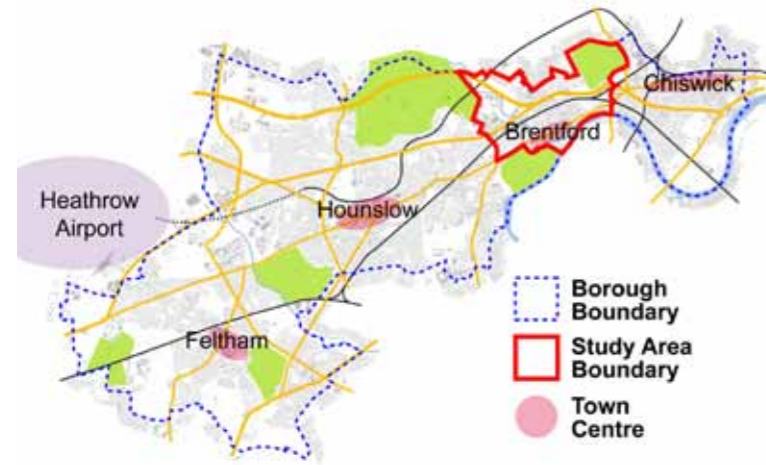




Brentford

Brentford

borough context



The Brentford study area lies toward the eastern end of the borough approximately 12km from central London. It is situated next to Ealing to the north (with which it merges imperceptibly), Chiswick to the east, and Isleworth and Osterley to the west. Kew Gardens, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, lies across the River Thames to the south. The study area is pierced roughly east-west by a railway line, the A4 Great West Road and the elevated M4. The Grand Union Canal/River Brent runs north-south through the west of the area to join the Thames south of the High Street.

The stretch of predominantly retail uses along the High Street is designated as one of the borough's four Town Centres and a District Centre in the London Plan.

present day context

Brentford has a unique and varied townscape with distinctive built and natural environments that are significant to its identity and sense of place. These include waterways and waterside environments, historic buildings, the A4 Great West Road 'Golden Mile' - London's western gateway, and a large number of cultural and recreational assets. There is a rich mix of residential and commercial development interspersed with open space. Large commercial developments dominate the Great West Road. The town centre provides for smaller commercial and retail development and is flanked by new high density residential development.

Brentford is subject to a significant amount of development pressure within a relatively small area. Negative characteristics include high levels of traffic and aircraft noise and a social and physical infrastructure that struggles to match the pressures placed on it. The overall townscape lacks cohesion, with high quality historic and contemporary development fragmented by areas of lower quality.

physical context

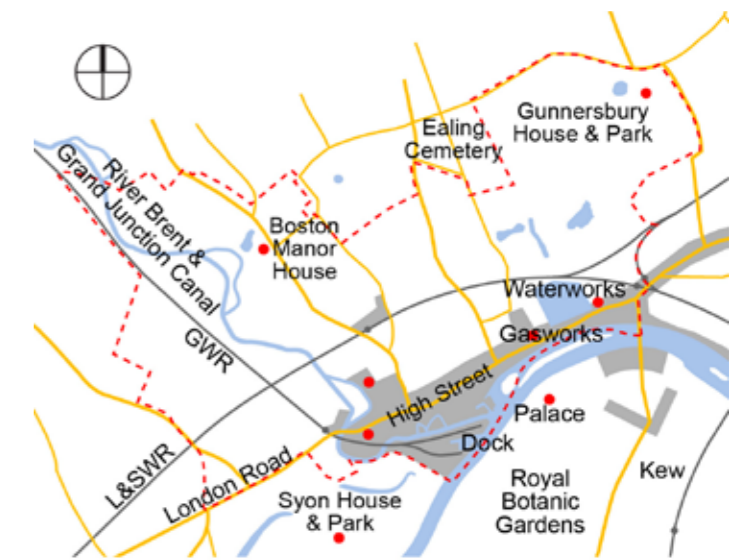
Brentford is located at the confluence of two major waterways and on a meander of the River Thames which features two wooded islands. The waterways and their banks are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The highest ground lies to the northeast in and around Gunnersbury Park.

historic context

Research shows that a Roman and British settlement existed c100CE along the site of the Roman road from London to Staines, which lay just north of the present High Street and especially close to the River Thames. Due to this strategic location, Brentford not only became an important trading centre - the town developed more rapidly than Hounslow - with a market and fair, but was the site of numerous battles. By the C18th Brentford had become a major administrative centre and, with the coming of the canal and the railways, an important industrial centre and transport hub. It thus developed a character somewhat out of keeping with its Arcadian surroundings.

In 1925 the Great West Road was constructed as a bypass to Brentford. The Brentford section became known as the Golden Mile due to the large number of factories that established or relocated there and stimulated the local economy. The elevated section of the M4 motorway opened in 1965. The town itself saw its first regeneration during 1960s and 70s in the form of High Street widening and the demolition of old buildings, and slum clearance and redevelopment of former water utility land into low and high rise social housing - the famous Brentford Towers. The staithes forming the coal gas wharf were transformed into a riverside park. However the area's cultural and industrial heritage are still very much in evidence, if hidden.

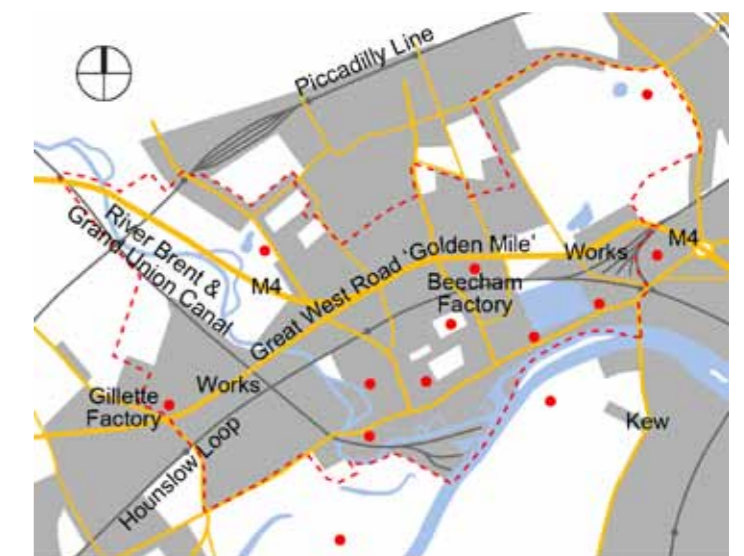
1870



1920



1965



1930s Art Deco former factory on the Golden Mile



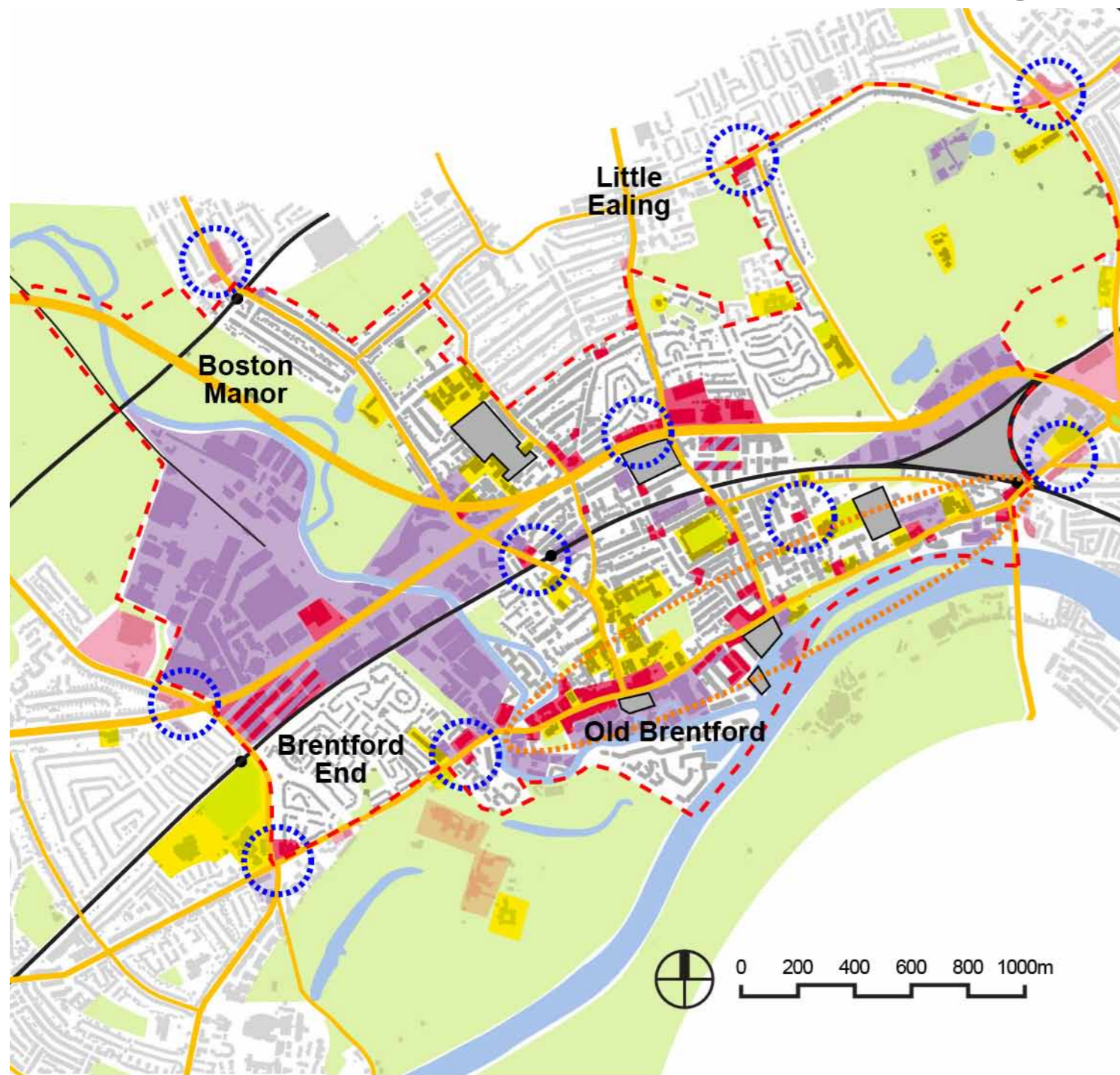
Kew Bridge Steam Museum at the former waterworks



Marina and housing at the former Brentford Docks

Brentford

land and building use



Brentford owes its unique overall character and identity as much to its huge variety of uses, building ages, styles, materials and layouts as to its natural setting. This variety has created distinctive local townscapes, ranging from local concentrations of particular styles, such as the Georgian housing in the Butts, to areas of considerable diversity such as the Ham with its eclectic mixture of old and new, residential and commercial. The different character areas in Brentford are an outcome of the evolving spatial pattern of development over time in relation to predominant land use, and the functional relationship between land use and building design.

The study area features a rich mix of residential and commercial development interspersed with open space. Large commercial developments dominate the Great West Road, providing a mix of old and new accommodation and a number of large sites providing regeneration potential. Use becomes more uniformly residential north of the Great West Road and M4 and southwest of the town centre. The town centre provides for smaller commercial and retail development and is flanked by new high density residential development which has taken place along the River Thames to the East (Ferry Quays) and the Grand Union Canal to the West (Brentford Lock). The area provides a wide range of large scale art and entertainment facilities that not only cater for local residents but also attract visitors from outside of the area. Over recent years there has also been a significant growth in hotel development. The area's waterside character is shaped by its canal and riverside buildings, its active boatyards and the variety of established residential moorings. Residential types vary enormously and include 2 storey late C19th terraces, early interwar garden suburbs, 1970s tower blocks and 2000s urban renaissance mid-rise apartments. The residential areas are served by a fairly even distribution of local centres in the form of shopping parades. A particular characteristic of its older areas are the many public houses, some of which are under threat of redevelopment.

Brentford currently struggles to perform its function to provide local goods and services with regards to both the quantity and quality of floorspace provided. The town centre also has an incoherent and run-down appearance and suffers from a constant stream of traffic travelling along the High Street.



Commercial uses on the Great West Road



Regular terraces in St Paul's, a complete Late Victorian New Town



New residential development, Great West Quarter



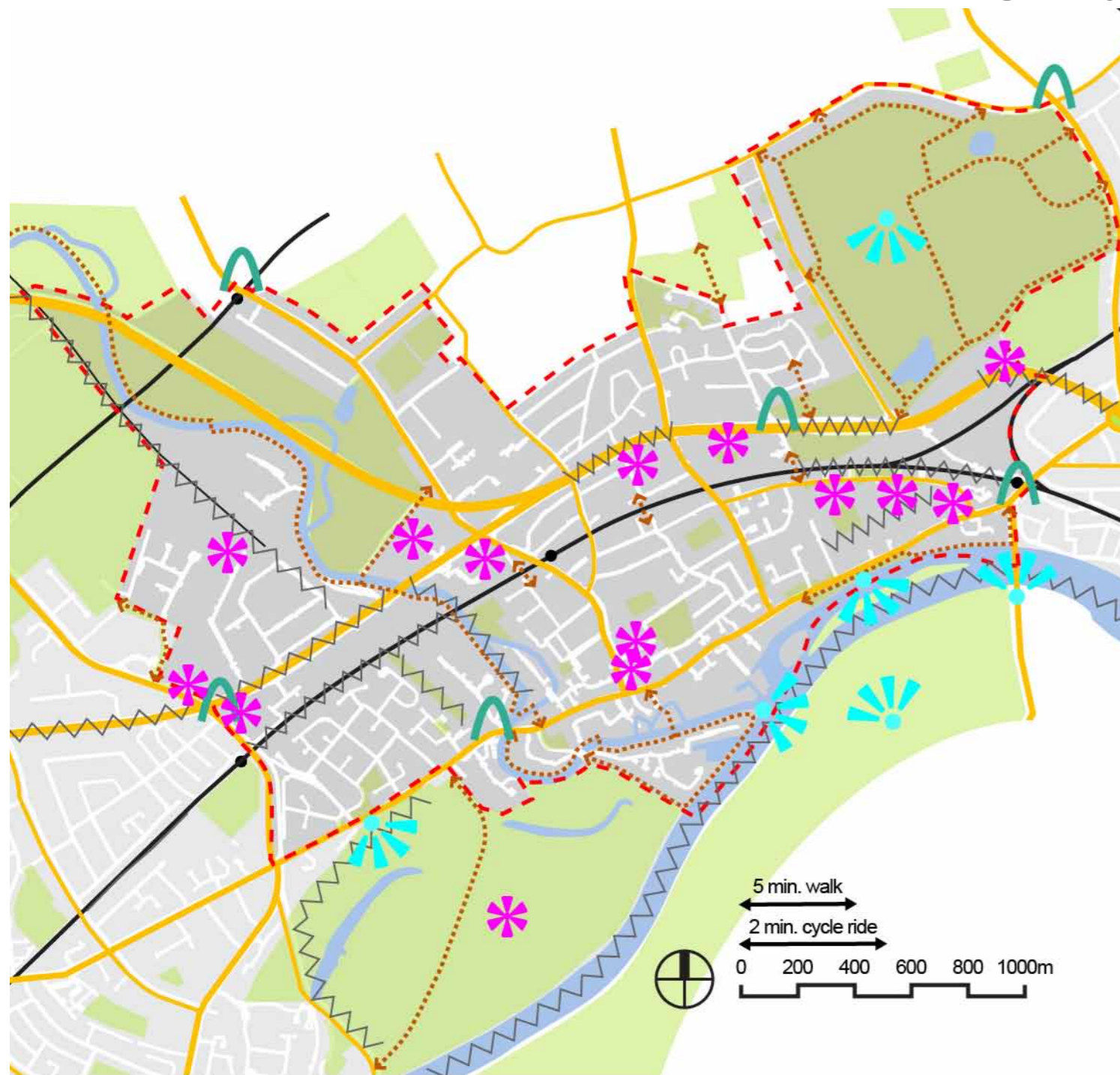
Local shopping parade, 1970s housing estate



The south side of the High Street

Brentford

movement and legibility



The overall movement structure is dominated by the east-west road and rail routes. The A4 Great West Road/M4 provides a key commercial area to the north of Brentford town centre and an important gateway to and from London particularly from the West and North West of the UK and indeed the rest of the world through Heathrow. Brentford's economic success has been based in part on these excellent links. Less positively, the A4/M4 is a major barrier to both vehicular and pedestrian north-south movement, in places quite clearly slicing the pre-existing urban fabric in two. The Hounslow Loop rail line runs east west through the area and stations at Syon Lane, Brentford and Kew Bridge provide connections with central London, other parts of the borough and parts of Surrey. To the south the area is crossed by London Road/Brentford High Street/Kew Bridge Road. The North Circular Road forms part of the eastern boundary, where the River Thames is crossed by Kew Bridge. Lesser though often busy roads provide mainly north-south links on an irregular and sometimes character area-defining grid. On a local level the route network offers a relatively high degree of connectivity.

Brentford is an area that experiences a large number of cars travelling to and through the area which results in high levels of congestion, poor air quality and unacceptable levels of traffic noise, all major concerns to local residents. Furthermore, traffic movements through the area, most of which are not generated within the area, reduce the attraction of walking and cycling and the reliability and frequency of local bus services.

The area is well-served by bus, train and, in the north, tube, though travel is biased towards an east-west axis. The town centre is a terminus for buses from Ealing and Southall to the north.

Pedestrian movement and way-finding through the overall area is on the whole easy, the only major barrier being the Great West Road with its infrequent crossing opportunities. Lesser barriers are in the form of sections of the railway corridor. The Green Dragon Estate with its six tall towers feels cut off from the High Street to the south. The Thames Path diverts interestingly through the industrial and semi-derelict areas south of the High Street and along the Canal/River Brent from where the towpath leads north to Birmingham.

Landmark buildings of varying age, use and quality are concentrated in the town centre, to the east of the area and along the Great West Road, and may often be glimpsed at the ends of streets and across open spaces. Quality views are to be had from various points along the banks of the River Thames and Kew Bridge, to and from Kew Gardens.



The Golden Mile, A4 Great West Road



Cycle and footway on Great West Road with elevated M4



Busy junction, Kew Bridge Road and North Circular Road, with landmark tower



The popular Grand Union Canal/River Brent towpath



St Paul's Church, central Brentford

Brentford

green and blue landscape



There are a limited number of open spaces in the study area (St Paul's Recreation Ground, Watermans Park and Carville Hall Park, cut in half by the Great West Road), although there are larger areas of parkland immediately surrounding Brentford at Syon Park, Osterley Park, Boston Manor and Gunnersbury Park, each possessing its own historic mansion, all of which are now listed. Just across the river lies Kew UNESCO World Heritage Site that not only provides a unique place to visit but also provides pleasant views and broad vistas from the Brentford banks of the river.

The River Thames and the Grand Union Canal form an integral part of London's Blue Ribbon Network. The Canal, combined with the River Brent, joins the Thames south of the Thames Lock, and provides the gateway to the inland waterways that pass through the rest of the country. Whilst some major waterside sites have been redeveloped for housing, other areas still provide for traditional uses. These include boatyards, moorings and a plethora of small industrial and commercial uses, all of which contribute in their own way to Brentford's unique waterside environment, its intimate scale and unique sense of place. Much of the riverbank and canal towpath is accessible to the public but other parts need to be provided where appropriate and where opportunities arise.

The contribution of the waterways to the quality of the local environment, biodiversity and recreational amenity are also of fundamental significance, and this has been recognised by their designation within London's Blue Ribbon Network and as Sites of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The section of the river flowing through Brentford is part of the tidal Thames and supports a diverse mix of habitats. The Thames islands, which include Brentford Ait and Lots Ait, were originally deliberately planted with trees to hide the industrial scene from the Kew side. They now form an extended landscape with Kew.

With the exception of those in the historic Butts area and in the modernist Brentford Dock estate, few of the streets are significantly tree-lined. Grass verges are only found in the interwar developments on the fringes and are generally well-maintained though some are scruffy from parking use. Later post-war large infill and peripheral developments, typified by residential buildings standing alone in open space and undefined by street patterns, sometimes result in lifeless, un/underused green areas.

The High Street offers a sequence of more formal small urban square-like spaces with seating and planting, though quality could be improved.



Viewing point in pocket park, tip of Brentford Dock and Marina



River Brent crossing from towpath to playing fields of Boston Manor Park



Waterman's Park between High Street and River Thames with houseboats



Square in Brentford Lock residential development off High Street

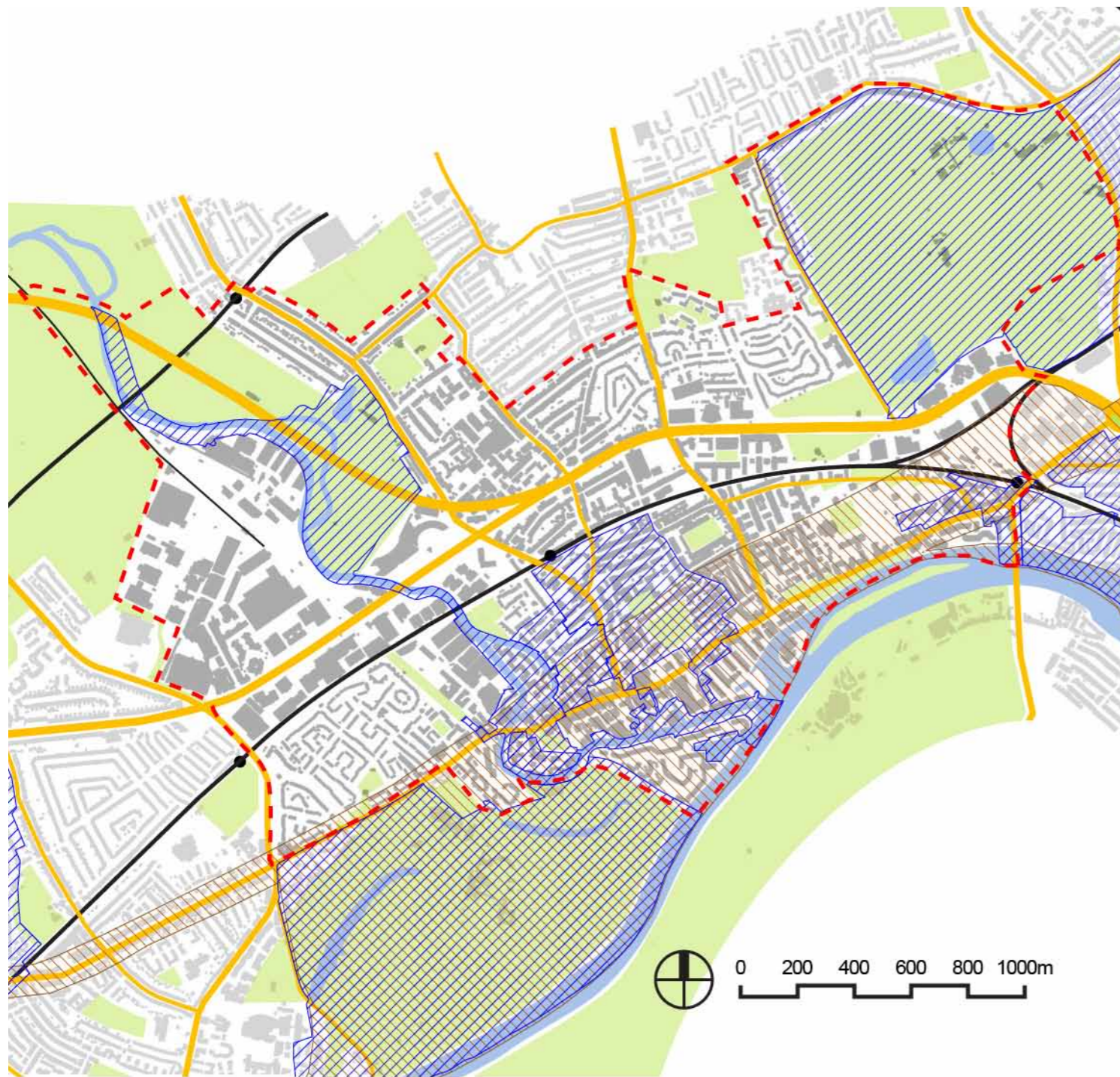


Badly designed and meaningless open space

Brentford

page in development

heritage assets



 Conservation Area

 Archaeological Priority Area

As ever in LBH the Roman Road was a primary influence on the route and position of settlements, together in this area with the proximity of the Thames and the arriving River Brent. The delta-like streams of the meandering Brent and the resulting islands, or aits, and the much wider and shallower water of the Thames at this confluence, made opportunities for protected early settlements, beaching boats and fishing; and for crossing the rivers on foot or by ferry. By the 1750s the coaching road to the west (following the Roman route) continued to make the town a place of opportunity, encouraging inns and trade. The key early areas were the crossing places. Brentford Bridge (ie crossing the Brent) existed in 1280, in stone from the 15th century. Kew Bridge, a listed building, is the 1903 version of a sequence beginning in 1758 which served the royal palace opposite and displaced ferries to the Richmond side. (The junction was increasingly used as a market place in the 19th century). Early maps show the stretch between Kew Bridge and Goat Wharf as Old Brayneford (Brentford), the stretch west of 15th century St Lawrence's Church tower / Brentford Bridge as Brayneford End; the stretch in between which is now the High Street being New Brayneford; all clearly established by 1635 (Moses Glover map). The market lay at the heart of New Brentford, and was a source of prosperity but thievery from the 14th century. The Butts, now an attractive enclave of listed 17th and early 18th century houses lies around a historically public space north of the former market place, which itself lay north of the congested High Street at the narrowest point between the wharfs and the road. The land and links between the High Street and Brent delta, and later the canal and its docks, were historically parcelled like medieval burgrave plots. These became more formalised and allowed goods to be channelled through more secure "yards" by the 19th century, and remained a distinctive feature if less intense well into the 20th century. The canalising of most of the borough's river Brent, at the end of the eighteenth century, began a period of industrialisation of the area which lasted until the later 20th century. Wharfage and sluices created stable water conditions at the entrance to the Thames; this increased trade opportunities as well as transit commerce. By the mid nineteenth century the incoming rail head, surrounding an interchange marina, cornered and greatly increased goods traffic, although the canal is still evocative and well used in other ways.

Exemplar municipal architecture from both Victorian times and the twentieth century remain intermittently. The market place is now symbolised by the formal and civic iteration of the former Magistrates Court, and its forecourt. A handful of historic buildings, some listed, have survived road widenings and represent the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on the south side of the High Street.

Spanning between Boston Lane, where the 17th century gem of Boston Manor overlooks the Brent scarp and flood meadows, and Ealing Lane, fringed with housing and pubs by mid nineteenth century, both medieval routes from the north, a "Back" lane behind the built fringe of the High Street was perhaps an early safer pedestrian route. The lanes intersected with the High Street at Half Acre and Drum Lane. North of this was grid-developed as a late Victorian mixed settlement, the formative elements being St Pauls church and the recreation ground, with the fine Carnegie library and the municipal baths in characteristic red terracotta and brick. Eastwards, mid Victorian grid patterns, and gas works have almost all been redeveloped in the twentieth century.

Being upstream on the Thames led to water extraction, filtration and pumping, and later reservoir storage at the Grand Junction Waterworks. The enclave of listed buildings begun in 1835 are of high architectural and townscape value, particularly the Grade 1 listed campanile-style stand pipe tower, as well as exciting monuments to the industrial use of steam. The first filter bed of 1845 visibly remains.

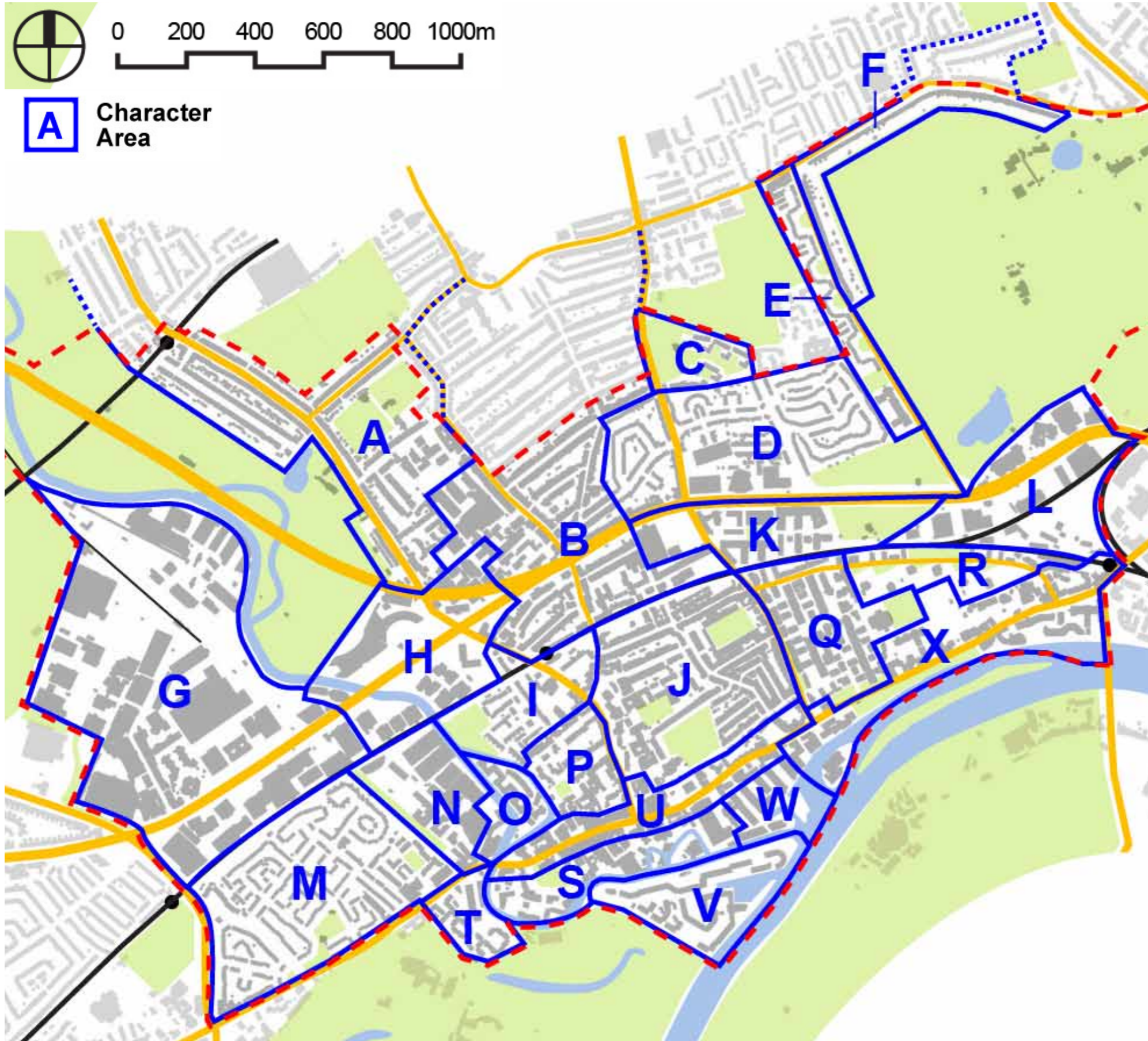
In the 1960s, when the Brentford Towers were constructed, they were placed as neatly as possible into the bunded reservoirs. Beginning with views from Kew Bridge, a fringe of older buildings around the junction provide welcome interest and relief at human scale.

To the north east, Gunnersbury Park with its collection of mansions and landscape features was formative as a rich man's estate. The Great West Road, opened in 1925 as a bypass to Brentford, skirted the southern edge of the Park and severed the earlier Carville Hall's park. Land for a cemetery and buildings along the south edge were sold and then from 1926 the Park was sold to become a public park. Development on the western fringe of Lionel Road dates from the late 1920s.

The "Golden Mile" of art deco buildings along the Great West Road is described elsewhere.

Brentford

character areas



overall summary

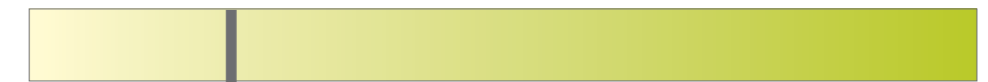
There are 24 character areas in Brentford covering a diverse range of urban layouts, land uses, building types, styles, periods etc. Some cover large areas, such as G and J (XX ha and XX ha respectively) and others quite small areas, such as O and S (XX ha and XX ha respectively). Where deemed necessary, larger and/or more complex areas are given more extensive assessment.

Each character area has been defined, characterised and assessed in order to build up a clear, detailed picture of the whole of Brentford from the sum of its parts. Each character area has been assessed according to the four strands; quality, sensitivity to change, likelihood of change and suitability for tall buildings.

urban design quality



sensitivity to change



potential for change



suitability for tall buildings



Brentford

character area

A



defining characteristic(s) & type

General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Interwar Suburban - Speculative

Minor Type:
Interwar Apartment Block

description

Primarily residential with school, sports facilities and access to Boston Manor House and Park. Mostly early interwar ribbon development estate of two-storey semis and short-medium terraces with rear access lanes. Architecturally interesting interwar three-storey linear apartment blocks with parking and green space on cul-de-sac to south, where there is generally a greater mix. Served by underground station and shopping parade to north with buses along main north-south road. Merges imperceptibly with Hanwell, part of Ealing, to north.

ambience

B



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Contrast with nearby commercial developments.

Major Type:
Late Victorian/Early Edwardian

Minor Type:
Postwar Modern Estate

Primarily residential with school and trading estate to northwest. Cut in two by Great West Road. Mostly Victorian and Edwardian 2 storey long terraces with some extensive C20th infill development including the trading estate and 1970s housing estate to south. Only area with housing fronting directly onto Great West Road. Served by railway station and small shopping parade to southwest and rundown parade to east. Poor access to open space. Merges imperceptibly with Little Ealing to north.

C



Extreme uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Postwar Modern Estate

Post-war estate of local authority social housing. Mostly 1960s, consisting of six 6 storey L-plan apartment blocks and four 4 storey maisonette slabs set in green open space with surface parking, play space and community centre. Spaces are on the whole in good condition and blocks are coherently laid out providing good legibility and east-west permeability. Two older 3 storey slabs in less coherent open space to south. More recent 2-3 storey development on cul-de-sac to southwest. Strongly bounded to north by cemetery.

D



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Interwar Suburban - Planned

Primarily residential with trading estate and park to south. Mostly 2 storey early inter-war semis and short terraces with some bungalows, on classic loops and lollipops Garden Suburb layout. Eastern part has limited accessibility. Some modest grass verges and corner spaces. Buffered from Great West Road to south by commercial uses and park with childrens' play area. Served by rundown shopping parade, to west, which fronts directly onto Great West Road (GWR).

Brentford

urban quality

sensitivity to change

likelihood of change

suitability for tall buildings



Brentford

character area

E



defining characteristic(s) & type

Extreme uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Linearity

Major Type:
Interwar Suburban - Planned

description

Exclusively residential with school to south. North-south ribbon development of 2 storey early interwar short terraces with some semis. Characterised by Garden Suburb-style sequence of green crescents, in varying conditions, and short cul-de-sacs. Served by shopping parade to north. Slopes downward to south with views of Brentford Towers development along Great West Road. Access to Gunnersbury Park from south end.

ambience

F



Extreme uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Linearity

Major Type:
Interwar Suburban

Exclusively residential ribbon development along northwest inner perimeter of Gunnersbury Park. Interwar 2 storey houses progressing east-west from linked detached through semi-detached on northern stretch to short terraces opposite Area E on western stretch. Served by shopping parades to east and west. Intermittent access to Gunnersbury Park, onto which houses back. Shares character with part of neighbouring Ealing to northeast.

G



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Almost exclusively industrial and commercial use, straddling and stretching northwards from Great West Road. Mostly low-rise warehousing-style units with large floor plates. Some big box retail to southwest. The northeast is more industrial with ageing metal warehousing, open yard operations, and large volumes of heavy goods traffic. Some significant remaining examples of Art Deco architecture front Great West Road 'Golden Mile', including landmark Gillette clock tower. Strongly bounded to east by River Brent.

H



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Contrast with nearby low rise residential and community uses.

A cluster of high-rise office and residential buildings and advertising columns create a focal point at the junction with Boston Manor Road, and function as strategic gateway to West London. The elevation of the M4 roadway and the taller office buildings have created uniformity within the character area and a number of landmark structures. However, overall scale of this area is out of context with surrounding residential areas and parkland. Combined mass and height of Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK) building make it particularly visible.

Brentford

character area

I



defining characteristic(s) & type

General uniformity of use.

Moderate uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type and period.

Transitional location.

J



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Late Victorian/Early Edwardian

Minor Type:
Postwar Modern Estate

K



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Contrast with neighbouring areas

Major Type:
Urban Renaissance

L



General uniformity of use.

Moderate uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type.

Location on major route

description

Unified by south-north axes of Boston Manor Road and lesser Church Walk from The Butts to the Great West Road via a railway footbridge. Off these hang mostly post-war residential developments of 1-2 storey terraces and 3-4 storey blocks of flats. Area is partly delimited by the railway line to the north and more strongly bounded by the River Brent to the west, and serves as a transition zone between the historic Butts and the modern high rises to the north. Riverside recreation ground to west and small shopping parade to northeast.

A complete Victorian New Town of mostly Late Victorian and Edwardian 2 storey terraced housing arranged around areas of local open space, including Griffin Park stadium and St Paul's recreation ground. Though very close to High Street/Town Centre the area is served by numerous local shops and pubs, though some are under threat from redevelopment. Large areas devoted to well-integrated community uses. St. Paul's Church is a prominent landmark in the area terminating a vista from London Road across the Brentford Lock.

2010s mixed use development on previously commercial site between Great West Road and railway line. Residential, hotel, retail, community and leisure uses in 4-10 storey buildings with 25 storey tower to west, with courtyards, playground and central square. Includes converted Art Deco listed factory and tower. Overlooks elevated M4 to north and southern half of Carville Park to east. Relatively well-connected to surrounding areas given island location. Western end with derelict tower awaiting redevelopment.

Predominantly features small group of mid-high rise office buildings of contemporary design with glass and metal exteriors, straddling Great West Road and elevated M4. Vantage West, at 15 storeys, is most prominent, particularly from Kew Bridge. Act as buffer between M4 and Gunnersbury Park. All of the buildings are set back from the roadside and have frontages dominated by car parking. To west: low-rise warehousing units with large car parking areas. To south: open yard works within railway triangle, accessed by one-way through road from Kew Bridge Road to GWR.

ambience

Brentford

character area

M



defining characteristic(s) & type

General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Interwar Suburban - Planned

description

Residential estate of inter-war, semi-detached and terraced 2 storey housing. The uniform architectural style of the properties, the regular spaces between buildings and the road layout incorporating cul-de-sacs are very distinctive of the period in which the housing was completed. The landscaping of the estate is also important in extending the parkland seen through the Lion Gate from Syon Park. Served by shopping parade to southwest. Some postwar infill to east on similar layout but with less coherent amenity spaces.

ambience

N



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Isolation

Canal-side area of warehousing and works reaching a maximum of three-storeys in height. Includes iconic overhanging wharf built to enable covered goods transhipment. Much of the industrial activity in this area has receded and mixed-use redevelopment is proposed. The towpath along the canal links the Great West Road with the High Street and is used for houseboat mooring.

O



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Contrast with neighbouring areas

Major Type:
Urban Renaissance

2000s residential development with some small retail units, hard landscaped areas of public open space and narrow-boat moorings, all focused on the canal at Brentford Lock. The scale of the buildings at 3-6 storeys is significantly greater than surrounding areas. The Island site has more variety of form to link with its river fronts and the tallest buildings relate to the High Street with an 8th storey feature and public square. However, the Lock and the vista along the canal to GSK provide the only connections to the wider Brentford townscape.

P



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Georgian

The Butts is an exceptionally attractive and unspoilt group of largely 3 storey houses of early C18th focused on a large irregular square, now a registered village green. The central space is part surrounded by Georgian properties of similar scale and materials. Many of these are listed, some wide-fronted of simple but gracious and symmetrical style with railed front gardens, others straight onto the footpath. It is approached from an avenue of similarly scaled but later properties to the east, and other similar properties are to be found in streets to the north.

Brentford

character area

Q



defining characteristic(s) & type

General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Contrast with neighbouring areas

Major Type:
Post-war low rise estate

R



General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Contrast with neighbouring areas

Isolation

Major Type:
Post-war tower block estate

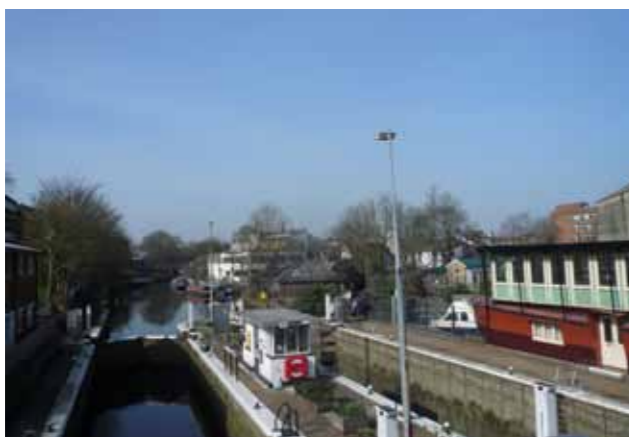
S



Moderate uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, and period.

Industrial use

Waterside location



description

Post-war housing estate of 4 storey flats and 2 storey terraces typical of their time and lacking distinctive architectural features. Layout has led to predominance of dead ends, on-street parking, visible backs and undefined frontages. 4 storey flat blocks are particularly confusing with regard to fronts, backs and access. Earlier and later development along better-defined street across north. Earlier post-war 4 storey blocks in green space fringe High Street to south. Large school and shopping parade to east.

The area contains six identical 23 storey 1970s tower blocks creating a strong sense of architectural unity and a distinct sense of place. They also function as strategic landmarks for Brentford. Set back from the east-west through-road in large areas of green open space and parking. More recent strip of 2-3 storey terraces to north. Relatively isolated area between railway line and post-industrial spaces to south, with no direct access to High Street. Access to school and shopping parade to west.

The area has an industrial character with a mixture of buildings, some built at a time where the proximity to the Grand Union Canal had little relevance to their operation, interspersed with older buildings that were wholly dependant on their waterside location. The area retains some features of its past as a working dock such as wharf buildings, boat-yards, cranes and Victorian warehouses. The general former-industrial, almost unkempt appearance of the area and the remaining boat building activities give character to the area. The historic street pattern in this area, which was characterised by narrow alleyways running north to south to the waterfront, has largely been replaced although some important links remain. The current meandering layout of buildings and roads impedes visual and physical access to the Grand Union Canal.

To the west is a mixed-use enclave of late C20th 4 storey residential apartments and 2 storey industrial units, inter-leaved with remnants of the area's early history. There are also a significant number of houseboats moored along the canal that add colour and interest to the waterside.

ambience

Brentford

character area

T



defining characteristic(s) & type

General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Major Type:
Post-war low-mid rise estate

U



Town Centre/High Street function

Linearity

Diversity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period



V



Extreme uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Isolation

Waterside location

Major Type:
Post-war mid rise estate

description

Small branching cul-de-sac 1970s estate of 2 storey terraces and 3-5 storey flat blocks somewhat randomly set in green and parking space, on the west bank of the Grand Union Canal and adjacent to Syon Park. The area also contains a small, recreation ground. The residential blocks are of a uniform architectural style and their urban character contrasts with their waterside, parkland setting.

ambience

The current Town Centre/High Street is a bewildering mix of old and new from converted Georgian houses and Victorian shops to 1960s retail and residential units. Key historic landmarks include the former church of St Lawrence, the Magistrates Court and the Beehive public house. Within the primary retail parades, the condition of shop fronts, footways and public realm is mixed.

To the east is a varied mix of residential, retail and civic developments. The range of ages and styles reflects the piecemeal basis on which development took place. The mix of street-level uses in the area increases westward towards the town centre and the scale peaks with the police station as by far the tallest structure in the town centre at over 10 storeys. The buildings are largely set back from the High Street or with inactive High Street frontages.

Area includes a small cluster of historic brick buildings off the south side of the High Street, dating from C18th and C19th.

Primarily residential with leisure uses. Located on a peninsular between the Grand Union Canal and the River Thames, Brentford Dock is an estate of 6 storey snake-blocks completed in the late 1970s by the Greater London Council. The uniform style of the architecture and landscaping create a sense of seclusion from surrounding areas and a distinctive identity. Built on original site of docks with former railway route providing only vehicular access. Private yacht marina provides focus. Coherent and well-maintained amenity spaces. Isolated from main activity centres and public transport.

Brentford

character area

W



defining characteristic(s) & type

General uniformity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period.

Waterside location

Major Type:
Urban Renaissance

X



Extensive pre-Town Centre/High Street Gateway function

Linearity

Diversity of scale, density, layout, building type, urban type, use and period



description

The recent development of this area has created a distinctive residential townscape of 4-6 storey blocks mixed with some leisure uses and waterside areas of public spaces. There are also some strong north-south vistas that allow views of the river from the High Street and reflect the historical pattern of development.

On the whole, a bewildering and incoherent mix of old and new from Victorian houses and large scale industrial buildings to mid rise 1980s post-modernist office and high rise 2010s urban renaissance mixed use developments, with more in the pipeline.

To the east is an enclave of 2 storey houses ranging from late C19th to late C20th which relates to an extent to the Kew Bridge Steam Museum opposite, and contrast starkly with the mid-to-high rise mainly residential development to the south, by the bridge and the river.

The proto-High Street is flanked by a riverside park and a mix of recently redeveloped post-industrial sites which include the Musical Museum and yet more recent mid-to-high rise residential.

At the western end of the linear park is the unimposing building housing the Watermans's Arts Centre which, together with a drive-through McDonalds, heralds Brentford Town Centre.

ambience