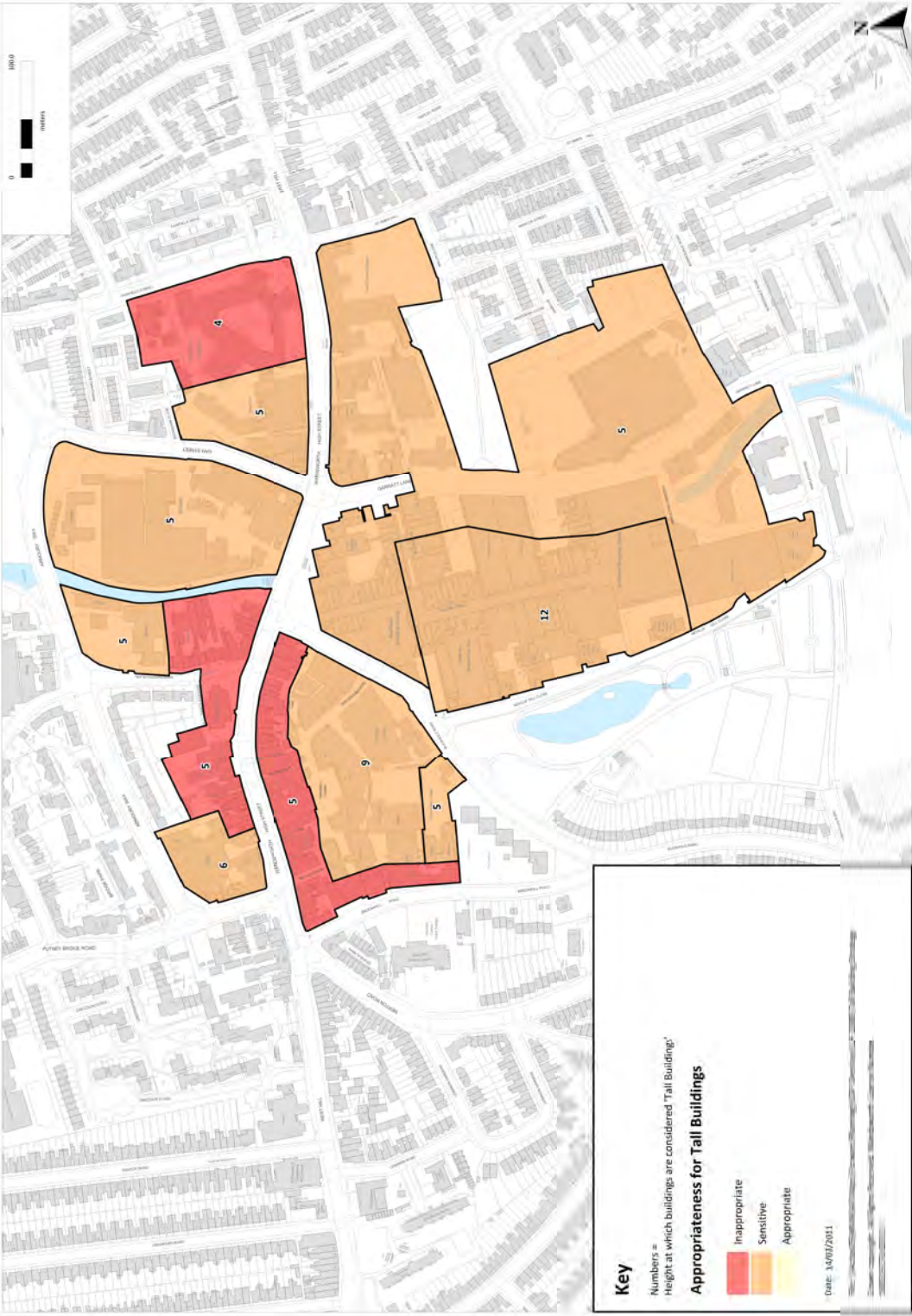
**2.17** The less successful tall buildings are those that appeared in the 1960s and 70s and these include: the office buildings Lyon House and Welbeck House on Wandsworth High Street at 7 and 5 storeys respectively; the offices on Garratt Lane at 6 storeys and finally; Sudbury House, the residential tower that forms part of the Arndale Estate, that rises to 25 storeys. These contrast with the successful examples referred to above, because in each case the buildings contribute very little at ground level and display little or no sensitivity to their context.

**2.18** The greater part of the town centre falls into an area where any proposal for a building over 5 storeys will be subject to the tall buildings policy contained in chapter 5. This control applies to almost the entire frontage to Wandsworth High Street.

**2.19** Acknowledging the high buildings that already exist in the town centre along a north – south alignment that marks the course of the River Wandle, the map below shows the height at which buildings will be considered tall in different locations in the town centre, which is derived from an assessment of existing building heights and surrounding building heights.



**2.20** The urban characterisation has identified the majority of the town centre as sensitive to tall buildings, however the following sites/areas are inappropriate. The site containing the Wandsworth Town Hall is inappropriate due to the presence of the Grade II listed building, which in essence does not present any redevelopment potential. The high street frontage and ends of The Business Village wrapping around the site are inappropriate due to its location within/adjacent to a conservation area, the prevailing height of buildings in this location and the residential character of surrounding sites in Broomhill Road.



Picture 2.1 Wandsworth Town Centre - Tall buildings policy

## Clapham Junction Town Centre

**2.21** Clapham Junction is located in the north east of the borough. The centre is designated as a town centre in the Wandsworth UDP (August 2003) and the Core Strategy, and is identified as a 'Major Centre' in the London Plan (February 2004).

### Policy Context

**2.22** Core Strategy to Policy PL8 - Town and local centres, sets out the strategic policy for the five town centres and nine local centres in the borough. The policy promotes and encourages:

- The five town centres as the focus for shopping and complementary activities, including business, cultural, leisure and entertainment;
- Each centre to provide a distinctive range of facilities serving their local area, but not to grow at the expense of other centres;
- New shopping (A1) floorspace to meet projected future needs;
- A diversity and mix of appropriate uses, including shopping, restaurants and bars, leisure, recreation, entertainment, cultural, offices and other business use, educational, institutional, medical and healthcare, community and housing, and other uses contributing to vitality and viability;
- The existing street market in Clapham Junction and local shops and distinct areas of important, unique character, such as Northcote Road.

**2.23** The supporting text Policy PL8 acknowledges that each of the town centres has different opportunities for development to strengthen their distinctive roles. In Clapham Junction, opportunities to improve new retail floorspace at the northern end of the centre, in particular around the station, can take pressure off the unique and distinct areas to the south such as Northcote Road, Battersea Rise and Webbs Road. Measures to protect the character of Northcote Road, with its small scale, independent shops and lively bars and restaurants, will be pursued, including enhancement of the street market, in consultation with local residents, shoppers and businesses.

**2.24** Core Strategy Policy PL13 - Clapham Junction and the adjoining area, provides further detail on the strategy for Clapham Junction town centre. The policy promotes and encourages:

- Clapham Junction as a major transport interchange, creating a new station fit for the twenty-first century through improvements to the station entrances, lifts to platforms and improved bus/rail interchange facilities;
- A comprehensive retail and residential led mixed-use redevelopment of the station approach shopping centre and the adjoining land to enable substantial improvements to the station and access to it. Development at Clapham Junction and other sites in the town centre should aim to meet targets of 1,500 homes by 2021/22 and up to 30,000 sq ms of employment floorspace. Other appropriate

uses include offices, hotel, cultural, leisure and entertainment. Taller buildings in this location could not only help deliver significant regeneration benefits, but also give a visual focus to the town centre, subject to the qualifications set out in Policy IS3 and the criteria based policy on tall buildings to be included in the DMPD;

- Mixed use developments with quality street frontages to create enhanced linkages to the north of the station and town centre;
- An improved pedestrian environment at Lavender Hill/St Johns Hill/St Johns Road/Falcon Road, with improved facilities for buses, taxis and cycles;
- Restructuring of the area around Falcon Lane to secure an extension to the town centre through mixed use development providing additional housing and low density retail facilities on the north side of the town centre;
- The potential redevelopment of Peabody Estate providing an opportunity to restructure the area and integrate with residential areas on the edge of the town centre;
- St John's Road as the main focus for shopping provision;
- Measures which help maintain the distinctive character of Northcote Road as a specialist retail and restaurant area;
- Funding contributions from developers towards the cost of specific off-site improvements, particularly transport and other infrastructure.

### Urban Characterisation

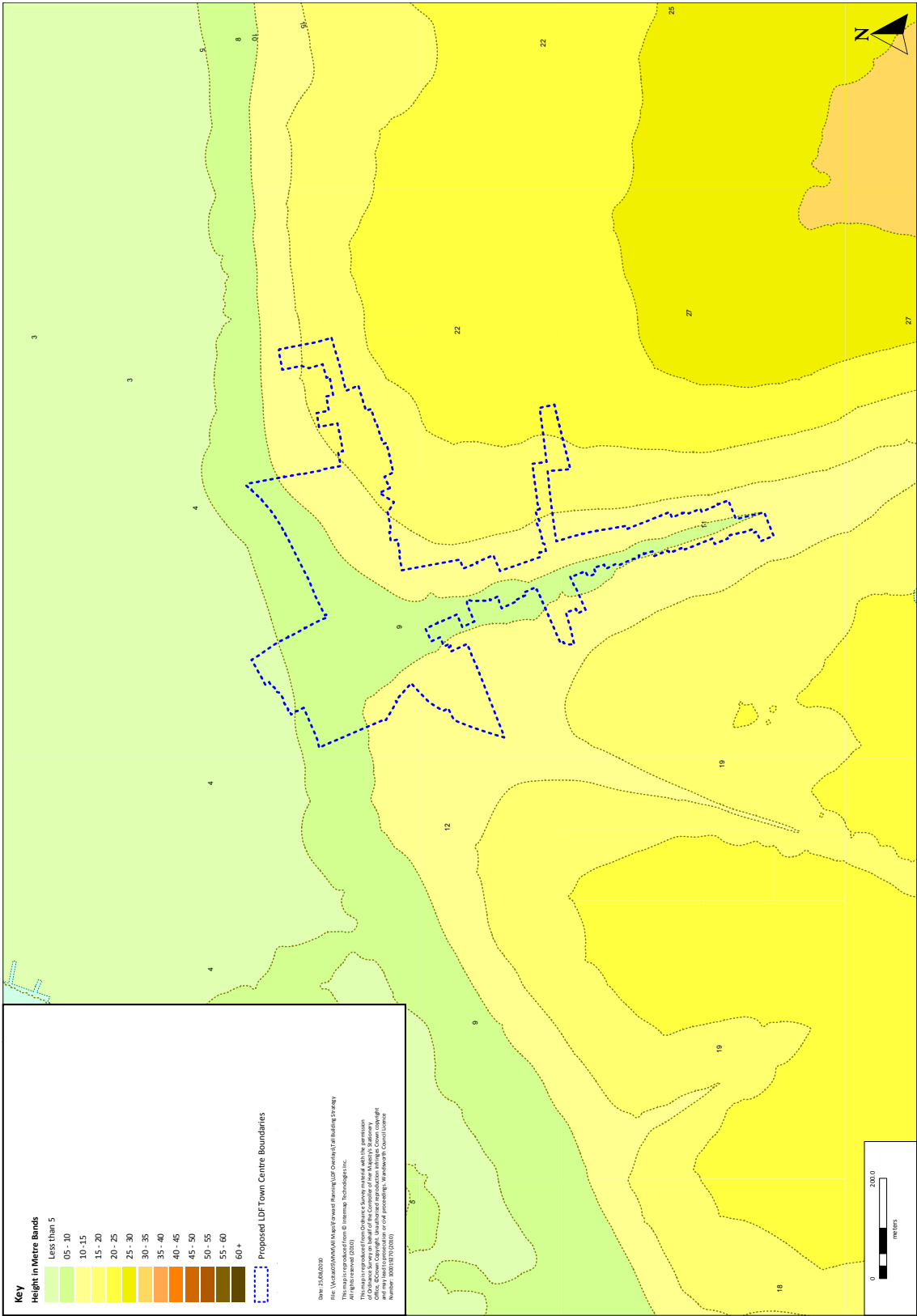
**2.25** Clapham Junction Town Centre is located on the old coaching route from Central London to the south west, which is now Lavender Hill/St John's Hill (A3036) and includes Clapham Junction Station, which is the busiest station outside central London, and a major interchange. The character of the area is derived from its surviving Victorian and Edwardian townscape as exemplified by the terraces of shops in St John's Road, St John's Hill and Lavender Hill. The main issues affecting tall buildings are seen to be as follows:

- A substantial part of the town centre lies within the Clapham Junction Conservation Area, which focuses on the Clapham Junction railway hub.
- Many historic Victorian and Edwardian shop houses survive along the arterial routes with Victorian terraced housing in the side streets. The buildings are generally 3-4 storeys and built in tightly knit terraces comprising narrow fronted plots. The urban pattern of development in the nineteenth century was characterised by narrow plot frontages of around six metres. This tight knit form of streets in the town centre with a north-south and east-west orientation creates a strong sense of enclosure, punctuated by the former Arding and Hobbs Department store (Debenhams), the Clapham Grand and the former station parcel office, which are detached free standing buildings of a much larger footprint than the terraced buildings. The tight-knit urban form creates a high quality townscape giving enclosure to streets, and with the frequency of street intersections makes it easy for people to find their way around the town centre, instilling a feeling of safety

to users. This is juxtaposed with the supermarket development north of Lavender Hill which has created an impoverished public realm.

- The town centre contains a number of important listed buildings including the former Arding & Hobbs Department store (now Debenhams), the Clapham Grand and the Falcon Public House. Others are locally listed, such as the timber bridge to the platforms in the station and the former Parcels office.
- Building materials in Clapham Junction are predominantly red brick with yellow stock bricks forming flank and rear elevations. Roof materials are mainly of natural slate. The appearance of shopfronts represents a mix of traditional timber with more recent alterations carried out in steel and uPVC. Windows to upper floors were originally timber, mainly vertical sliding sashes, but a number of replacements in steel and uPVC have been installed.
- Topographically, the town centre occupies the valley of the Falcon Brook where it cuts through the higher land of Lavender Hill before the land opens out to form the River Thames floodplain.
- The public realm of the station is an important area for people as it is a major gateway to the town centre. The approaches to the station have a high pedestrian flow and the cycle stands outside the station are heavily used for parking bicycles. The subway in particular gets very crowded at peak times, which is an unpleasant experience for pedestrians. A second entrance to the station via the former Parcels Office will be opened in 2011, along with a scheme to provide lifts to all the platforms to provide access for people with disabilities. Proposals to extend the platforms to accommodate longer trains are under way. The quality of the footways, the amount of street clutter, and the station environment have been highlighted as in need of improvement.
- The town centre has an interesting skyline, with Lavender Hill and St. John's Hill occupying a ridge running parallel with the River Thames floodplain.
- From the railway, the unfolding views of Clapham Junction from Waterloo are of interest with the view of the towers to the Clapham Grand signalling arrival at the station. Once arrived in the town, the view of the former Arding & Hobbs store from all approaches forms a local landmark, dominated by its tower on the corner of St. John's Road.
- The view from the railway bridge in St John's Hill captures the topography of Clapham Junction's fine grained urban structure, pictured in the way buildings step up Lavender Hill to the west and the valley indicates the line of the now culverted Falcon Brook.
- Views westwards along Battersea Rise focus on the landmark of St. Mark's Church, with its prominent spire. Southwards down Northcote Road, views focus on the tower of the Northcote Road Baptist Church.

- Views towards central London from the overbridge to Clapham Junction station include significant landmarks such as Battersea Power Station, The London Eye and the Palace of Westminster.
- Due to the highly urban character and development of the area, there is very little public open space within the town centre and no green space, although Clapham Common and Wandsworth Common serve the area being only 300 metres away.



Map 2.3 Clapham Junction Town Centre Topography



Map 2.4 Clapham Junction Town Centre Urban Characterisation



## Transport

**2.26** Clapham Junction town centre is a major transport hub and the most accessible location in the borough with most of the area in PTAL levels 5, 6 and 6b. PTALs fall away to the south of the Northcote Road area. Clapham Junction is well served by public transport including:

- Clapham Junction railway station located at the northern end of the centre near the junction of St Johns Hill and Falcon Road. The station is managed by South West Trains and provides regular direct trains to a number of suburban and national rail network destinations including London Waterloo, London Victoria, London Bridge, Wandsworth Town, Putney, Richmond, Feltham, Staines, Watford Junction, Basingstoke, Brighton, Southampton, Portsmouth, Bournemouth, Ascot, Bracknell, Reading, Windsor and Eton Riverside, Woking, Croydon, Gatwick Airport and Eastbourne. There are proposals as part of the East London Line project to link Clapham Junction with Surrey Quays to complete an orbital rail around London. This will further improve rail links to and from Clapham Junction in the future;
- There are sixteen daytime bus routes providing access to and from Clapham Junction from surrounding areas in the borough and beyond. Numerous bus stops are located along St Johns Hill, Falcon Road, Northcote Road and Battersea Rise providing good access to the railway station. The bus routes connect Clapham Junction with many destinations throughout inner and outer London including Aldwych, Brixton, Colliers Wood, Earl's Court, Fulham, Hammersmith, Kensington, Ladbroke Grove, Peckham, Putney, Richmond, Roehampton, Waterloo, Shoreditch, Wimbledon, Wandsworth Town, Tooting and Victoria.
- Four of the routes operate 24 hour service, providing links to Kingston, Putney, Ladbroke Grove, Camden, Finsbury Park, Aldwych, Liverpool Street and Peckham throughout the night, and there are a further four night buses.

## Development opportunities

**2.27** As discussed above, the Core Strategy promotes development at Clapham Junction together with improved access to the station and interchange facilities. The Council's aspirations for Clapham Junction are long standing and in 2005, the Council launched a '10-point plan' for improving transport links to and from the station. This involved proposals for a new station entrance on St John's Hill and improved interchange connections associated with proposals from Network Rail and Transport for London.

**2.28** Despite its size and importance the station is not a landmark building like the terminus stations of central London, but an assemblage of buildings of different periods. Although there are a number of buildings within the complex that are of some architectural or historic interest, many others are of poor architectural merit. The state of disrepair of the station buildings, problems of access for people with disabilities, outdated facilities and lack of information for customers present an image of neglect. The increasing importance of Clapham Junction railway station as an interchange

warrants the creation of a station fit for the 21st century. Growing passenger numbers mean that its existing conditions have become overcrowded. In terms of footfall, its usage is seventh in the UK. It needs first class facilities for passengers and inclusive design, as well as being a quality civic building.

**2.29** Development on a fairly major scale over the station could facilitate general improvements addressing these matters. Future redevelopment of the site will need to restructure the architecturally and historically insignificant station approaches and provide an enhanced shopping area, together with residential and employment provision and major new public space. This would reflect the mixed use nature of the town centre and exploit the relatively untapped train passenger market. Given the strategic importance of the station, there may be justification for taller buildings which could help to reinforce and add visual significance to the town centre if carefully designed. There is also the opportunity to bring Brighton Yard back into use in conjunction with station.

**2.30** The railway lands also currently present a major physical barrier between the town centre and the residential areas to the north at Grant Road. Pedestrian accessibility between the two areas is currently restricted to Falcon Road, or with a ticket, via the underpass serving the station. Redevelopment of the site presents the opportunity to provide improved 24 hour accessibility between Grant Road/Winstanley Estate and the town centre.

**2.31** With the town centre largely confined to the area south of the railway, the limited recent expansion around Falcon Lane has resulted in a fragmentation of the urban fabric, an underutilisation of the development potential and a degradation of the public realm. An opportunity exists to realise the development potential of the area by repairing the urban fabric and creating a quality shopping street frontage with residential and other uses above. This should seek to knit together the disparate parts of the area.

**2.32** The quality of the public realm is important to the area to provide an appropriate setting to the buildings as well as a high quality environment for pedestrians. There are opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of streets by improving the quality of the experience for pedestrians as well as improving its visual character by removing clutter, rationalizing signing, and providing good quality materials for surface finishes and well-designed street furniture.

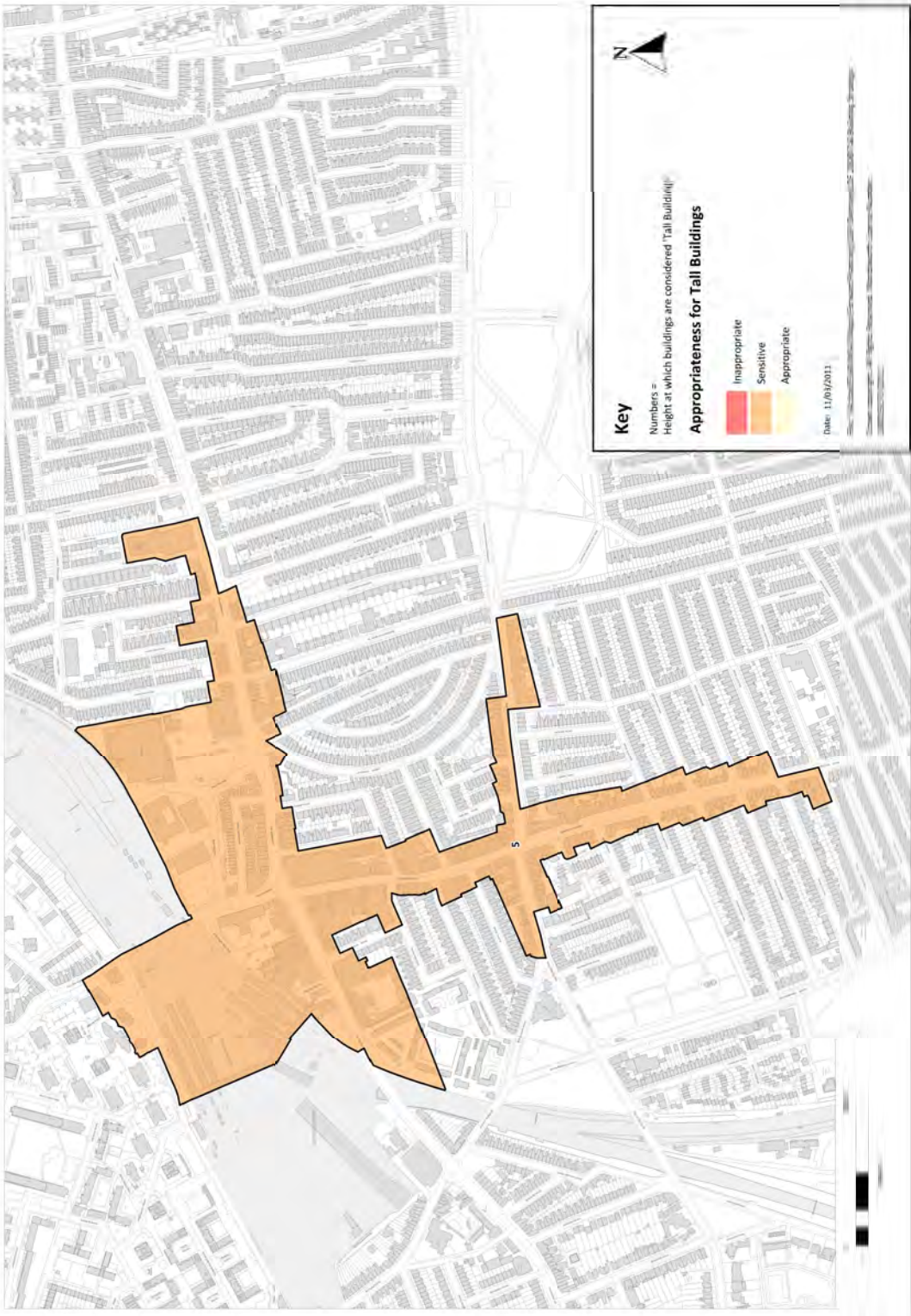
**2.33** The main opportunity sites within Clapham Junction include:

- Asda, Lidl, Boots and 155 Falcon Lane
- Lanner and Griffon House, Winstanley Road
- Car park adjacent to Sendall Court, Grant Road
- Clapham Junction Station Approach
- Land on the corner of Grant Road and Falcon Road

- Land at Clapham Junction Station
- Peabody Estate

### **Findings and policy recommendations**

**2.34** The urban characterisation of Clapham Junction town centre, which is mostly within a conservation area, indicates that the centre has a rich historic heritage and as such is considered sensitive to tall buildings (see map below). The urban characterisation also reveals that the centre's prevailing building height is around four storeys, and the only buildings that punctuate the skyline are those of Civic, cultural and retail importance, notably Debenhams (formerly Arding and Hobbs), a flagship Department store, the Grand Theatre and the former Parcel office at the station. Accordingly any building of five storeys and above would be noticeable above the prevailing height within the town centre. Because of the need to protect the essential character of the buildings that define the main shopping streets, applications for development of 5 storeys and above will be subject to the criteria of the tall buildings policy contained in this document.



Picture 2.2 Clapham Junction Town Centre - Tall buildings policy

## Putney Town Centre and Putney Wharf Focal Point

**2.35** Putney Town Centre is located in the north west of the borough. The centre is designated as a town centre in the Wandsworth UDP (August 2003) and the Core Strategy, and is identified as a 'Major Centre' in the London Plan (February 2004).

**2.36** The Putney Wharf focal point is outside the north eastern boundary of the town centre as defined by the UDP, but is proposed to be included within the town centre through the Proposed Submission Development Management Policies Document. Putney Wharf is identified as a focal point of activity in the Core Strategy.

## Policy Context

**2.37** Core Strategy Policy PL8 - Town and local centres, sets out the strategic policy for the five town centres and nine local centres in the borough. The policy promotes and encourages:

- The five town centres as the focus for shopping and complementary activities, including business, cultural, leisure and entertainment;
- Each centre to provide a distinctive range of facilities serving their local area, but not to grow at the expense of other centres;
- New shopping (A1) floorspace to meet projected future needs;
- A diversity and mix of appropriate uses, including shopping, restaurants and bars, leisure, recreation, entertainment, cultural, offices and other business use, educational, institutional, medical and healthcare, community and housing, and other uses contributing to vitality and viability;
- That Putney remains the focus for office activity.

**2.38** The supporting text to Policy PL8 acknowledges that each of the town centres has different opportunities for development to strengthen their distinctive roles. In Putney, a shortage of available modern retail units providing medium to large floorplates in the core frontages can be remedied through redevelopment of significant sites on either side of the high street. A small amount of new retail and bar/restaurant floorspace could be provided as part of renovation of office blocks outside the shopping core along Upper Richmond Road, to enhance overall provision in the centre.

**2.39** Core Strategy Policy PL14 - East Putney and Upper Richmond Road, provides further detail on the strategy for Putney town centre. The policy promotes the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing office blocks clustered around East Putney Station and on the south side of Upper Richmond Road to deliver modern office floorspace, new housing including affordable housing, new retail/restaurant space and an improved public realm.

**2.40** Core Strategy Policy PL9 - River Thames and the riverside, sets out strategic policy in relation to focal points of activity. The policy promotes mixed use redevelopment along the riverside, in order to create safe attractive environments, provide new homes, jobs, leisure and social infrastructure facilities with public spaces at focal points, a riverside walk and cycle way and increase public access to the river. The focal point at Putney Wharf has already been created by new development.

**2.41** Core Strategy Policy IS3 - Good quality design and townscape, states that tall buildings may be appropriate at focal points, providing they can justify themselves in terms of the benefits they bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and their effect on the existing historic environment.

### Urban Characterisation

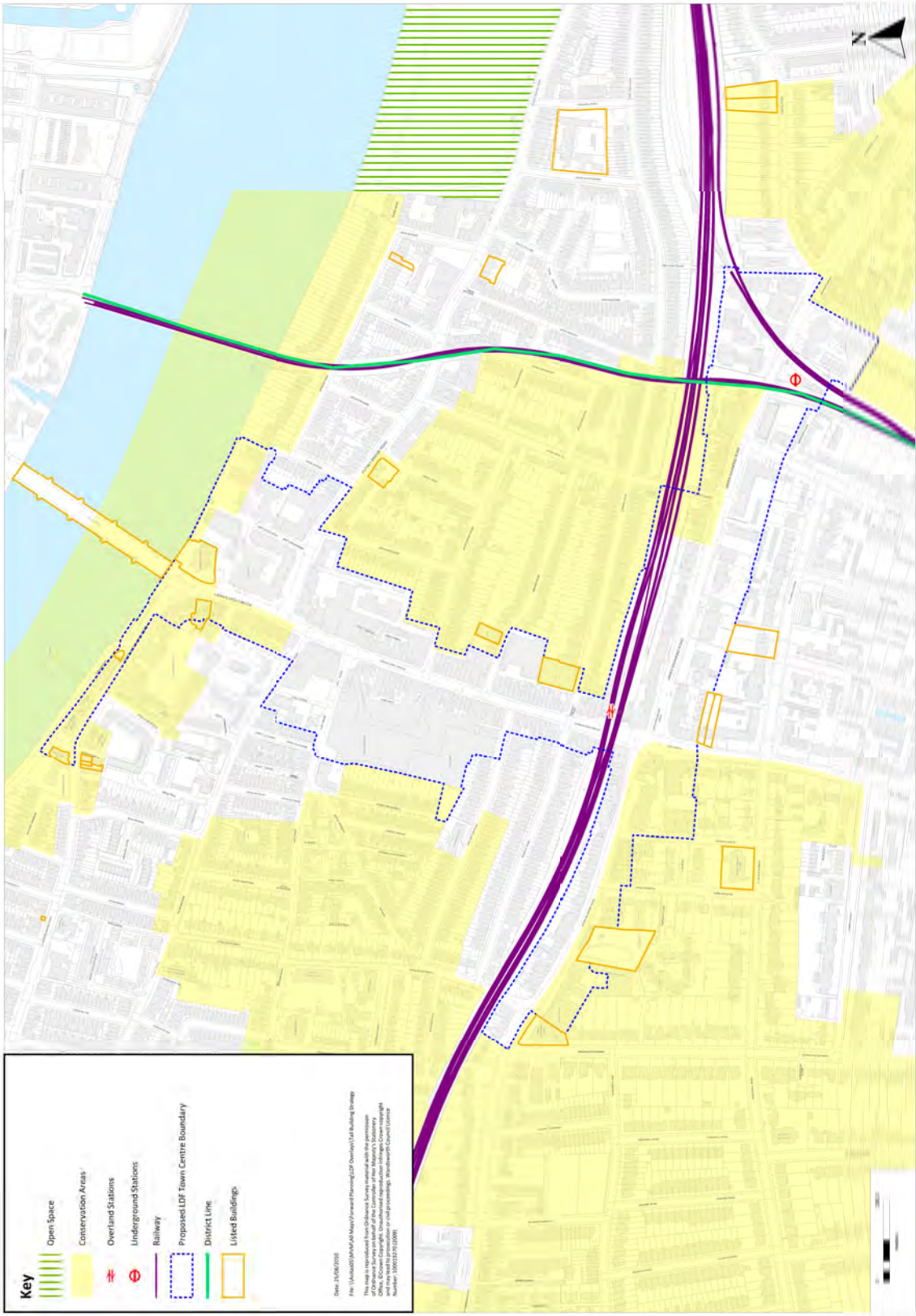
**2.42** Putney has a long history, largely due to its importance as a river crossing, originally by ferry, dating from the early 1300s. The first permanent bridge was completed in 1729 and the bridge that stands today was built in 1886. The main issues affecting tall buildings in Putney town centre and the Putney Wharf focal point are seen to be as follows:

- Putney has an historic core, with the majority of buildings along Putney High Street being Victorian with some Georgian;
- More modern retail development complementing the historic buildings which characterise the High Street is present at the Putney Exchange shopping centre;
- The development of Putney Wharf has opened up the riverside area significantly, offering attractive new public spaces with places to eat drink and relax by the river;
- The Putney Embankment Conservation Area covers the Embankment as well as part of the High Street, St Mary's Church and Putney Bridge and the riverside end of Brewery Street.
- The town centre is also surrounded by several conservation areas, with the Oxford Road Conservation Area to the east, Charlwood Road/Lifford Street Conservation Area to the west and Deodar Road Conservation Area to the north east.
- The land rises gradually away from the Thames up Putney High Street to the Upper Richmond Road and then rises again more steeply up Putney Hill towards Tippet's Corner and the highest point in the borough at Wimbledon Common. This means that there are extensive long views towards and across Putney town centre from many viewpoints to the south. Within the centre, away from the riverside, local views are more confined to the usual street vistas with occasional glimpses of good townscape buildings.
- Putney town centre enjoys an extensive frontage to the River Thames, and the river frontage is within the Putney Embankment Conservation Area. This northern part of the centre also contains the most listed buildings, all in particularly sensitive locations directly on or visible from the riverside.

- Views from Putney Bridge of the largely domestic scale of the buildings along the Embankment to the west, and the Putney Wharf development to the east are important.
- The prevailing height of buildings throughout the centre is relatively low, with the majority of buildings generally 4 storeys or less in height. This applies particularly to the main town centre core of Putney High Street, Upper Richmond Road (west) and the north side of Upper Richmond Road (east) and also to the Embankment.
- There are exceptions, to the prevailing height, with noticeably higher buildings at Putney Wharf to the north of the centre and on the south side of the Upper Richmond Road (east). Some of these taller buildings are positive additions to the townscape. Putney Wharf tower (17 storeys), formerly a 1960s office block, demonstrates how it is possible to transform a once intrusive eyesore into a dynamic new addition to the townscape and the SWish building (10 storeys) at East Putney is another example of a successful tall building. There are common factors that contribute considerably to the success of these two buildings: they are both examples of good modern architecture and have mixed uses that work particularly well at ground level. These examples show how tall buildings, when sensitively designed, can enrich the public realm and contribute to the quality of the town centre as a place and should serve as exemplars to guide new development for the opportunity areas identified.
- The public square created as part of the Putney Wharf scheme is one of the most attractive, well used and well regarded open spaces in the town centre;
- The section of Upper Richmond Road from East Putney to the High Street suffers from a poor townscape. The south side of the road has a monotonous series of tall, unattractive office buildings, ranging between 8 and 9 storeys, whilst the north side of the road has mostly low, traditional 2 and 3 storey buildings. This contrast creates a visually uncomfortable imbalance to the streetscape where the higher buildings on the north side are clearly an unwelcome and incongruous element. The overbearing tall slabs restrict sunlight from the south and are all set back behind anonymous forecourts; they add nothing to the street scene.







Map 2.6 Putney Town Centre Urban Characterisation

## Transport

**2.43** Public transport accessibility to Putney town centre is excellent with PTAL levels generally levels 5 and 6a. Public transport includes:

- Putney Railway Station which is located in the heart of the centre on Putney High Street, just north of the cross roads with Upper Richmond Road. The station is managed by South West Trains and provides regular links to a number of key destinations including London Waterloo, Clapham Junction, Wandsworth Town, Richmond, Twickenham, Chiswick, Strawberry Hill, Hounslow, Ascot, Bracknell, Reading, Feltham, Staines, Datchet, Windsor and Eton Riverside, Woking, Chertsey and Egham.
- East Putney tube station, which is located on Upper Richmond Road at the eastern end of the town centre boundary, and is approximately 500m from the cross roads with Putney High Street and Putney Railway Station.
- Putney Bridge underground station, which is located north of the river approximately 600m from the town centre boundary. Both East Putney and Putney Bridge Stations are on the District Line, and as such provide regular connections to many central and outer London destinations;
- Numerous bus routes have stops in Putney town centre. Bus stops are located at the most accessible locations along Putney High Street, Upper Richmond Road, Putney Bridge Road and Putney Bridge. There are fifteen bus routes providing access to and from Putney from surrounding areas in the borough and beyond. The bus routes connect Putney with many destinations around London including; Brixton, Charing Cross, Chelsea, Clapham Common, Earl's Court, Earlsfield, Fulham, Hammersmith, Hyde Park, Kingston, Knightsbridge, Marble Arch, New Malden, Peckham, Piccadilly Circus, Richmond, Roehampton, Shepherd's Bush, South Kensington, Tottenham Court Road, Wandsworth town and Wimbledon. Five routes offer 24-hour service and there are a further three night bus routes.

## Development opportunities

**2.44** The main development opportunities within the town centre include:

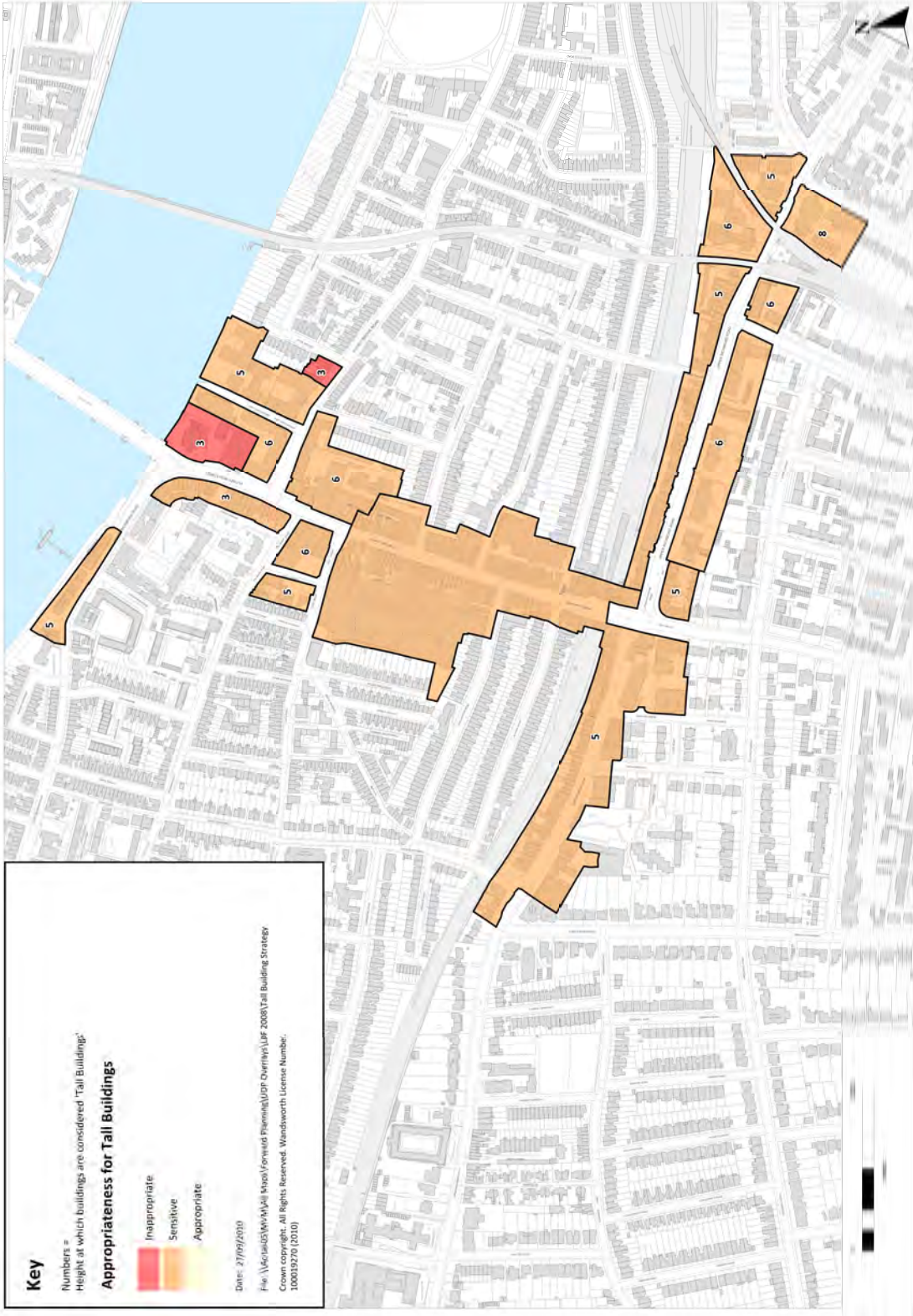
- Upper Richmond Road (south) - the Core Strategy identifies the opportunity to refurbish/redevelop office buildings to provide new modern office space, flats and complementary retail with public realm improvements;
- Putney town centre north - this includes the area adjacent to Putney Wharf, the north of Putney High Street and the corner of Putney Bridge Road. In particular, the Jubilee House/Cinema - Putney High Street/Putney Bridge Road development dates from the 1970s and contains two linked office blocks and a cinema. The highest element of the Brewhouse Lane frontage rises 9 storeys and is already a tall building in this context. This site has considerable potential for a mixed use

development that would extend the qualities of the adjoining Putney Wharf development with new public spaces.

### **Findings and policy recommendations**

**2.45** The urban characterisation of Putney's topography, existing building heights and the various heritage assets, enables subdivision of the town centre into areas of differing sensitivity to tall buildings. The majority of the town centre is considered to be sensitive to tall buildings due to the constraints set out in the urban characterisation. Exceptions to this include the site containing the St Mary's church and directly adjacent, and the corner of Putney Bridge Road and Deodar Road. These sites are considered inappropriate because of their particular sensitivities, including proximity to St Mary's church, the prevailing height of buildings and proximity to Conservation Areas.

**2.46** The map below identifies the height at which a building will be considered tall and therefore subject to the tall buildings criteria policy set out in this document. This is based on based on existing buildings onsite and the prevailing height of surrounding buildings.



Map 2.7 Putney Town Centre - Tall buildings policy

## Balham Town Centre

**2.47** Balham Town Centre is located in the south east of the borough. The centre is designated as a town centre in the Wandsworth UDP (August 2003) and the Core Strategy, and is identified as a 'District Centre' in the London Plan (February 2004).

### Policy Context

**2.48** Core Strategy Policy PL8 - Town and local centres, sets out the strategic policy for the five town centres and nine local centres in the borough. The policy promotes and encourages:

- The five town centres as the focus for shopping and complementary activities, including business, cultural, leisure and entertainment;
- Each centre to provide a distinctive range of facilities serving their local area, but not to grow at the expense of other centres;
- New shopping (A1) floorspace to meet projected future needs;
- A diversity and mix of appropriate uses, including shopping, restaurants and bars, leisure, recreation, entertainment, cultural, offices and other business use, educational, institutional, medical and healthcare, community and housing, and other uses contributing to vitality and viability;
- High density mixed use development, including residential;
- The existing street market in Balham.

**2.49** The supporting text Policy PL8 acknowledges that each of the town centres has different opportunities for development to strengthen their distinctive roles. Balham is the smallest centre but recent improvements to the market have been complemented by significant convenience shopping provision, including independent shops, the daily street market and weekly farmer's market. The area also benefits from a growing evening economy.

### Urban Characterisation

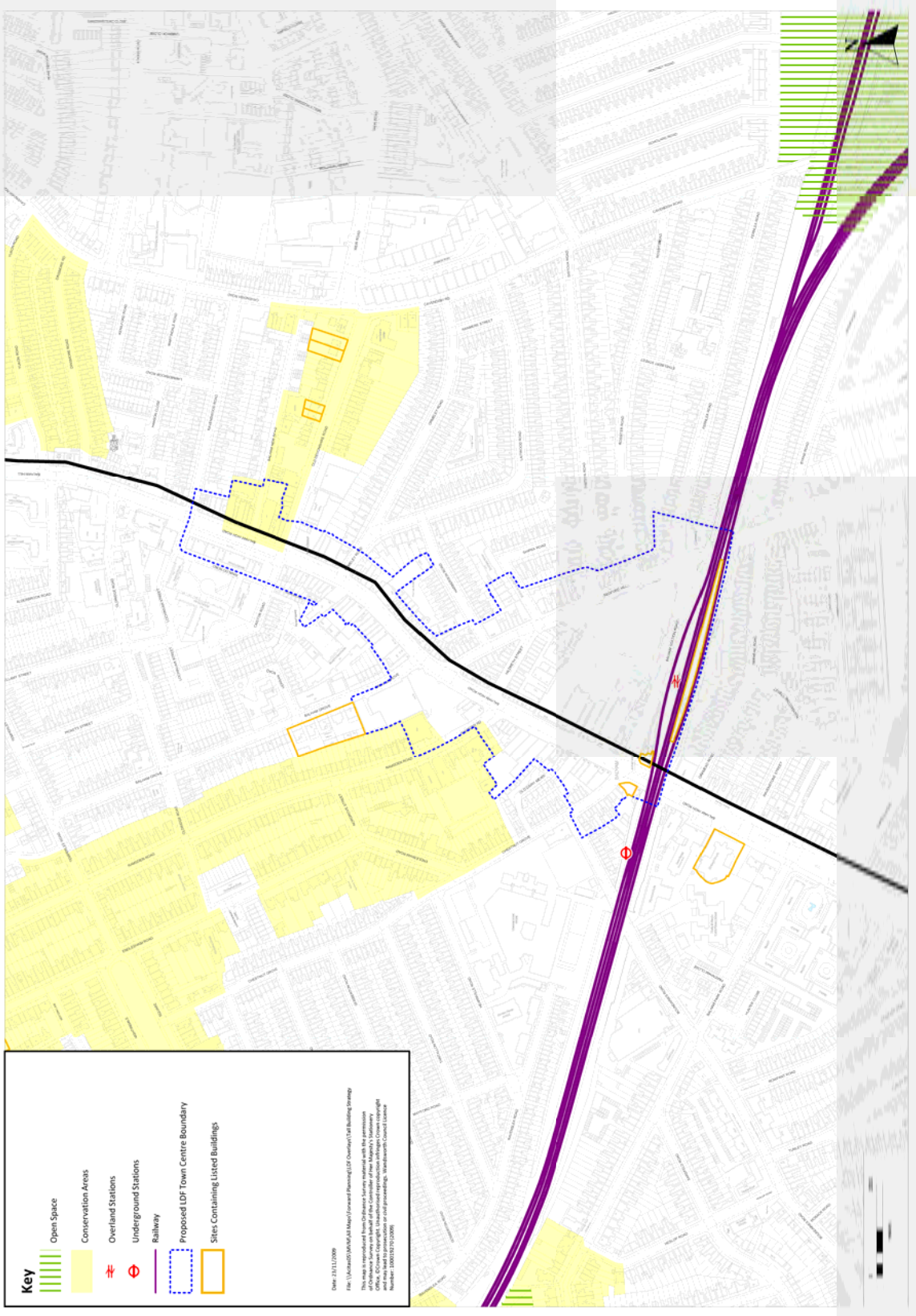
**2.50** Balham town centre, often referred to as the Gateway to South London, is arrived by road after descending the hill from Clapham Common along the old Roman Road, Stane (stone) Street, which led to Chichester. Balham was the first urban settlement along this road southwards, although development only burgeoned following the opening of the Crystal Palace Railway Line in the mid nineteenth century. Another development boost occurred following the opening of Balham Underground station on the Northern Line in 1926. The pattern of development that occurred was through plot subdivision of fields by developers. The main issues affected tall buildings in Balham are seen to be as follows:

- A tight knit fine grain pattern of development in the town centre. A number of the early villas that had developed along Balham High Road acquired shop front

extensions, and a number of these still exist. Elsewhere along Balham High Road and in the town centre developers built shop houses, mainly of three or four storeys, with shops on the ground floor and residential accommodation on the upper floors;

- Balham town centre retains many of its older buildings though newer developments, such as the Sainsbury's and Waitrose supermarkets, have brought large format convenience shopping floorspace to the centre;
- The town centre is focused on three main roads; Balham Station Road, Balham High Road and Bedford Hill, which create a triangle with the Sainsbury's and Hildreth Street Market at the heart;
- The town centre is bounded by residential areas to the north and east, with the railway line running north-west to south-east parallel to Balham Station Road;
- The Nightingale Lane Conservation Area is just outside the town centre boundary to the east of Balham High Road and the Old Devonshire Road Conservation Area is to the west of Balham High Road;
- Nos. 162-168 represent a splendid short terrace of architectural interest with their triangular and arched pediments to first floor windows, tripartite windows to second floor and triangular and arched pediments to third floor attic windows. The former Royal Arsenal Co-op (RACs), now Balham Mosque represents a sumptuous 1930's three storey composition;
- The Bedford Public House represents a Neo-Classical four storey composition located at the gateway to the town centre from the south-east;
- The prevailing character of Balham town centre is of four storey buildings, often in terraces, but individual units set within a plot frontage of around six metres width. The tallest building is a six storey building at 184 Balham High Road, although the sixth floor is slightly set back from the street frontage;
- Unusually the tallest buildings in Balham lie just outside the town centre. These are St. Mary's Church, a grade II listed building, the Mother church of Balham, and Du Cane Court, a massive red brick nine storey art-deco composition, by architect George Kay Green in 1935-38. They are located on Balham High Road just south of the town centre. At this point Balham High Road is a wide street and the scale of the buildings does not look out of place here.





Map 2.9 Balham Town Centre Urban Characterisation



## Transport

**2.51** Public transport accessibility to Balham Town Centre is excellent with PTAL levels generally 5 and 6a. Public transport includes:

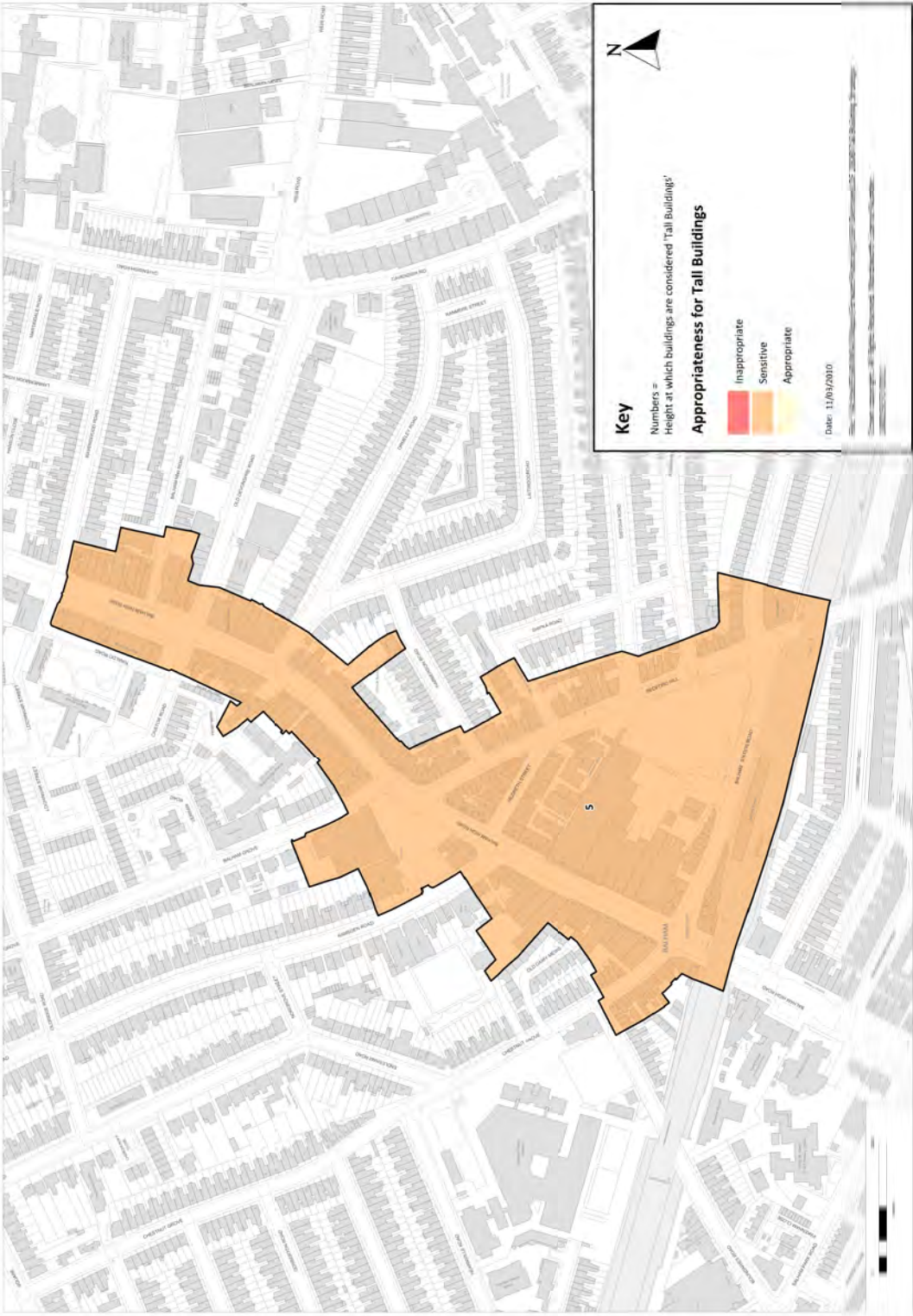
- Balham railway station, which is located at the southern end of the centre adjacent to Balham Station Road. The station is managed by Southern Trains and provides regular direct trains to a number of destinations including London Victoria, London Bridge, Crystal Palace, Clapham Junction, Wandsworth Common, West Croydon and Sutton.
- Balham Underground Station, which is located adjacent to the railway station and operates the Northern Line service with regular direct tubes to Central London, Kings Cross St. Pancras and North London.
- Five bus routes, serve the town centre with stops located along Balham High Road, outside the train station and just outside the town centre on Bedford Hill. The bus routes connect Balham with many destinations throughout London including Tooting, Mitcham, Crystal Palace, Norwood, Clapham High Street, Elephant and Castle and Brixton. In addition, there is one night bus route that runs through the centre providing public transport to Aldwych and Morden.

## Development opportunities

**2.52** The main town centre opportunity site is the area occupied by the town centre car park adjacent to Sainsbury's supermarket. There has been a longstanding opportunity to redevelop the site for a mixed use scheme, involving retail floorspace, business and residential accommodation. The site is within close proximity to high frequency railway lines (Network Rail and London Underground services) and it is considered that a higher intensity development would be considered acceptable, providing that it makes a significant contribution to the regeneration of the town centre and reinforces the character of Balham with a fine grain of uses and vibrant shopping frontages, and enhances the public realm.

## Findings and policy recommendations

**2.53** Within the town centre, because of the prevailing four storey height, any building that punctuates the skyline at five storeys becomes noticeable. Accordingly a building of five storeys or more in the town centre would be regarded as tall. The town centre has been identified as sensitive to tall buildings because of the prevailing residential character surrounding the town centre, including the Conservation Areas. The assessment of buildings of five storeys and above will enable the effect on residential amenity and the existing historic environment, among other things, to be assessed.



Picture 2.3 Balham Town Centre - Tall buildings policy

## Tooting Town Centre

**2.54** Tooting Town Centre is located in the south of the borough. The centre is designated as a town centre in the Wandsworth UDP (August 2003) and the Core Strategy, and is identified as a 'Major Centre' in the London Plan (February 2004).

### Policy Context

**2.55** Core Strategy Policy PL8 - Town and local centres, sets out the strategic policy for the five town centres and nine local centres in the borough. The policy promotes and encourages:

- The five town centres as the focus for shopping and complementary activities, including business, cultural, leisure and entertainment;
- Each centre to provide a distinctive range of facilities serving their local area, but not to grow at the expense of other centres;
- New shopping (A1) floorspace to meet projected future needs;
- A diversity and mix of appropriate uses, including shopping, restaurants and bars, leisure, recreation, entertainment, cultural, offices and other business use, educational, institutional, medical and healthcare, community and housing, and other uses contributing to vitality and viability;
- High density mixed use development, including residential.

**2.56** The supporting text Policy PL8 acknowledges that each of the town centres has different opportunities for development to strengthen their distinctive roles. In Tooting, there is a high proportion of independent retailers, especially catering for specialist Asian shopping, and a number of specialist outlets as well as the covered markets. Together with the high proportion of Asian businesses and important Afro-Caribbean sector, this gives Tooting a distinctive identity and character to protect and build on. There is a need to secure large modern retail units, and there is some scope to add or improve floorspace through renewal of existing buildings and modernisation of the markets. Opportunities will be sought to resolve the long standing problems of buses in Tooting Broadway through the provision of improved facilities for buses.

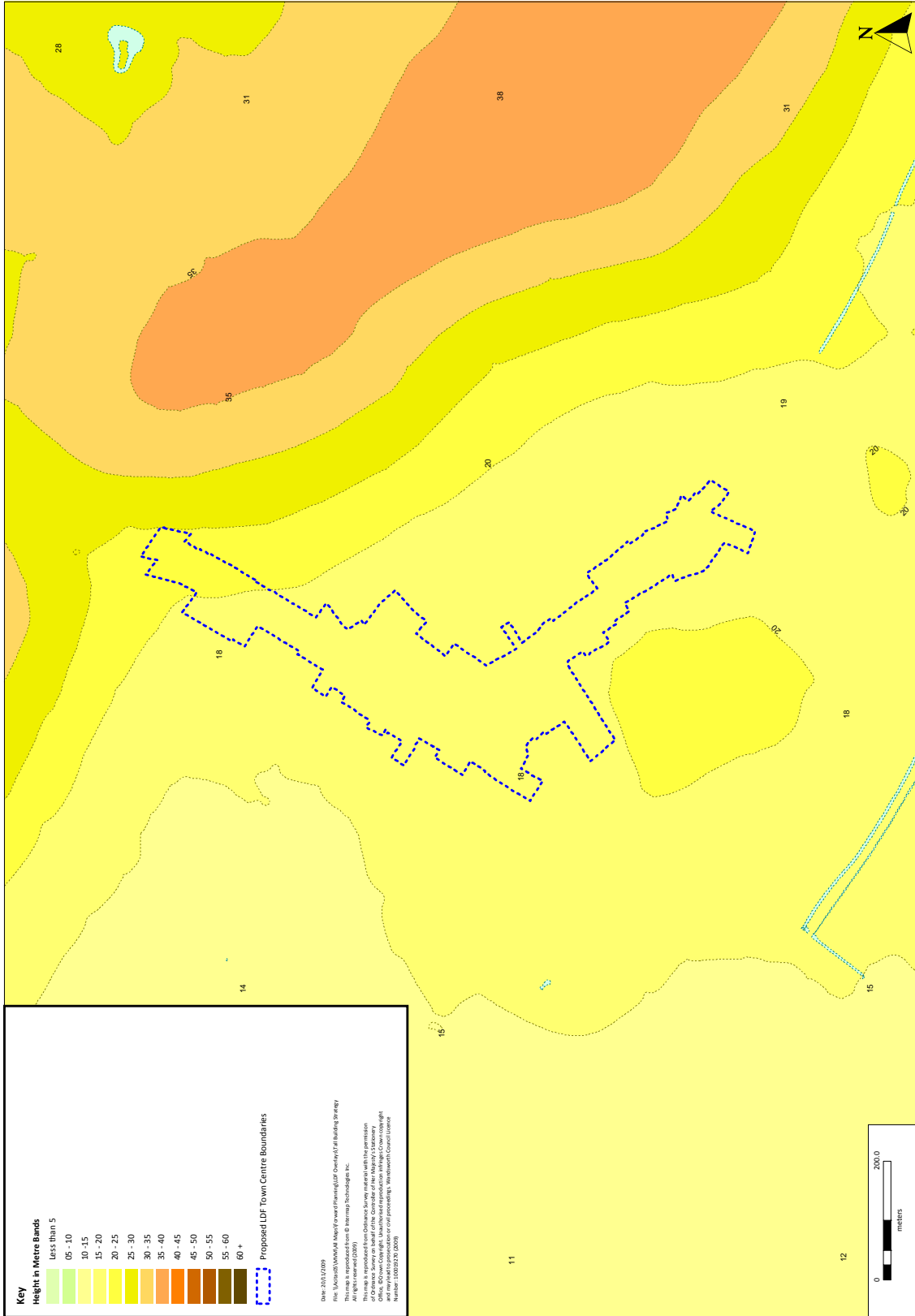
### Urban Characterisation

**2.57** Tooting, like many of the boroughs town centres, developed largely in the late Victorian period. Similarly to Balham it received further investment and development in the late 1920s and 1930s following the opening of Tooting Broadway underground station on the extended Northern Line in 1926. The main issues affecting tall buildings are seen to be as follows:

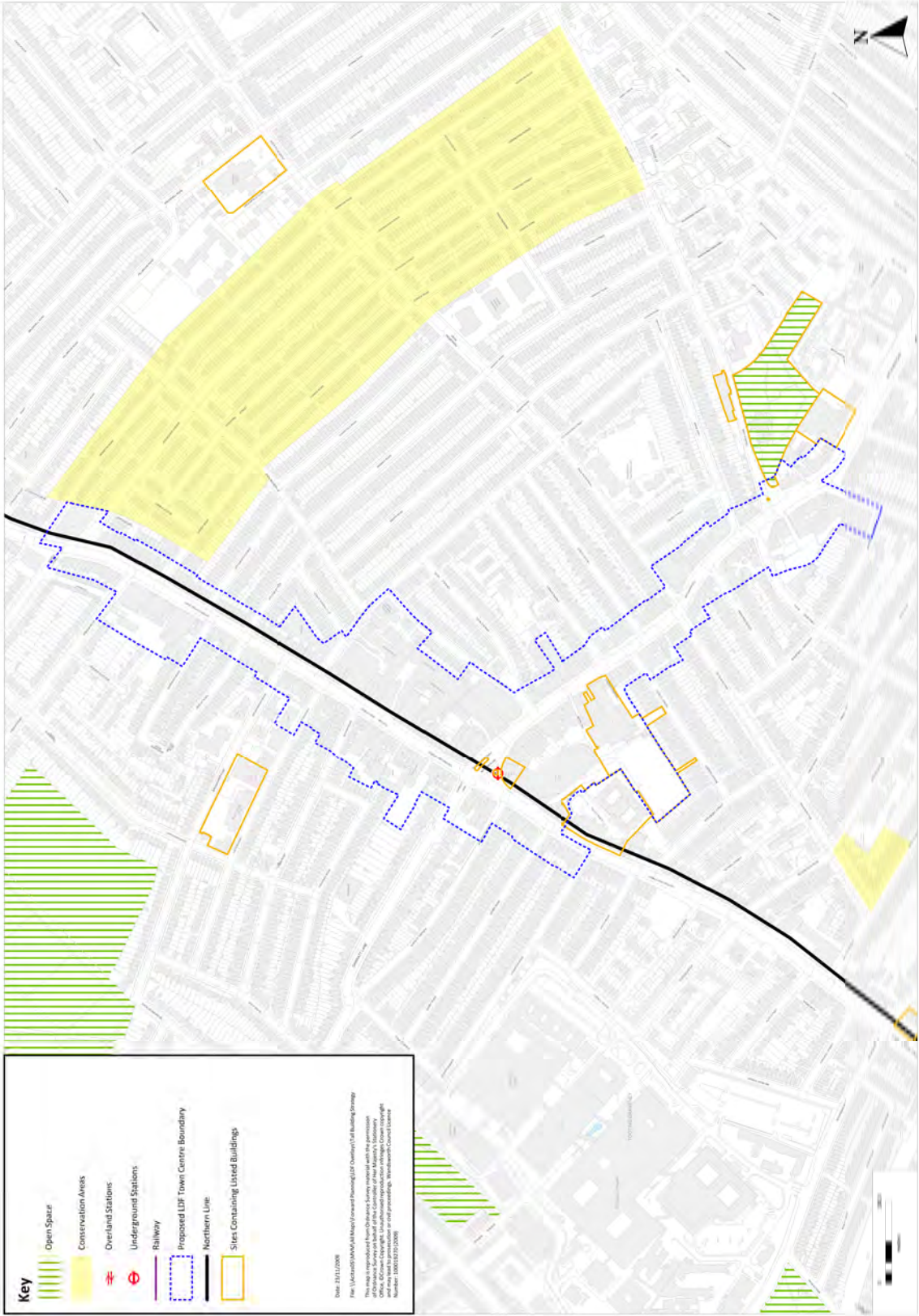
- Tooting town centre retains many of its older buildings although post war developments and more modern developments, such as the Sainsbury's

supermarket, are interspersed amongst the traditional Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

- The town centre is focused on two main roads, Tooting High Street (which becomes Upper Tooting Road) and Mitcham Road. Retail development is very linear along these two roads and the core of the town centre is located at their junction with Tooting Broadway underground station adjacent.
- The town centre is bounded on all sides by residential development.
- Upper Tooting Road and Tooting High Street (A24) run across the Wandle Valley on the line of the old Roman Road and the land falls gradually from the start of the town centre in Upper Tooting as a gentle slope down to the Broadway. Garratt Lane and Mitcham Road run along the valley bottom with no perceptible gradient.
- Tooting's most important listed building is the Gala Bingo Club (formerly the Granada Cinema) on Mitcham Road which is grade I.
- Listed grade II buildings include Tooting Broadway Underground Station, St Boniface Church, Mitcham Road, Statue of King Edward VII on Tooting Broadway and the Parish Pump on Mitcham Road.
- Visually prominent and important buildings include the Public Library on Mitcham Road, the Former Mayfair Cinema on Upper Tooting Road and the former RACS (Coop) building on Upper Tooting Road.
- Views are, for the most part, unremarkable street vistas involving narrow corridors defined by traditional groups and terraces of 2 and 3 storey buildings.
- There are some local views that include important local landmark buildings that are attractive and distinctive to Tooting. These include the views looking north and south along Mitcham Road of the impressive facade of the Gala (Granada) in Mitcham Road and the decorative facade of the Public Library also in Mitcham Road.



Map 2.10 Tooting Town Centre Topography



Map 2.11 Tooting Town Centre Urban Characterisation

## Transport

**2.58** Public transport accessibility to Tooting town centre is excellent with PTAL levels generally 5 or 6a. Public Transport includes:

- Tooting Broadway underground station, which is located on the corner of Tooting High Street and Mitcham Lane. The station is on London Underground's Northern Line, with regular direct services to Central London, Kings Cross St. Pancras and North London.
- Several bus routes with stops along Mitcham Road, Tooting High Street and Garratt Lane on the edge of the town centre boundary. There are at least fourteen bus routes providing access to and from Tooting with many destinations throughout London including Richmond, Putney, Wandsworth Town, Victoria, Waterloo, Elephant and Castle, Balham, Clapham North, Brixton, Streatham, Croydon, Purley, Sutton and Kingston. Two of the bus routes through the centre run 24 hours providing links to Croydon, Kingston, Clapham Park, Sutton, Aldwych and Morden throughout the night, and there are a further two night bus services.

**2.59** Tooting railway station is in the London Borough of Merton outside the town centre to the south, along Mitcham Road.

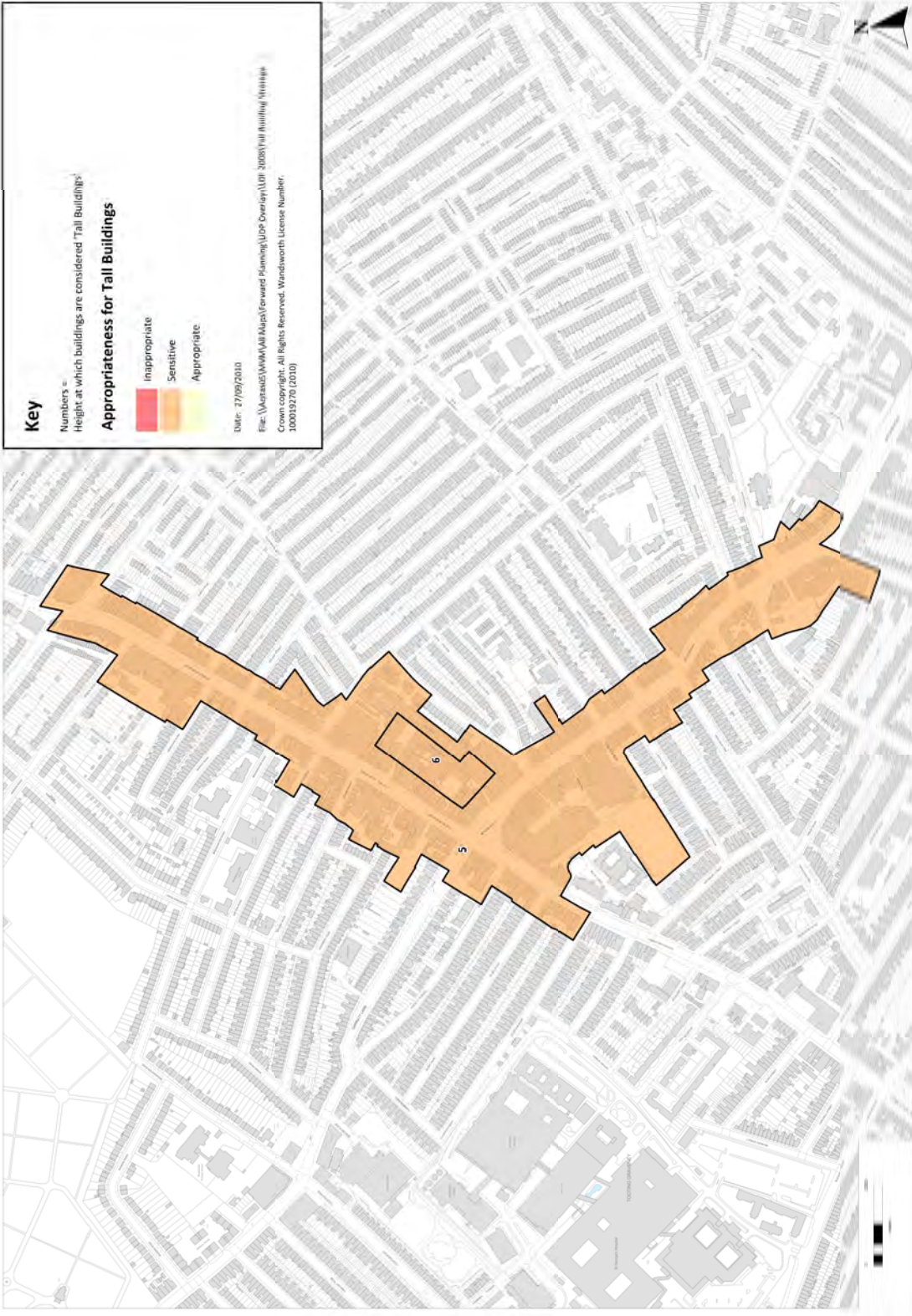
## Development opportunities

**2.60** The main development opportunity within Tooting Town Centre is the market site at the heart of the town centre. There is an issue of poor environmental conditions in and around the indoor markets which presents an opportunity for improvement. The area has with potential for mixed use development, with retail and market stalls with new public spaces and some residential accommodation to upper floors.

## Findings and policy recommendations

**2.61** Within the town centre, because the prevailing height of buildings is 4 storeys, any building of 5 storeys or more will be noticeable. Therefore, a building of 5 or more storeys will be regarded as a tall building, apart from the centre of the town centre where a building of 6 storeys or more will be regarded as tall due to the distance to residential buildings, and assessed against the criteria in chapter 5.

**2.62** The urban characterisation has revealed that the town centre is sensitive to tall buildings.



Map 2.12 Tooting Town Centre - Tall buildings policy



## Nine Elms near Vauxhall

**2.63** Nine Elms near Vauxhall is in the north eastern part of the borough and is part of the Vauxhall Nine Elms Opportunity Area identified in the London Plan. The area includes the Market Towers site, the Flower Market section of the New Covent Garden Market and warehousing and storage, which is the site of the proposed US Embassy.

### Policy Context

**2.64** Core Strategy policy PL11 - Nine Elms and the adjoining are in north-east Battersea, sets out strategic policy for development of the Nine Elms area. The policy promotes:

- High density mixed use development around Battersea Power Station and nearby sites to help create a sense of place and a dynamic mixed use quarter, including local shops and services, with improved public transport links;
- New homes and jobs along the riverside through the redevelopment of existing low density industrial and warehouse sites;
- The release of land near Vauxhall, in particular the Flower Market site, for high density housing to maximise the potential of the area to contribute to London's housing and employment needs;
- High density mixed use development around Vauxhall, to create a sense of place and improve the centre, including public transport improvements;
- Continued use of the Stewarts Road/Silverthorne Road area as a reservoir of employment land for industry and waste management, including enhancements of the environment and access to the industrial area;
- Development of the Opportunity Area Planning Framework in conjunction with the GLA and Lambeth, to guide the comprehensive redevelopment of the area, ensuring infrastructure is available including significant new public transport provision and strategic sustainable energy infrastructure;
- Funding from planning obligations on site within the opportunity area;
- Meeting targets of at least 8,000 jobs and 2,500 homes by 2026 in the Vauxhall/Nine Elms/Battersea Opportunity Area (including part of Vauxhall in Lambeth).

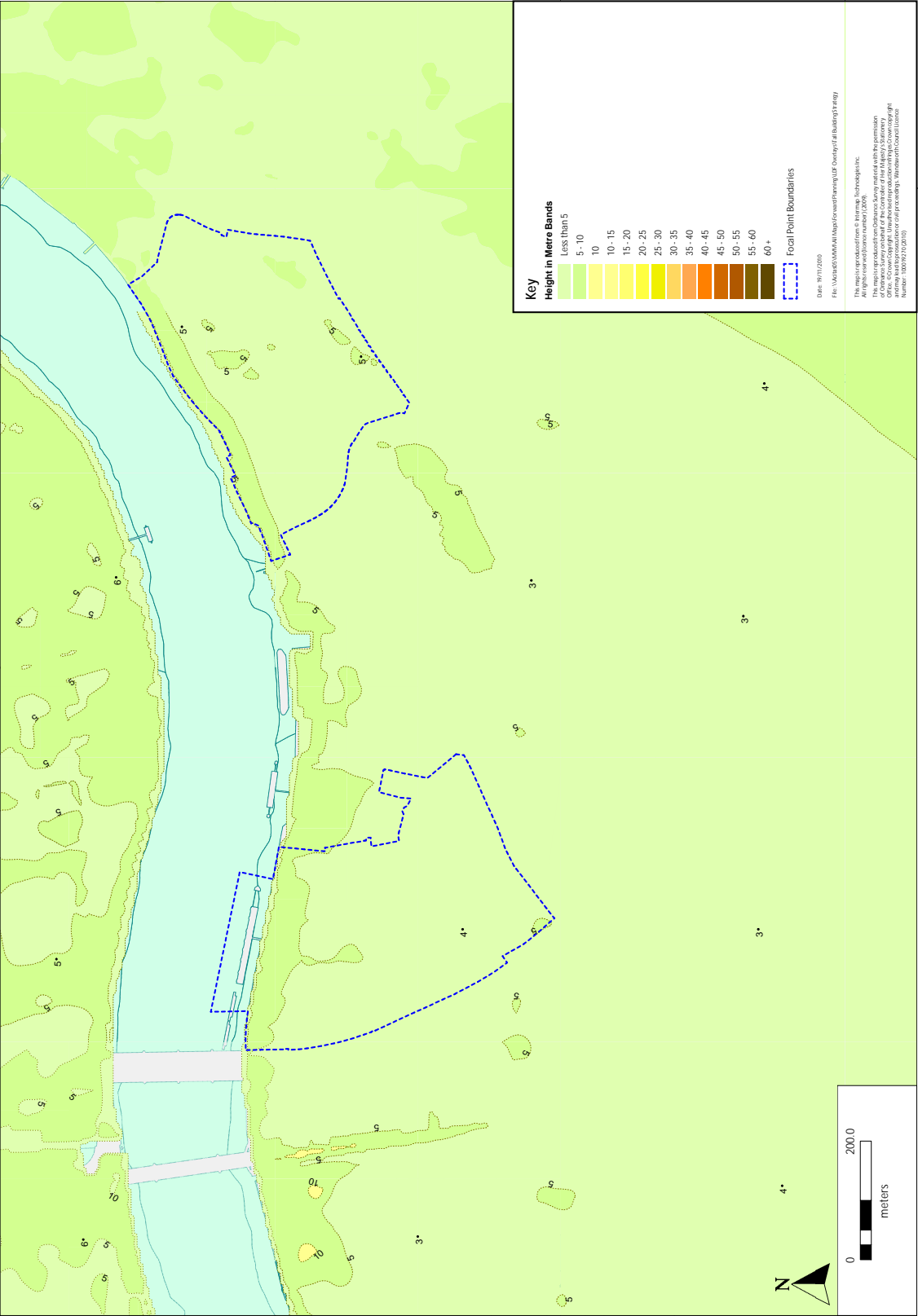
**2.65** Policy PL11 states that tall buildings may be appropriate in the Vauxhall/Nine Elms area subject to qualifications set out in Policy IS3.

### Urban Characterisation

**2.66** The site of Battersea Power Station like much of the Nine Elms area was open marsh land as part of the floodplain of the River Thames. In the late nineteenth century it was developed for the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Works with reservoirs and filtering beds. By the early 20th century the land to the south of the water works was

developed as a marshalling yard for rail freight. As a result, Nine Elms has long suffered from a lack of functional identity. The main issues affecting the development of tall buildings are seen to be as follows:

- Much of the area suffers from a generally impoverished appearance with poor quality buildings and spaces, under-utilised land, and poor connections, being one of the most impermeable areas in London with no north-south connectivity;
- The London Plan identifies the area as part of the Vauxhall/Nine Elms/Battersea Opportunity Area (including part of Vauxhall in Lambeth) within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), with scope for intensification and the potential capacity to provide 8,000 jobs and 3,500 homes by 2026. The draft VNEB OAPF suggests that with the existing and consented schemes at Vauxhall/Nine Elms, there is an opportunity for further proposals to relate to and strengthen the composition of the emerging cluster there, and that this will not be detrimental to the setting of the Palace of Westminster World Heritage site. Approval for a 50 storey building at Vauxhall has already been granted, with proposals for further tall buildings emerging adjacent to the borough within Lambeth;
- Views identified in the London Plan towards the Palace of Westminster affect the Vauxhall/Nine Elms area. The London Plan SPG revised London Views Management Framework July 2010 (LVMF) sets out a number of views from central London and provides a rigorous assessment tool by which the impact of tall buildings may be considered. The river prospect views of the LVMF are of most significance, namely from Waterloo Bridge (view 15A and 15B), Golden Jubilee/Hungerford footbridges (17A and 17B), and Westminster Bridge (18A). The Nine Elms area forms the backdrop and context to the Palace of Westminster, the focus of the World Heritage site, when viewing it from these bridges. Significantly tall buildings within the opportunity area could potentially affect these views and impact on the World Heritage site. In the LVMF the sky component between Millbank tower and the Palace of Westminster is extremely sensitive. In this view there is an open sky component between Millbank Tower and the emerging cluster of tall buildings at Vauxhall/Nine Elms.



Map 2.13 Nine Elms near Vauxhall and Battersea Powerstation Focal Point Topography



## Transport

**2.67** Public transport accessibility is highest around the existing nodes around Battersea Park station in the west (PTAL levels 5/6a), and Vauxhall in the east (PTAL levels 6a/6b), where both areas are served by railway lines and several bus routes. In between, PTAL levels are variable and as low as Level 1 in some places. Transport provision, particularly public transport provision, is the key to unlocking the development potential of the area. Even areas of existing public transport accessibility will need improvement in capacity and services to fully exploit development potential here.

**2.68** The proposed East London line extension using Wandsworth Road station will improve accessibility to the southern part of the opportunity area around the industrial areas. The OAPF is carrying out a transport assessment to look at other ways transport provision can be improved. Delivering transport improvements will require substantial contributions from developers, and this will be set out in the OAPF.

## Development opportunities

**2.69** The Nine Elms area has undergone several transformations over the last 200 years, from marshy floodplain of the River Thames to railway marshalling yards and early terminus from trains to London from the south-west, to large scale industrial area and site of the New Covent Garden Market, when it was re-located from Covent Garden in Westminster. It is set to be transformed once again, having been identified as an Opportunity Area in the London Plan.

**2.70** Its change from industrial zoning to mixed use development allows a significant intensification of development. Paragraphs 5.141 and 5.142 of the London Plan state that, *'subject to the other policies of this plan, good quality tall buildings in appropriate parts of the area will help to reduce its perceived isolation, clearly signposting its transformation as an Opportunity Area.'*

**2.71** The Nine Elms area will be the focus of considerable new development in the medium to long term, including considerable employment and housing development in line with the Vauxhall/Nine Elms/Battersea Opportunity Area Planning Framework and the Area Spatial Strategy for Nine Elms in the Site Specific Allocations Document.

**2.72** The OAPF suggests that tall buildings in the region of 150 metres are likely to have a secondary relationship to the consented 50 storey Vauxhall tower (180 m) and anything above 150 m is unlikely to be acceptable. Within this existing cluster is Market Towers, which is currently 23 storeys. The existing building represents a landmark at the apex of two routes and defines the public space around the Vauxhall interchange. Recent planning applications nearby within Lambeth have involved the erection of a 42 storey building (175 metres) at 69-71 Bondway, and a 34 storey (130 m) building at 143-161 Wandsworth Road.

**2.73** The site of the proposed US Embassy has been highlighted as suitable for a tall building on the basis of its Civic significance. Throughout history buildings of Civic and cultural importance have frequently been designed as landmark buildings, with their height significantly exceeding that of surrounding buildings, the Palace of Westminster and St. Paul's Cathedral, being the most eminent in this context. There is an approved scheme, subject to a legal agreement, for a new US Embassy building in Nine Elms Lane subject to a maximum height of 97 metres.

### **Findings and policy recommendations**

**2.74** The urban characterisation of the Nine Elms area highlights important constraints on tall buildings. These include the parameters set by the LVMF to assess the impact on the Palace of Westminster World Heritage Site.

**2.75** Riverside development of 11 storeys and above will also be considered a tall building in this area, and subject to the tall buildings criteria. The north-eastern end of the focal point closest to Vauxhall is considered appropriate for tall buildings as it is less constrained by the LVMF, whilst the rest of the sites are considered to be sensitive, due to the LVMF restrictions.



## Wandsworth Riverside Quarter Focal Point and Wandle Delta Proposed Focal Point

**2.76** The Wandsworth Riverside Quarter focal point and Wandle Delta proposed focal point (as identified in the Core Strategy) are located north of Wandsworth Town on the south side of the River Thames. The area is bounded by railway land to the south, Northfields Road to the west and the Smugglers Way Solid Waste Transfer Station to the east.

### Policy Context

**2.77** Core Strategy Policy PL9 - River Thames and the riverside, sets out strategic policy in relation to focal points of activity. The policy promotes mixed use redevelopment along the riverside, in order to create safe attractive environments, provide new homes, jobs, leisure and social infrastructure facilities with public spaces at focal points, a riverside walk and cycle way and increase public access to the river. The focal point at Wandsworth Riverside Quarter/Point Pleasant has already been created by new development. A new focal point will be incorporated at the Wandle Delta, where a wide mix of uses, including restaurants, cafes, bars and small scale retail uses and the provision of open space with good accessibility will form a new destination to make full use of the amenities offered by the riverside.

**2.78** Core Strategy Policy IS3 - Good quality design and townscape, states that tall buildings may be appropriate at focal points, providing they can justify themselves in terms of the benefits they bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and their affect on the existing historic environment.

### Urban Characterisation

**2.79** The Wandle Delta, once a flat, featureless and remote area of marshland at the mouth of the Wandle was gradually drained and the reclaimed land developed for industry at the turn of the century. Industry remained here until the 1980s when one of the first of the new residential riverside developments appeared at Prospect Quay, followed just over 10 years later by the first phase of the Riverside Quarter development on the former Shell Oil depot site. Most of the area's extensive frontage to the River Thames has now been developed, with the exception of a small length of Thames frontage where the next phase of the Riverside Quarter development is anticipated and also the Feathers Wharf site on the east bank of the Wandle. There is still industry away from the river front and this is gradually being replaced by new mixed use development.

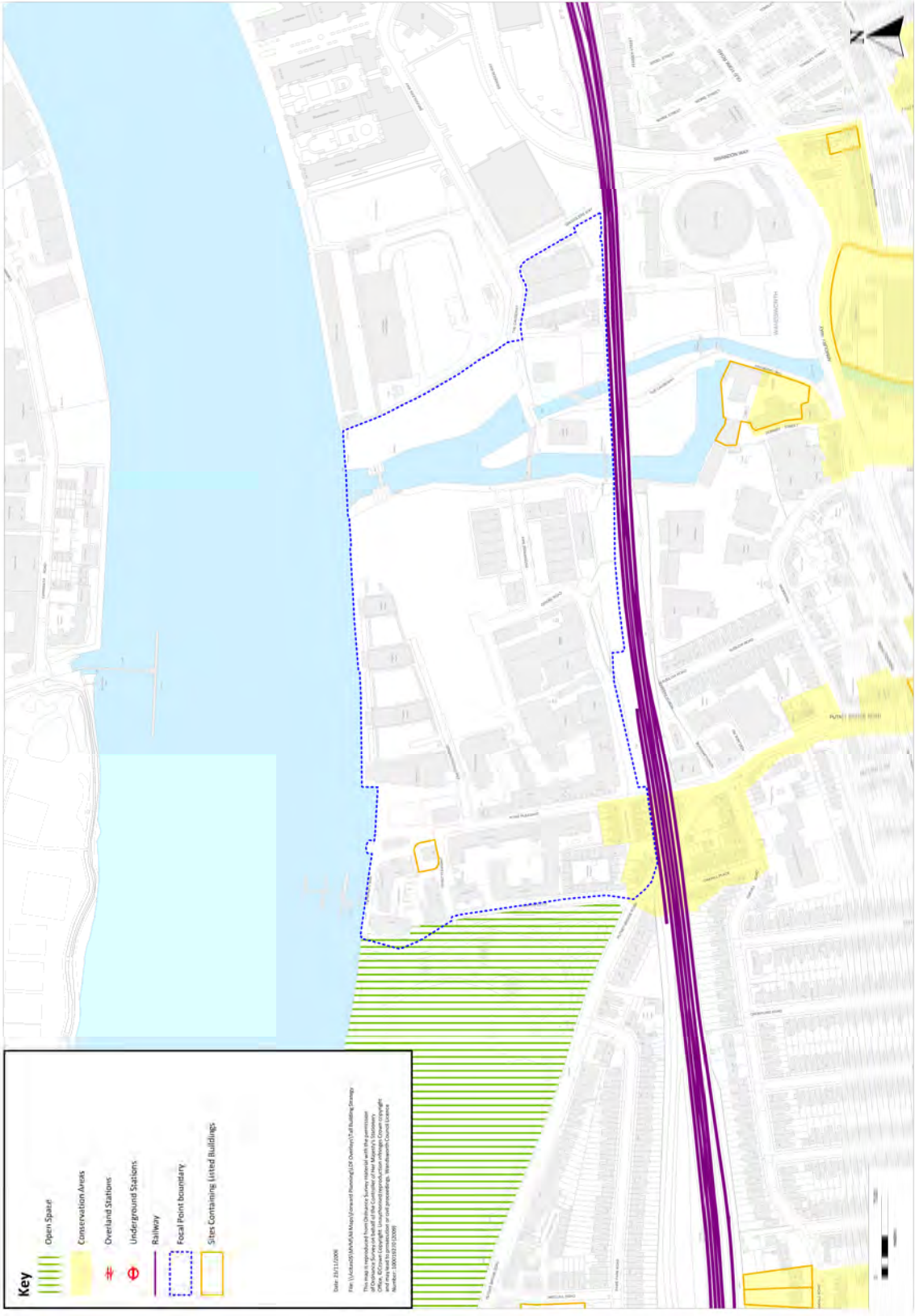
**2.80** This is a flat area of land where the River Wandle flows into the Thames. It is bounded to the south by a railway line set high on an embankment. To the east is the Western Riverside Waste Authority's refuse transfer station building and safeguarded wharf; to the west is Wandsworth Park, a Victorian gated Park and listed on the Register



of Historic Parks and Gardens. The only other heritage assets are a listed building (Grade II) – Prospect House – in Point Pleasant and a remnant of the extensive housing that once lay to the west of Point Pleasant in the form of the cottages in Prospect Place. These are within the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area.

**2.81** Situated on a broad, sweeping concave bend of the river there are extensive long views of the area from both the Deodar Road footbridge, Wandsworth Bridge and from the opposite bank in Fulham. The site is almost directly opposite Hurlingham House and its grounds and there are long views available from Hurlingham Park that could be affected by tall building proposals. There are also views from within Wandsworth Park looking east where buildings in the focal points appear above the trees that mark the boundary of the open space.





Map 2.1.6 Wandle Delta and Wandsworth Riverside Quarter Urban Characterisation

## Transport

**2.82** The area remains remote with only one road connection via Point Pleasant to Putney Bridge Road but there are aspirations to effect better connections to the town centre via the Wandle riverside. A river taxi now stops at the pier at the end of Point Pleasant to take commuters into central London. PTAL levels are generally low (Levels 1-3).

**2.83** Several bus routes operate along Putney Bridge Road operating services as far as Aldwych, Tooting, Victoria, Kensal Rise, Mitcham, Camden and Sutton. The bus routes include two night bus services providing links with Putney and Clapham Junction Overground Stations. The area would benefit from public transport improvements.

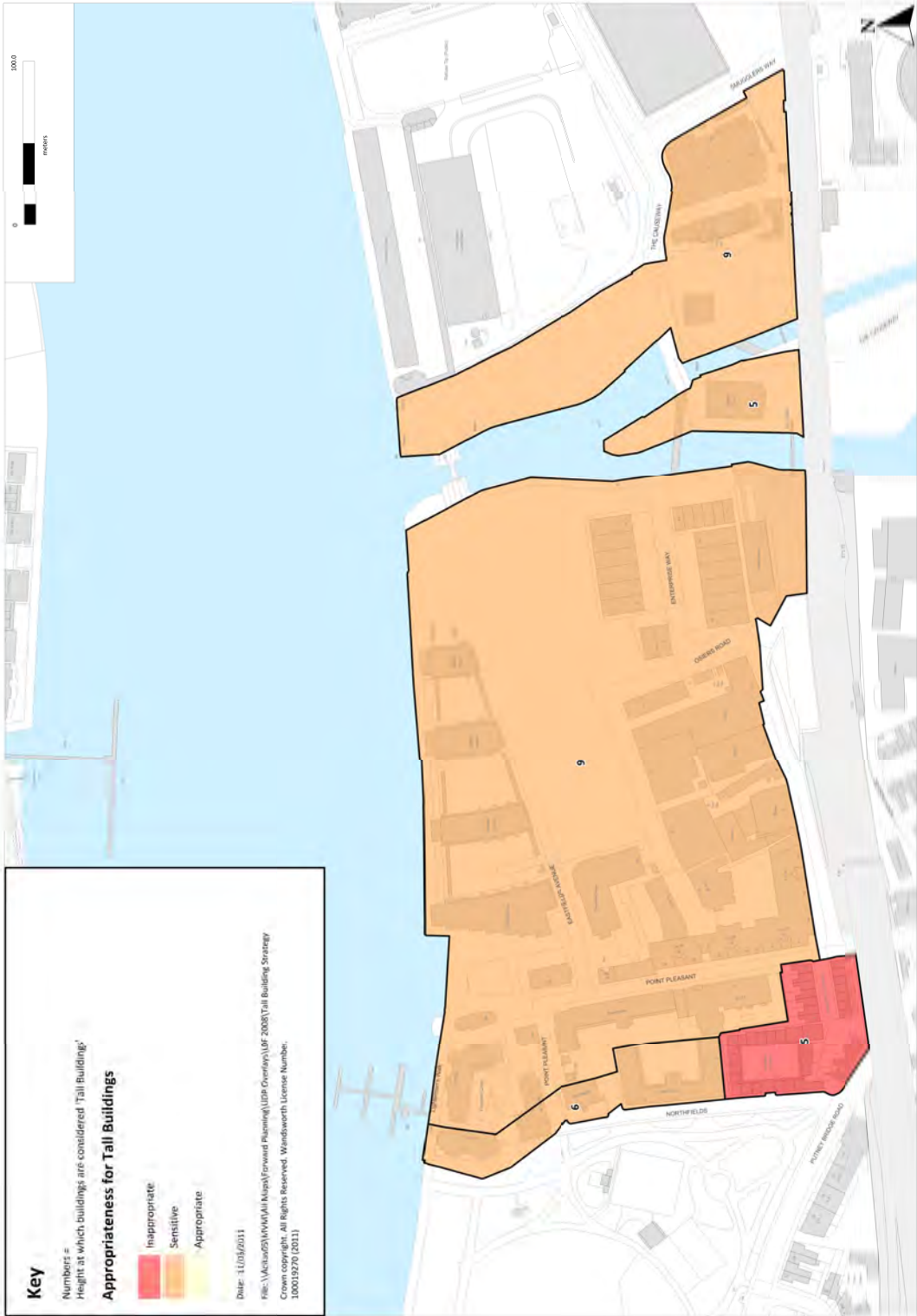
## Development opportunities

**2.84** The Core Strategy (Policies PL9 and PL12) set out a spatial strategy for the area and identifies development opportunities, where taller buildings could be a catalyst for further regeneration of the centre. These opportunity sites include Wandsworth Riverside Quarter (Phase 3), 3-4, 9-19 and 21-22 Osiers Road, Enterprise Way Industrial Estate and Linton Fuels sites and Feathers Wharf. Redevelopment proposals should provide links with the Thames Riverside and Wandsworth town centre. The sites present an opportunity to develop mixed uses including residential, with potential to incorporate the Wandle mouth as an ecological area. A riverside walk and cycle way should be provided along the Thames and Wandle Rivers.

## Findings and policy recommendations

**2.85** Tall buildings already exist on the riverside with the four residential blocks of the first phase of the Riverside Quarter rising from 8 to 10 storeys, and the recently completed schemes on Point Pleasant up to 8 storeys. The prevailing height of buildings throughout the area is still relatively low given the predominance of 1 and 2 storey industrial buildings. However, the low industrial buildings will be replaced by significantly higher buildings as part of the planned process of regeneration to encourage new mixed use development. As such, any building of 9 storeys or above will be considered tall and assessed against the policies in Chapter 5 of this document. The assessment carried out in this report has revealed that most of the focal point is sensitive to tall buildings, with two areas identified as inappropriate.

**2.86** Causeway island is inappropriate due to the importance of the site for nature conservation and the site at the corner of Northfields and Putney Bridge Road is inappropriate due to the close proximity of traditional 2 storey residential property that predominates and sets the low key character of this particular area.



Picture 2.5 Wandsworth Riverside Quarter and Wandle Delta Focal Point - Tall buildings policy

## Ransomes Dock Focal Point

**2.87** Ransomes Dock is located in the north east of the borough along the River Thames, between Battersea and Albert Bridges and to the west of Battersea Park. It is identified as a focal point of activity in the Core Strategy Submission Version (March 2009).

## Policy Context

**2.88** Core Strategy Policy PL9 - River Thames and the riverside, sets out strategic policy in relation to focal points of activity. The policy promotes mixed use redevelopment along the riverside, in order to create safe attractive environments, provide new homes, jobs, leisure and social infrastructure facilities with public spaces at focal points, a riverside walk and cycle way and increase public access to the river. The focal point at Ransome's Dock has been partially implemented by new development. There are two remaining development sites at Ransome's Dock and their redevelopment is the final part of a long-term strategy for the area. They provides a unique opportunity to link with the adjoining area where a significant amount of new development has taken place, and provide a dockside walk through to the River Thames. The inclusion of an area of public open space is important to ensure that the dock basin provides the focus for the creation of an urban space that can be used for a variety and diversity of outdoor activities including al fresco dining. The inclusion of public art is also encouraged to enhance the public realm.

**2.89** Core Strategy Policy IS3 - Good quality design and townscape, states that tall buildings may be appropriate at focal points, providing they can justify themselves in terms of the benefits they bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and their affect on the existing historic environment.

## Urban Characterisation

**2.90** Ransome's Dock was created in the late nineteenth century when the area was the focus of a number of riverside related industries, notably floor milling, foundries, bakeries, barge building and engineering works. This unique dock basin provides a pleasing setting of boats moored against a quayside with enclosing buildings. A public footpath around the dock basin gives access to the area.

**2.91** Since the 1970's the area has undergone a transformation following the redundancy of most of the river-related uses and it has now emerged as a new riverside quarter. Part of the area, notably in Howie and Radstock Streets was designated as light industrial use until recently, and the Site Specific Allocation Document now allocates it for mixed use. This will enable the area to strengthen its image as a riverside quarter, by retaining and maintaining business and commercial uses on the ground floor with residential use above.

**2.92** Much of the focal point, has already been redeveloped, notably Albion Wharf a large mixed use scheme up to 12 storeys in height, Foster and Partners architects offices, Waterside Point and Albert Bridge House. Hester Road has been transformed into a 'shared surface' street in conjunction with the adjoining piazza and riverside walk. The buildings on the south side are of 6 storeys and in commercial use.

**2.93** The eastern side of Battersea Bridge Road contains several surviving nineteenth century buildings with shop frontages at ground floor. The Royal College of Art occupy the building at the corner of Howie Street. The buildings, which are generally of three storeys, are including in the Westbridge Road Conservation Area. Parkgate Road contains a variety of buildings in residential and commercial use which generally date from the nineteenth century and are of three storeys. Beyond Parkgate Road lies Battersea Park, a grade II\* Registered Historic Park and Garden, laid out in the nineteenth century.







## Transport

**2.94** Ransomes Dock Focal Point is served by several bus services connecting to transport hubs including Clapham Junction Overground Station and Sloane Square and South Kensington Underground stations. The buses provide services to Peckham, Victoria, White City and Streatham, including 3 night bus services, providing services to Clapham Junction, Finsbury Park, Camden, Aldwych and Sutton. Nevertheless, PTAL levels are currently low (levels 2/3).

## Development opportunities

**2.95** Most of the focal point has already been developed. The main development opportunities are now in Elcho Street, particularly around the old dock basin and Howie and Radstock Streets. There is a scheme for a mixed use development at 30-40 Elcho Street that is approved subject to a legal agreement involving the erection of a building up to 11 storeys.

## Findings and policy recommendations

**2.96** Along the riverside, prevailing buildings indicate that a building of 9 storeys and above will be tall and therefore subject to the tall buildings policy set out in this document.

**2.97** Elsewhere within the focal point the prevailing height is lower, including the street frontages to Battersea Bridge Road, Parkgate Road, Howie Street and Radstock Street, as well as sites adjoining the existing residential development in Anhalt Road. The Battersea Bridge Road frontage and the eastern end of Parkgate Road lie within the Westbridge Road and Battersea Park Conservation Areas respectively. Any redevelopment in and adjoining these areas should be of a scale and massing related to its context, which is characterised by buildings of up to four storeys. Moreover, the tight knit form of development with existing buildings built up to the back of the pavement means that street enclosure ratios, which exceed 1:1.5 are likely to result in an oppressive form of development with little sunlight penetration to streets. Therefore within this part of the focal point any building which is 5 storeys or above in height will be regarded as a tall building and subject to the policies contained in this document. The entire focal point is considered sensitive to tall buildings.



Map 2.19 Ransomes Dock Focal Point - Tall buildings policy

## Battersea Power Station Proposed Focal Point

**2.98** Battersea Power Station is located at 188 Kirtling Street, SW8. The site is bounded by the River Thames to the north, Battersea Park Road to the south, Grosvenor Bridge and railway land to the west, Kirtling Street to the south-east and the Thames Water Battersea Works and the Western Riverside Waste Transfer Station to the north-east. It is identified as a proposed focal point of activity in the Core Strategy Submission Version (March 2009).

## Policy Context

**2.99** Core Strategy Policy PL9 - River Thames and the riverside, sets out strategic policy in relation to focal points of activity. The policy promotes mixed use redevelopment along the riverside, in order to create safe attractive environments, provide new homes, jobs, leisure and social infrastructure facilities with public spaces at focal points, a riverside walk and cycle way and increase public access to the river. Core Strategy Policy IS3 - Good quality design and townscape, states that tall buildings may be appropriate at focal points, providing they can justify themselves in terms of the benefits they bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and their effect on the existing historic environment.

**2.100** The proposed focal point at Battersea Power Station will be implemented by large scale redevelopment of the power station site. Policy PL11 - Nine Elms and the adjoining area in north-east Battersea, sets out the strategic direction for the development of this area and promotes mixed use development around Battersea Power Station and nearby sites to help create a "sense of place" and a dynamic mixed use quarter, including local shops and services, with improved public transport links.

## Urban Characterisation

**2.101** The site of Battersea Power Station like much of the Nine Elms area was open marsh land as part of the floodplain of the river Thames. In the late nineteenth century it was developed for the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Works with reservoirs and filtering beds. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the land to the south of the water works was developed as a marshalling yard for rail freight.

**2.102** A proposal to build a power station beside the River Thames at Battersea was conceived in 1927. The architect Sir Giles Gilbert Scott was commissioned to design the building. It was built in two stages with Battersea A Power Station being built first in the 1930s, and the 1930's OS map clearly shows this. Battersea Power Station to its east was built in the 1950s. The two power stations were built to an identical design, providing the well known four chimney layout. The power station ceased generating electricity in 1983, but has since become one of London's cherished landmarks. In

recognition of its importance the power station was included in the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest in 1980 as grade II and upgraded to grade II\* in October 2007.

**2.103** The site currently contains the Grade II\* listed Power Station Building and the Grade II Listed Battersea Water Pumping Station, both of which are vacant. Several unused structures remain within the curtilage of the building, including a river wall, a jetty, cranes and associated structures. A series of temporary uses have been established throughout the site, including waterworks buildings, modern exhibition buildings, a district heating facility and miscellaneous mobile offices.

**2.104** As one of London's cherished landmarks, views of the buildings are important. The view north along Queenstown Road is significant with the Power Station punctuating the vista. Views of the Power Station from Chelsea Bridge and the north bank of the River Thames are significant.





## Transport

**2.105** The power station site currently has low PTAL ratings of 1 and 2, and future development of the site will require significant infrastructure investment to facilitate transport improvements. The closest stations to the site are Battersea Park Rail station to the south west (Southern Railway services), Queenstown Road station further south (Southwest Trains services) and Vauxhall Underground and Overland Stations to the north east. While these stations offer a range of services, accessibility to and from the stations is currently poor, and Vauxhall Station is at capacity.

**2.106** The applicant of the current development proposal, along with other key stakeholders, is promoting the development of an extension of London Underground's Northern Line from south of Kennington to the site. This proposal does not form part of the current planning application but will come forward in due course.

**2.107** There are two bus routes operative alongside the site on Battersea Park Road/Nine Elms Lane.

## Development opportunities

**2.108** Several schemes have been put forward since redundancy as a power station, for conversion to mixed uses and leisure-related facilities. The latest planning application was submitted in 2009 and was approved subject to legal agreement in 2010. The current permission involves restoration, extension, alterations and conversion of the Power Station building to provide retail, residential flats, business, cultural, hotel and conference facilities, event space and incidental accommodation; the demolition of other buildings and development of the land surrounding the Power Station and adjacent/nearby sites to provide retail, restaurants bars and cafes, offices, hotel, residential, community and cultural space, assembly and leisure space, an energy centre; parking for cars, coaches, motorcycles and bicycles, associated access and internal road system, works to the jetty to facilitate river transport and fuel delivery, including alterations to the river wall; provision of open space and landscaping works.

## Findings and policy recommendations

**2.109** As part of the assessment of tall buildings within this focal point the significance of the power station is pre-eminent. It is the focus of views from the north bank of the River Thames and frames the view north along Queenstown Road. The space between the power station and the river is important presenting a dramatic almost theatrical relationship to the river, and the views to the power station across the river should not be impeded by any development in front of it. This view is identified in the City of Westminster Metropolitan Views Draft SPD as view 24B (Battersea Power Station to Chelsea Bridge) and Wandsworth's Local Views SPG as view 11 (Upstream and downstream from bridges over the River Thames and river Wandle) and the view north

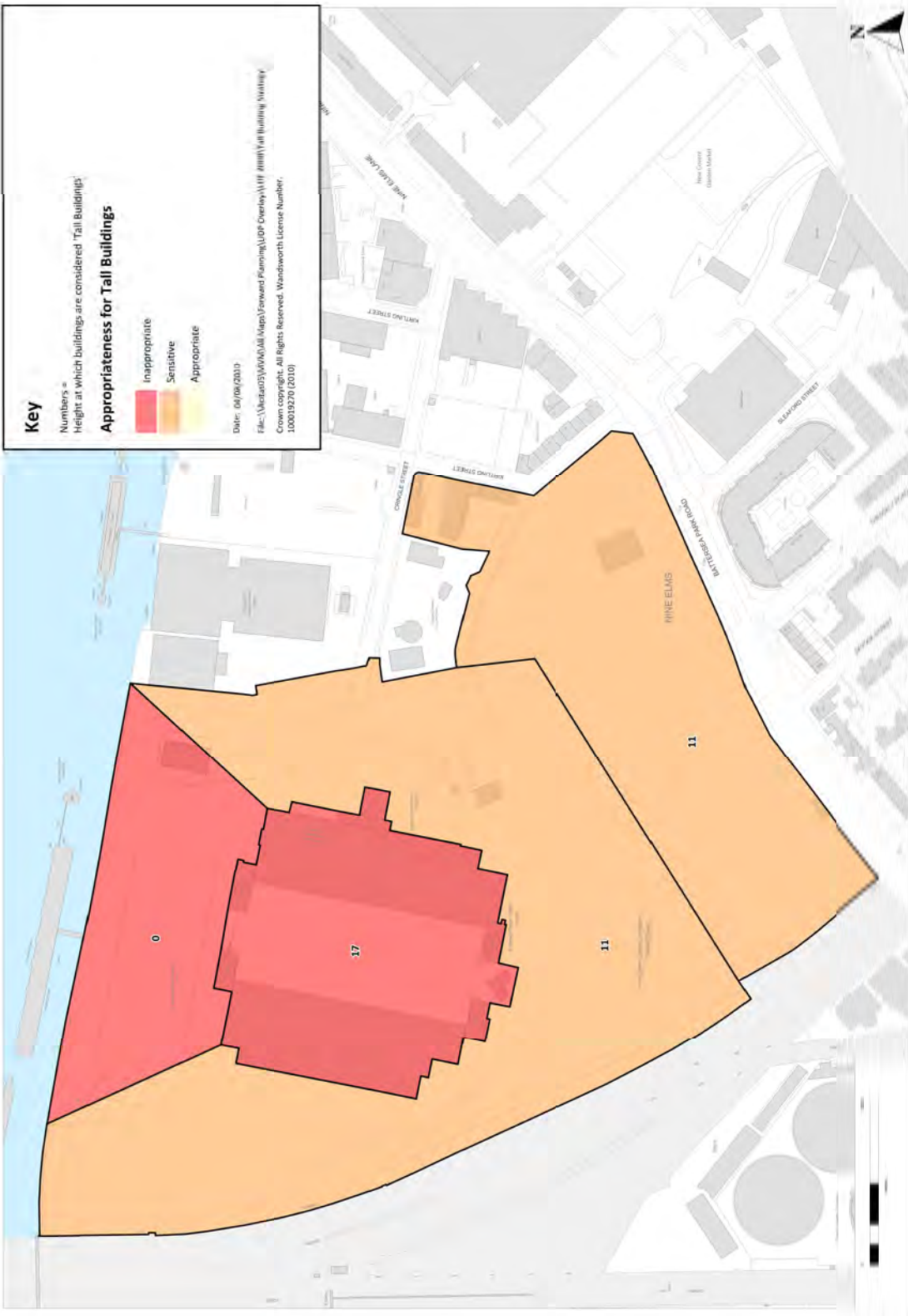


along Queenstown Road. This space should be laid out as a public space in conjunction with a riverside walk. The map below therefore displays a height of 0 storeys to be considered tall and the area is considered inappropriate for tall buildings.

**2.110** In common with other riverside development sites in the VNEB OA, any building which is above 11 storeys in height will be regarded as a tall building and subject to the policies contained in this document. Tall buildings within the site of Battersea Power Station will be considered in terms of their effect on the setting of this historic landmark. The height of the building up to the base of the chimneys is around 53 metres (17 storeys). It is important that any development within the Power Station building is below this height, and as such any building 17 storeys or above in this location will be inappropriate. The Power Station chimneys represent a landmark which is part of the cherished scene set out above.

**2.111** The impact of tall buildings around the power station must also be viewed in the wider context. As described in relation to Nine Elms, significantly tall buildings in this area would need to be assessed under the criteria set out in the London View Management Framework (LVMF). Any significantly tall building in this area would impact on the sky component of the River Prospect views of Waterloo Bridge, Golden Jubilee/Hungerford foot bridges, and Westminster Bridge.

**2.112** Elsewhere within this focal point the street frontages of Battersea Park Road, Kirtling Street and any new streets created to improve accessibility to the area should ensure that good quality streetscape is created. It is important to secure enclosure to the streets, and ratios of around 1:1 are regarded as acceptable. Here applications for buildings of 11 storeys or above will also be subject to the criteria set out in this document for tall buildings.



### 3 Borough-wide tall building characterisation

**3.1** Core Strategy Policy IS3d states that in the remainder of the borough (i.e. outside the town centres, focal points of activity and Nine Elms near Vauxhall) tall buildings will generally be inappropriate. This section provides an analysis of what is considered to be a 'tall building' in the remainder of the borough.

**3.2** In the majority of the borough the predominant character is low rise residential development, however several areas contain clusters of taller buildings - notably the housing blocks in Battersea, along Battersea Park Road, around Battersea Village and to the north of Clapham Junction: above the Southside shopping centre in Wandsworth; in Wimbledon, along the Putney and Wimbledon Ridge: in Roehampton at the Alton East and Alton West Estates and also the office blocks of Upper Richmond Road. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s tall residential blocks were promoted as the solution to solving the housing problem by providing large numbers of homes set within generous open space. Some of these (the slab and point blocks of the Alton Estates) are now Grade II and II\* listed buildings within a conservation area, being recognised as exemplars of their time. Some of these, such as much of the high-rise housing in Battersea are not so highly regarded.

**3.3** While acknowledging the role these tall buildings played in their time, Wandsworth's view is that tall buildings are not now to be considered the universally applicable model for new high density housing initiatives, or the provision of large-scale offices or other commercial floorspace. The current approach requires that tall buildings always deliver public benefits that are more than simply the residential or office floorspace within the buildings themselves. For this reason applications for buildings of five storeys and above in the majority of the borough will be considered tall buildings and will be subject to the tall buildings criteria policy set out in chapter 5 of this report.

**3.4** The latest generation of tall buildings has evolved along the riverside, within the Thames Policy Area. These have been a response to a number of policy strands, aimed at regeneration of redundant former industrial sites and the optimisation of residential density, coupled with a sensitivity to strategic and local views and the objective of creating generous new public realm. Schemes here have been required to deliver mixed uses, create new public access and a riverside walk and signal the regeneration of formerly inaccessible sites. The creation of new public realm and the desire to avoid continuous mid-rise buildings overshadowing them has generated taller than average building elements in most of these schemes. Due to a higher prevailing height in the Thames Policy Area than the rest of the borough, applications of 9 storeys and above will be subject to the tall buildings criteria policy in chapter 5 of this report. Other policy considerations will be relevant in relation to specific allocations along the riverside. For example the protection of the special recreational character of the Putney Embankment are relevant regardless of the height of a building proposed.

**3.5** The Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea Opportunity Area is identified in the London Plan as a place in London with the potential to accommodate substantial numbers of new jobs and homes. A key principle of the VNEB Opportunity Area Planning Framework is that the supported form of development will be 8-10 storey high density development with tall buildings on key sites. The detailed area studies relating to Nine Elms near Vauxhall and Battersea Power Station deal with tall buildings on key sites (see chapter 2). In the remainder of the VNEB OA it is considered that in order to accommodate the scale of development anticipated, taller buildings than the predominantly low rise residential nature of the rest of the borough will be required. Therefore, within the Vauxhall Nine Elms Opportunity Area (outside the focal points addressed in chapter 2) applications for buildings of 11 storeys and above will be considered tall buildings, and will be subject to the tall buildings criteria policy in chapter 5 of this report. As identified in changes to the Core Strategy set out by the Inspector, within the VNEB OA, subject to the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support the redevelopment of the area, there is scope to create a new community in a high quality urban setting. Within this area there will be scope to build at the highest densities paying regard to the London Plan density matrix, subject to individual site constraints.

**3.6** In accordance with Policy IS3d, there is a general presumption that tall buildings in these areas are likely to be inappropriate. It should be noted that buildings below the 'tall buildings' threshold, will still be subject assessment against the Core Strategy and Unitary Development Plan (to be replaced by the Development Management Policies Document). Policies relating to high quality design, sustainable design, protection of amenity and privacy etc, will apply to any development proposal, regardless of its height.

## 4 Assessment of Tall Buildings Proposals

### Introduction

**4.1** English Heritage/CABE guidance contains criteria for evaluating tall buildings proposals. The following section sets out the detailed considerations for the assessment of tall buildings applications, building on the EH/CABE guidance and is designed to assist both applicants and planners to achieve high quality tall buildings.

**4.2** In addition to these considerations, BAA Airports should be consulted for applications where buildings of 90m or more are proposed within Wandsworth, to ensure that potential effects on Heathrow Airport are taken into account.

### Sustainable construction and credibility of design

**4.3** Section 4.1.6 of the EH/CABE guidance requires the sustainable design and construction of a proposal to be addressed, and states:

*"For all forms of development, good design means sustainable design. Tall buildings should set exemplary standards in design because of their high profile and local impact. Proposals should therefore exceed the latest regulations and planning policies for minimising energy use and reducing carbon emissions over the lifetime of the development. The long-term resource and energy efficiency of tall buildings will be enhanced if their design can be adapted over time."*

Section 4.1.7 requires credibility of design to be assessed, and states:

*"Tall buildings are expensive to building, so it is important that the high standard of architectural quality required is not diluted throughout the process of procurement, detailed design, and construction. Location, use, the commitment of the developer, and ability and expertise of the consultant team will have a fundamental bearing on the quality of the completed building."*

**4.4** In order to address this criteria, and identify other sustainability benefits, applicants will be required to:

- Describe how the proposal contributes to social inclusion, environmental health and economic vitality of Wandsworth;
- Provide a sustainability statement setting out how the proposal will apply best practice sustainability considerations using the appropriate method (Code for Sustainable Homes/BREEAM) to assess the proposal's sustainability;
- Demonstrate financial and technical credibility of design.

## Infrastructure

**4.5** Section 4.1.4 of the EH/CABE guidance requires the relationship to transport infrastructure to be addressed, and requires applicants to address:

**4.6** *"The relationship to infrastructure, aviation constraints, and in particular, the capacity of public transport, the quality of links between transport and the site, and the feasibility of making improvements, where appropriate. Transport is important in relation to tall buildings because of the intensity of use, as well as density, that they represent."*

**4.7** In addition to transport infrastructure, it is important sufficient social infrastructure is in place, or will be in place, in order to support the proposed development. To ensure this is addressed, applicants will be required to:

- Assess the current capacity of local infrastructure, particularly transport, including social infrastructure and facilities and identify additional infrastructure and facilities required as a result of the proposed development, and how these will be achieved and delivered;
- Provide a transport assessment and travel plan demonstrating innovative and sustainable approaches to transport issues including reduction of private vehicle use and improved access to public transport.

## Effect on historic context, local environment, and relationship to context

**4.8** Key elements of the EH/CABE guidance require assessment of relationship to context, the effect on historic heritage including world heritage sites, the architectural quality of a building, the credibility of design and the effect on the local environment. These are outlined in detail below.

*"The relationship to context, including natural topography, scale, height, urban grain, streetscape and built form, open spaces, rivers and waterways, important views, prospects and panoramas, and the effect on the skyline. Tall buildings should have a positive relationship with relevant topographical features and other tall buildings; the virtue of clusters when perceived from all directions should be considered in this light (4.1.1)."*

*"The effect on the historic context, including the need to ensure that the proposal will preserve and/or enhance historic buildings, sites, landscapes and skylines. Tall buildings proposals shall address their effect on the setting of, and views to and from historic buildings, sites and landscapes over a wide area including; world heritage sites, scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, and registered battlefields, archaeological remains, conservation areas (4.1.2) (4.1.3 provides further guidance on effect on world heritage sites)"*

*"The architectural quality of the building including its scale, form, massing, proportion and silhouette, facing materials and relationship to other structures. The design of the top of the building will be of particular importance when considering the effect on the skyline. The design of the base of a tall building will also have a significant effect on the streetscape and rear views (4.1.5)"*

*"The credibility of design, both technically and financially. Tall buildings are expensive to build, so it is important to be sure that the high standard of architectural quality required is not diluted throughout the process of procurement, detailed design, and construction. Location, use, the commitment of the developer, and ability and expertise of the consultant team will have a fundamental bearing on the quality of the completed building (4.1.7)."*

*"The effect on the local environment, including microclimate, overshadowing, night-time appearance, vehicle movements and the environment and amenity of those in the vicinity of the building (4.1.9)"*

### **4.9** Applicants will be required to:

- Describe how the proposal addresses the climatic effects on its surroundings including overshadowing, the diversion of wind speeds at ground level, heat islands and glare reduction.
- Describe how the proposal has considered impacts on neighbouring properties including outlook, privacy, daylight, sunlight and noise.
- Show, through a detailed design analysis, how the proposal visually affects surrounding areas. The visual impact will have to be illustrated through computer visualisations and photomontage techniques that consider the built and natural environment, key strategic views, conservation settings and listed buildings.
- Assess the impact on the existing historic environment through a conservation impact assessment identifying how the surrounding area's character or appearance or the setting of a listed building will be preserved or enhanced. As set out in Core Strategy policy IS3d, views of the Palace of Westminster will be protected in accordance with the London View Management Framework;
- Describe how the proposed land use mix supports and complements the surrounding land use pattern and local community.
- Describe how the scale and massing of the proposal creates a form that is integrated into surrounding development.

## **Contributions to townscape and public space**

**4.10** The EH/CABE guidance contains two criteria which relate to townscape and public space, and require tall buildings proposals to address:

*"The contribution to public space and facilities, both internally and externally, that the development will make in the area, including the provision of a mix of uses, especially on the ground floor of towers, and the inclusion of these areas as part of the public realm. The development should interact with and contribute positively to its surroundings at street level; it should contribute to safety, diversity, vitality, social engagement and sense of place (4.1.8)."*

*"The provision of a well-designed environment, both internal and external, that contributes to the quality of life of those who use the buildings, including function, fitness for purpose and amenity (4.1.11)"*

**4.11** Applicants will be required to:

- Demonstrate how the proposal sits within the existing townscape and landform by way of a townscape/landscape impact assessment;
- Describe how the proposal contributes to streetscape, particularly including active frontages and legible entrances;
- Describe how the proposal responds positively to any characteristic alignment and setbacks of surrounding areas;
- Describe how the proposal has been designed to create high quality public spaces within and adjacent to the site. Particular consideration should be given to climatic comfort, the need for sun, light and shade, compatibility of adjacent uses and the quality of materials;
- Describe how the proposal maximises provision of outdoor and indoor amenity space including internal private and outdoor public open space.

## **Accessibility**

**4.12** Tall buildings should maximise their benefit to surrounding communities by incorporating a range of uses which encourage access to the building, including high quality public spaces and, restaurants and educational facilities. Section 4.1.10 of the EH/CABE guidance requires the following to be addressed:

*"The contribution made to permeability of a site and the wider area; opportunities to offer improved accessibility, and, where appropriate, the opening up, or effective closure, of views to improve legibility of the city and the wider townscape."*

**4.13** In addition to the mandatory requirements of current building regulations, tall buildings should maximise accessibility for people of all abilities, including through the provision of ramps and lifts, adequate lighting and signage, safe surfaces, variable textures and adequate turning circles for wheelchair use.

**4.14** Applicants will be required to:



- Describe how the proposal will encourage public access;
- Demonstrate that the proposal will provide equal access for people of all abilities.

### **Maintenance and Management**

**4.15** The effect of a tall building continues over the building's life, and is greatly affected by maintenance and management of the building. Building materials should be used that require low maintenance and have a long life. Similarly, all public spaces should be well maintained and managed to encourage its use by occupants/users and the community.

**4.16** High density schemes rely on high quality management for their enduring success and the relationship between management and design is essential. A description of how the units will be managed is particularly important for those tall buildings that are mixed tenures and mixed use schemes. Applicants will be required to submit a Management Plan or which the freeholder is responsible, specifying how the landlord(s) will manage the development. This obligation will be secured on the freeholder and any successive freeholders, to ensure that there is a viable management framework for selling, letting and managing all the dwellings and other non-housing uses. Key aspects to consider include rent and service charges, the arrangements for coordinating management and maintenance of parts of the building where there is more than one landlord, security, tenancy consultation, maintenance plans, schedule of amenities to which the residents will have access and any applicable charges, details of the number of people each shared access, lift and stairwell will serve.

**4.17** Applicants will be required to:

- Describe long term maintenance commitments in a maintenance programme including details for the long term maintenance and management of public spaces.
- Submit a Management Plan, for which the freeholder is responsible, specifying how the landlord(s) will manage the development;

## 5 Policy Recommendations

**5.1** Core Strategy Policy IS3 provides the starting point for the assessment of tall buildings, as follows:

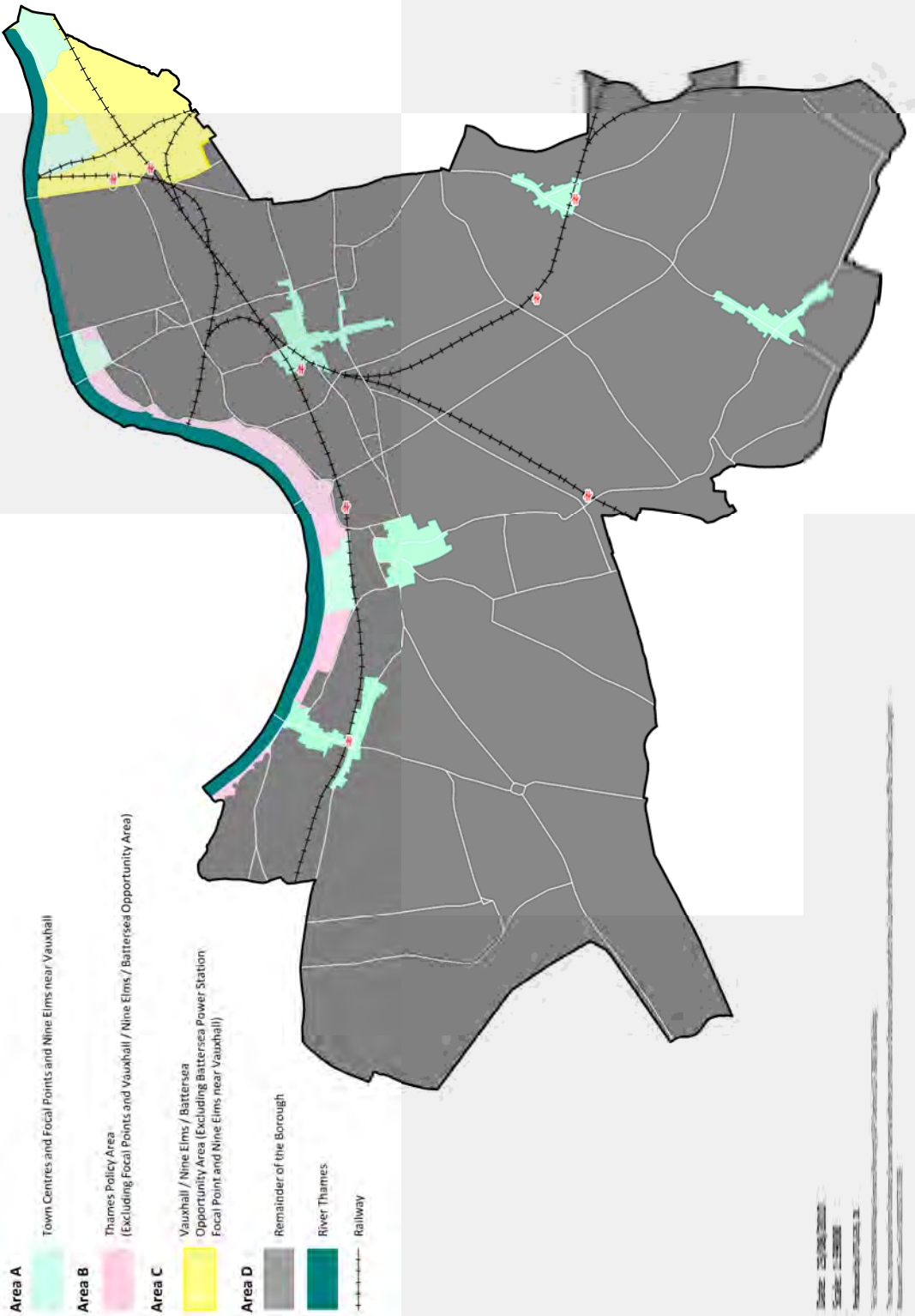
- d. *"Tall buildings, that is those which are substantially taller than the prevailing height of neighbouring buildings and/or which significantly change the skyline, may be appropriate in the borough's town centres, Nine Elms near Vauxhall or Putney Wharf, Wandsworth Riverside Quarter, Wandle Delta, Ransomes Dock and Battersea Power Station focal points of activity (as illustrated on Map 16). Some locations within these areas will be sensitive to, or inappropriate for, tall buildings. Applications for tall buildings will need to justify themselves in terms of the benefits they may bring for regeneration, townscape and public realm and be of high architectural quality, respect local context and the historic environment. Tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate in other areas. Detailed criteria for the assessment of tall buildings, consideration of the appropriateness of tall buildings on individual sites, and the heights at which buildings will be considered 'tall' on individual sites will be contained in the Development Management Policies Document and Site Specific Allocations Document.*
- e. *Views of the Westminster World Heritage Site will be protected in accordance with the London Plan and the London View Management Framework."*

**5.2** The Detailed Area Studies in section two of this report identified a series of heights at which buildings will be considered 'tall buildings' and therefore trigger the tall buildings policy. Through the urban characterisation assessments the detailed area studies also clearly identify, in map-based form, whether a site is appropriate, sensitive, or inappropriate for tall buildings. Section three of this report analyses the rest of the borough, where tall buildings are likely to be considered inappropriate, to determine at what height a building will be considered a 'tall building'. It is recommended that this information is added to the Site Specific Allocations Document in the form of an Appendix, and that information in relation to individual SSAD sites is added to the relevant site.

**5.3** In order to make it clear when applications will be considered 'tall buildings' it is recommended that the following policy be included within the Development Management Policies Document:

Proposals will trigger assessment against the detailed criteria in policy DMS4b in the following circumstances:

Location	Map 2.1	Height
<b>Locations where tall buildings may be appropriate:</b>		
Town centres, focal points and Nine Elms near Vauxhall	Area A	Refer Appendix 1 'Tall Buildings Maps' Site Specific Allocations Document
<b>Locations where tall buildings are likely to be inappropriate:</b>		
Thames Policy Area (excluding focal points and Vauxhall/Nine Elms/Battersea Opportunity Area)	Area B	9 storeys and above
Vauxhall/Nine Elms/Battersea Opportunity Area (excluding Battersea Power Station focal point and Nine Elms near Vauxhall)	Area C	11 storeys and above
Remainder of the borough	Area D	5 storeys and above



Map 5.1 Wandsworth - Tall buildings policy areas

**5.4** Section four of this report has identified a range of factors that will be taken into account in assessing applications for tall buildings. It is also recommended that these factors form a criteria based policy for inclusion in the Development Management Policies Document. However, a number of these criteria apply equally to all forms of development, rather than having specific relevance for tall buildings. Therefore, criteria that are already considered to be covered by DMS1 - Sustainable development principles, are omitted here, to avoid duplication. The recommended policy is set out below.

*"Applications for tall buildings will be required to address the following criteria in order to demonstrate compliance with Core Strategy Policies IS3d and IS3e:*

- *describe how the proposal contributes to social inclusion, environmental health and the economic vitality of Wandsworth;*
- *provide a transport assessment and travel plan demonstrating innovative and sustainable approaches to transport issues including reduction of private vehicle use and improved access to public transport;*
- *describe how the proposal addresses the climatic effects on its surroundings including overshadowing, the diversion of wind speeds at ground level, heat islands and glare reduction;*
- *show, through a detailed design analysis, that the proposal will have an acceptable visual impact on surrounding areas. The visual impact should be illustrated through computer visualisations and photo montages that cover the built and natural environment, strategic views, and the settings of conservation areas and listed buildings. Where clusters of tall buildings are proposed, this should also address the cumulative impact on the skyline;*
- *assess the impact on the existing historic environment through a conservation impact assessment identifying how the surrounding area's character or appearance or the setting of a listed building will be preserved or enhanced. As set out in Core Strategy Policy IS3e, views of the Westminster World Heritage Site will be protected in accordance with the London View Management Framework;*
- *describe how the proposed land use mix supports and complements the surrounding land use pattern and local community;*
- *describe how the massing and scale of the proposal creates a form that is well integrated into surrounding development;*
- *demonstrate how the proposal successfully sits within the existing townscape and landform by way of a townscape/landscape impact assessment;*
- *describe how the proposal positively contributes to streetscape, particularly including active frontages and legible entrances;*
- *describe how the proposal responds positively to any characteristic alignment and setbacks of surrounding areas;*
- *describe how the proposal has been designed to create high quality public spaces. Particular consideration should be given to climatic comfort, the need for sun, light and shade, compatibility of adjacent uses and the quality of materials;*
- *describe how the proposal will encourage public access;*

- *describe long term maintenance commitments in a maintenance programme including details for the long term maintenance and management of public spaces;*
- *submit a Management Plan, for which the freeholder is responsible, specifying how the landlord(s) will manage the development;*
- *demonstrate financial and technical credibility of design."*