



Draft Tall Buildings Strategy November 2023

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES

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Changes to this strategy since the previous Emerging Tall Buildings Strategy

To support the Regulation 18 consultation on the first draft of the Local Plan, between 28 November 2022 and 28 February 2023, an Emerging Tall Buildings strategy was published as one of the evidence base documents. The emerging strategy was used to support the draft Local Plan policies and supporting text on Tall Buildings, in the Design and Heritage chapter.

There was a significant amount of interest in the topic of building heights during the consultation. We received comments from local communities and community groups, developers and other statutory bodies. We have updated the strategy in response to this feedback. The changes made to the document are outlined below:

- A new map has been added which more clearly highlights the areas of the borough which are most or least suitable for tall buildings. This map overlays the factors relating to tall building suitability, such as public transport accessibility, proximity to town centre amenities and locations of existing tall buildings, which are an indication of an existing urban character.
- A combined sensitivity map has been added which includes conservation and heritage, views and open space. This map highlights where sensitivities are most concentrated in the borough.
- Sensitivity 'buffers' have been added around heritage assets including listed and locally listed buildings and conservation areas. These buffers may overlap areas identified as being suitable for tall buildings so indicates that any proposals for tall buildings within the buffer areas need to take greater account of their impact on adjacent heritage assets.
- Some minor changes have been made to the extent of sites and locations considered appropriate for tall buildings.

Engaging on the draft Tall Buildings Strategy

There is no statutory requirement for the council to consult on this evidence base document.

However in response to the significant amount of interest in building heights we want to publish this updated strategy so that those who wish to do so, have an opportunity to review and comment before the Regulation 19 consultation on the Publication version of the Local Plan.

The engagement on this document is taking place from 7 November to 19 December 2023.

During this engagement we would like to learn if there:

- Is any technical information or evidence missing that people feel should be considered as part of the strategy
- Are there any factual errors or omissions in the strategy

There are wide-ranging views on building heights. However as this is an evidence base document, it aims to provide an objective assessment. We are therefore not asking whether people agree or disagree with the findings of the strategy.

You can share your feedback by:

- Completing the online form on our engagement website www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/planning/draft-tall-buildings-strategy
- Emailing localplan@kingston.gov.uk
- Writing to **Spatial Planning Team, The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Guildhall 2, High Street, Kingston, KT1 1EU**

When the engagement ends we will review and analyse all the feedback and use it to finalise the strategy to support the Publication version of the Local Plan, for the Regulation 19 consultation.



Why has this strategy been prepared?

This Tall Building Strategy forms an important part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan for the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

It has been prepared to support policies in the Plan including tall buildings, delivering high quality design and views management, and our approach to positively manage the development of tall buildings in the borough. It has also been prepared to ensure that Kingston's Local Plan is consistent with national planning policy and the policies and guidance in the London Plan, which directs all London boroughs to identify locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development and to set parameters for building heights. The strategy is intended to provide greater clarity for communities, developers and council officers regarding the appropriate locations for tall buildings, to help determine planning applications.

What does this strategy do?

The strategy defines the height of a tall building in Kingston and the potential heights and locations where tall buildings may be considered appropriate in the borough, subject to meeting other stringent design policies set out in the Local Plan and the London Plan. It also identifies locations which are not suitable for tall buildings in the borough.

In Kingston, a tall building is considered to be 21m or above, in height, measured from the ground to the roof, including the height of any rooftop plant.

It is important to point out that any proposals for tall buildings which are in a location that is considered appropriate, will not automatically receive planning permission. Kingston's numerous heritage assets, established character and important local views mean that the borough has a high level of sensitivity towards new development, so all planning applications for tall buildings would be expected to meet exemplary design standards and address all other policies set out in the new Local Plan.

Following detailed assessments the strategy has looked at the most sustainable locations in the borough and identified four areas that are considered to be the most 'suitable' for tall buildings. They are the four main town centres of Kingston, New Malden, Surbiton and Tolworth.

These locations have been selected based on their access to public transport, level of existing activity, access to amenities and services, and for being most likely to experience growth over the plan period with a number of sites allocated for development

How has this strategy been prepared?

The strategy has been developed based on the following approach:

1. An overview of existing building heights across all areas of the borough, including a detailed look at the main town centres
2. Defining what building height is considered 'tall' in the borough
3. A borough-wide assessment of sensitivity issues relating to tall buildings
4. An assessment of suitability relating to where the most appropriate locations for tall buildings are
5. Targeted assessment of the suitable areas, examining sensitivity constraints, to identify specific locations where tall buildings may be appropriate, and potential heights that may be considered.

This approach is based on the methodology outlined in the Greater London Authority's (GLA's) London Plan Guidance: Characterisation and Growth Strategy 2023. It uses factors such as sustainability, local character, and heritage to determine whether specific areas are suited for tall buildings.

It is important to note that the guidance explicitly indicates that Tall Building Strategies are not meant to conduct detailed assessments of heritage harm. So, because this strategy only provides a broad, borough-wide assessment, a more granular analysis of potential impacts on heritage assets or specific local characters needs to take place when specific proposals are being developed, considering all policies, and not just this strategy.

It is acknowledged that this more detailed assessment may therefore contradict the borough-wide expectations outlined in this strategy.

Definition and analysis of existing tall buildings and prevailing character

Tall Buildings definition

The London Plan defines tall buildings as those that are substantially taller than their surroundings. Across London building heights vary, and so it is useful to define what is considered to be a 'tall building' in any particular location.

For instance, in an area of London with predominantly 6 storey buildings, a tall building could be defined as one that is substantially taller, so perhaps 9 or 10 storeys.

The Mayor of London's 'Characterisation and Growth Strategy' London Planning Guidance specifies that boroughs cannot set a minimum tall building height of less than 21m to include any rooftop equipment such as lift overruns, plant and other service structures.

Assuming a floor to floor height of 3m, this very roughly equates to a 6 storey building plus roof structures, or 7 storeys if no such structures are present.

What is Kingston's tall building definition?

In Kingston, a tall building is considered to be 21m or above, in height, measured from the ground to the roof, including the height of any rooftop plant.

This is in line with the minimum height set out in the London Plan and additional guidance. To reach this definition the strategy has looked at the prevailing building heights in all areas as well as where there are some clusters of existing taller buildings.

How does this affect planning applications?

Defining what we consider to be a tall building across the borough allows us to decide where tall buildings may or may not be an appropriate form of development.

By setting the local threshold for what is considered to be a tall building, means the London Plan and new Local Plan tall buildings policies can now be applied to all development proposals which are taller than this. They will also need to meet specific requirements in relation to their design and impact. New tall buildings in the borough should be of exemplary design quality, and the quality of design should be seen as a means to justify the proposed height.

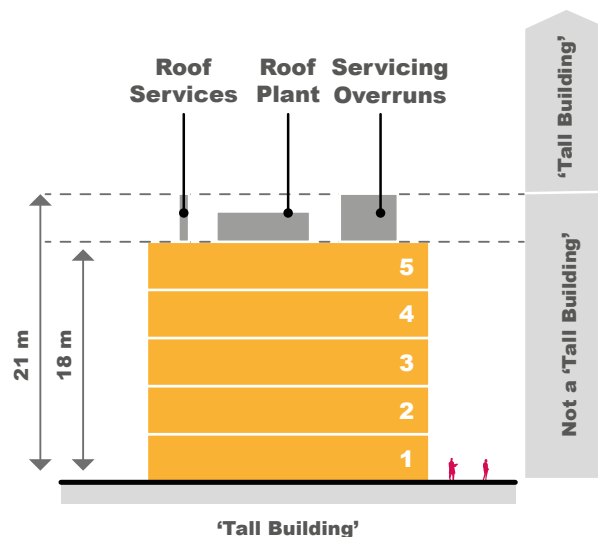


Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the definition of a tall building in Kingston



Existing tall buildings and prevailing character

It is helpful to start by looking at the existing building heights in the borough and distinguish between areas characterised by low scale buildings and those characterised by greater variety heights.

The next few pages establish local thresholds for low rise, mid rise and tall, based on existing building heights in the borough.

This map is helpful to understand where the introduction of a tall building could disrupt the continuity of an area, but is not in itself a reason to refuse development.

A finer level of analysis is needed to understand the relative sensitivity or opportunity a tall building could contribute towards any given location.

Low rise buildings

This map indicates the areas in the borough that are predominantly low rise, where the majority of buildings are up to 12m or roughly 4 storeys in height.

The less than 12m height threshold comprises of a range of low rise building types in the borough including bungalows, 2 or 3 storey houses, or low rise blocks of flats up to 4 storeys. Many parades of shops, retail units and industrial units fall within this threshold.

Buildings can be of varied architectural style and period, but often form areas of consistent and valued character.

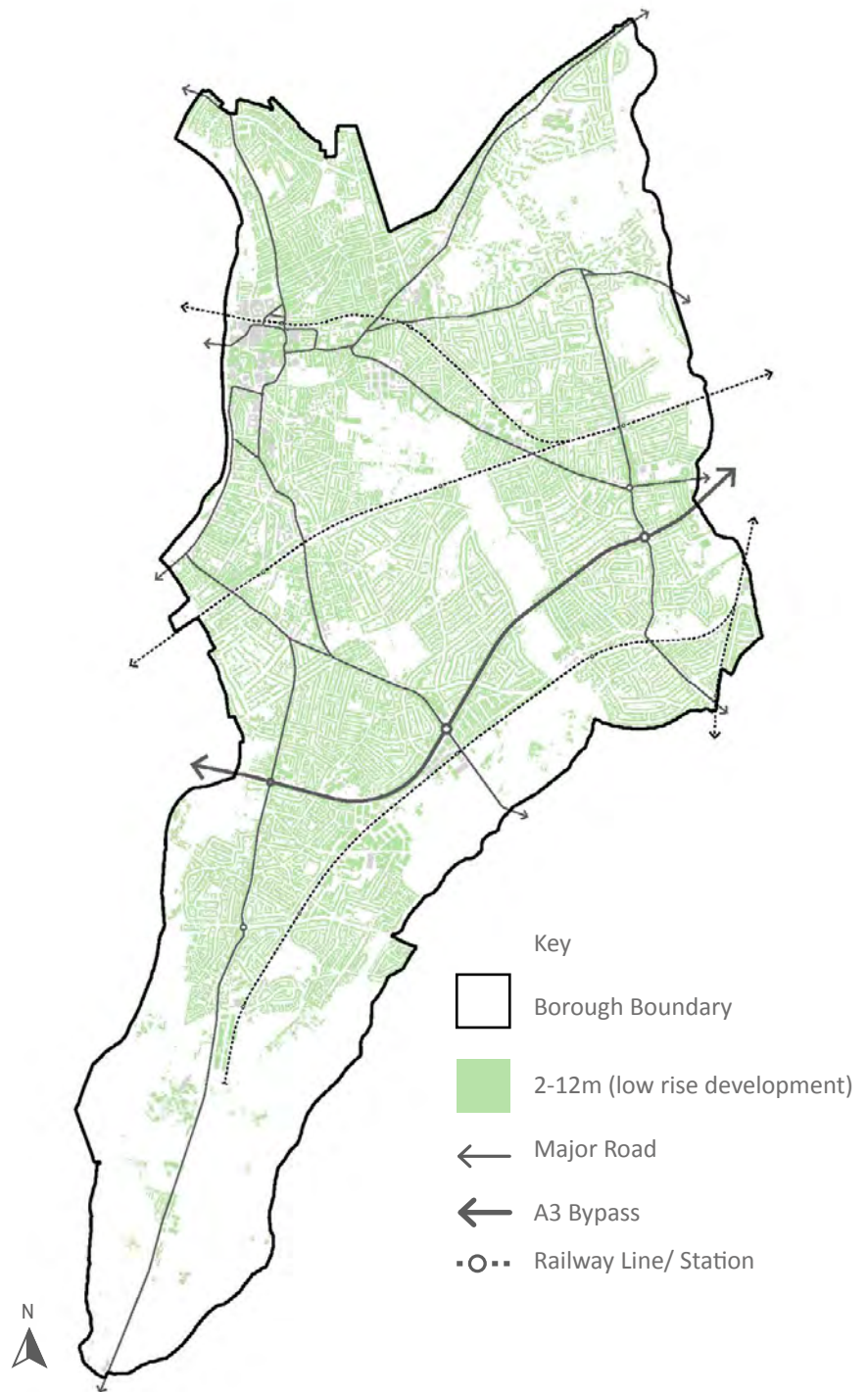


Figure 2. Map showing the low rise buildings in Kingston

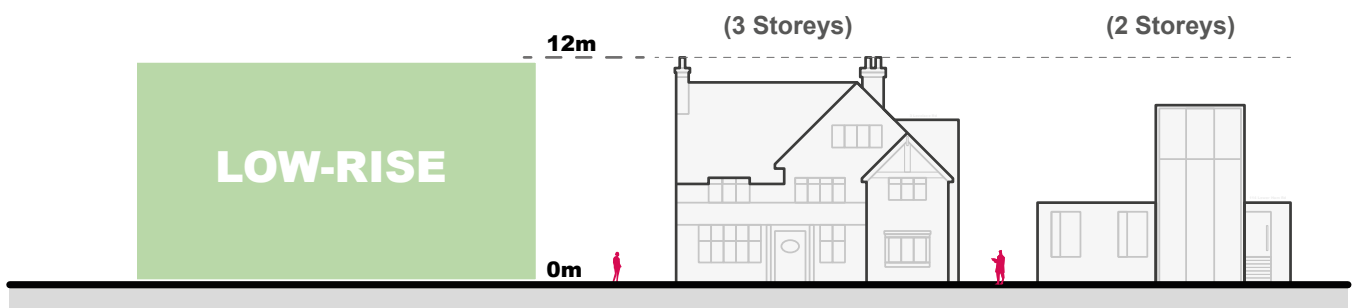


Figure 3. A diagram illustrating what low rise buildings, up to 12m, looks like in Kingston.

Mid-rise buildings

In addition to the low rise typology, the borough also comprises areas where there are building heights of between 12m and 21m. These are defined in this strategy as mid-rise and broadly corresponds to between 4-6 storeys.

The map opposite shows how mid-rise development is distributed across various parts of the borough, but is more concentrated in areas of good public transport accessibility including proximity to railway stations, in and around main town centres and along major roads.

Kingston town centre has the highest concentration of mid-rise buildings, and this building height is also relatively common in parts of Surbiton, Norbiton and New Malden town centre.

Mid-rise development is considered to be the most appropriate form of high density development in areas of the borough characterised by lower building heights.

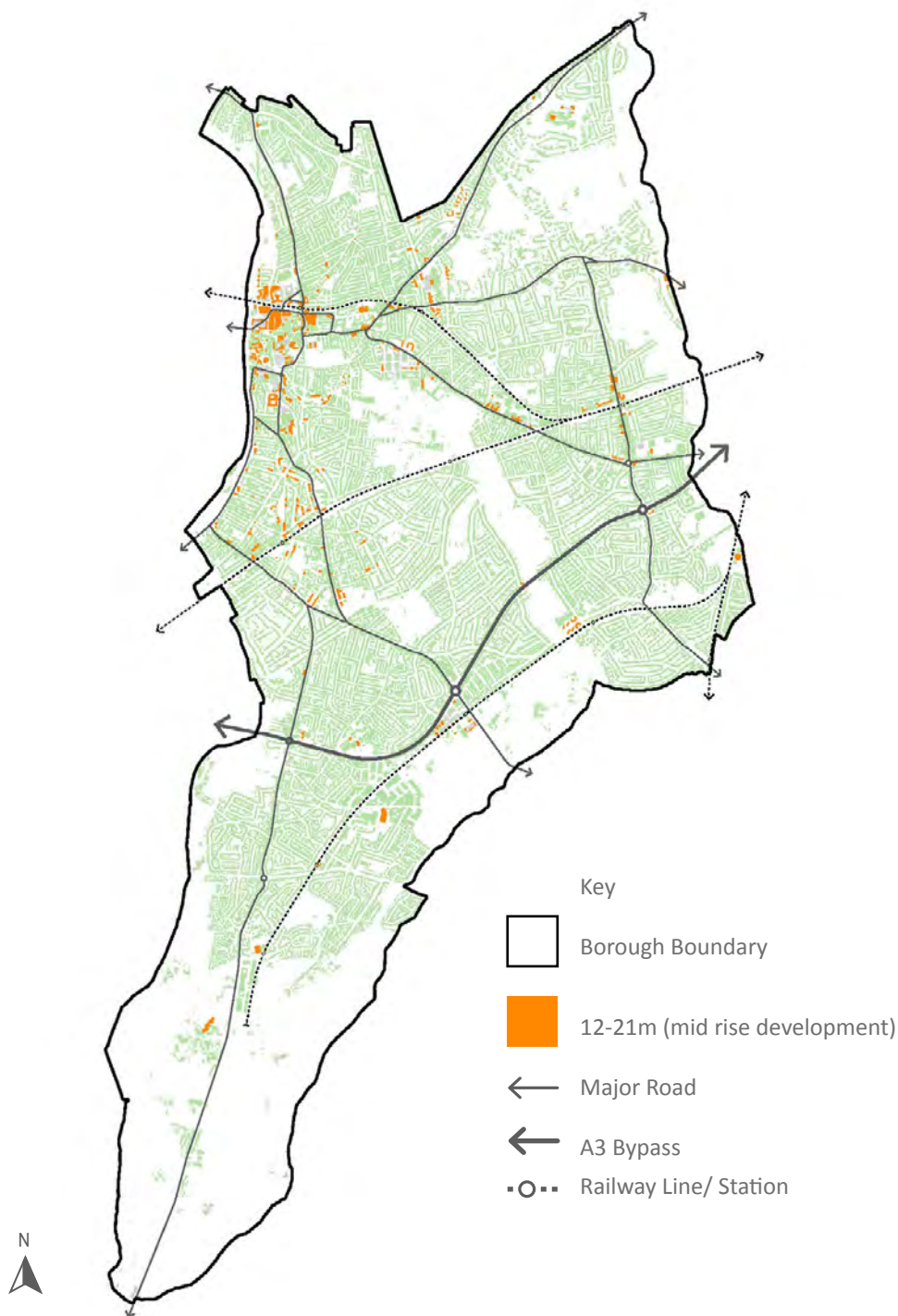


Figure 4. Map showing the mid rise buildings in Kingston



Figure 5. A diagram illustrating what low rise buildings, up to 12m, and mid-rise buildings from 12m to 21m, looks like in Kingston.



Tall buildings

In addition to low rise and mid-rise built form, the borough also contains locations where tall buildings are present. Sometimes these are grouped in close proximity to each other, such as in parts of Kingston town centre, or sometimes exist in a stand-alone fashion.

The map to the right shows where existing and emerging* tall buildings (above 21m) are located.

Kingston is a predominantly low-rise borough, and as such the council considers all buildings above 21m to be tall buildings.

* Note: Emerging = Consented Development Schemes

Not all tall buildings are the same.

The London Plan outlines that “the higher the building the greater the level of scrutiny that is required of its design”, and that “tall buildings should reinforce the spatial hierarchy of the local and wider context and aid legibility and wayfinding” by “emphasising the hierarchy of a place such as its main centres of activity, and important street junctions and transport interchanges”.

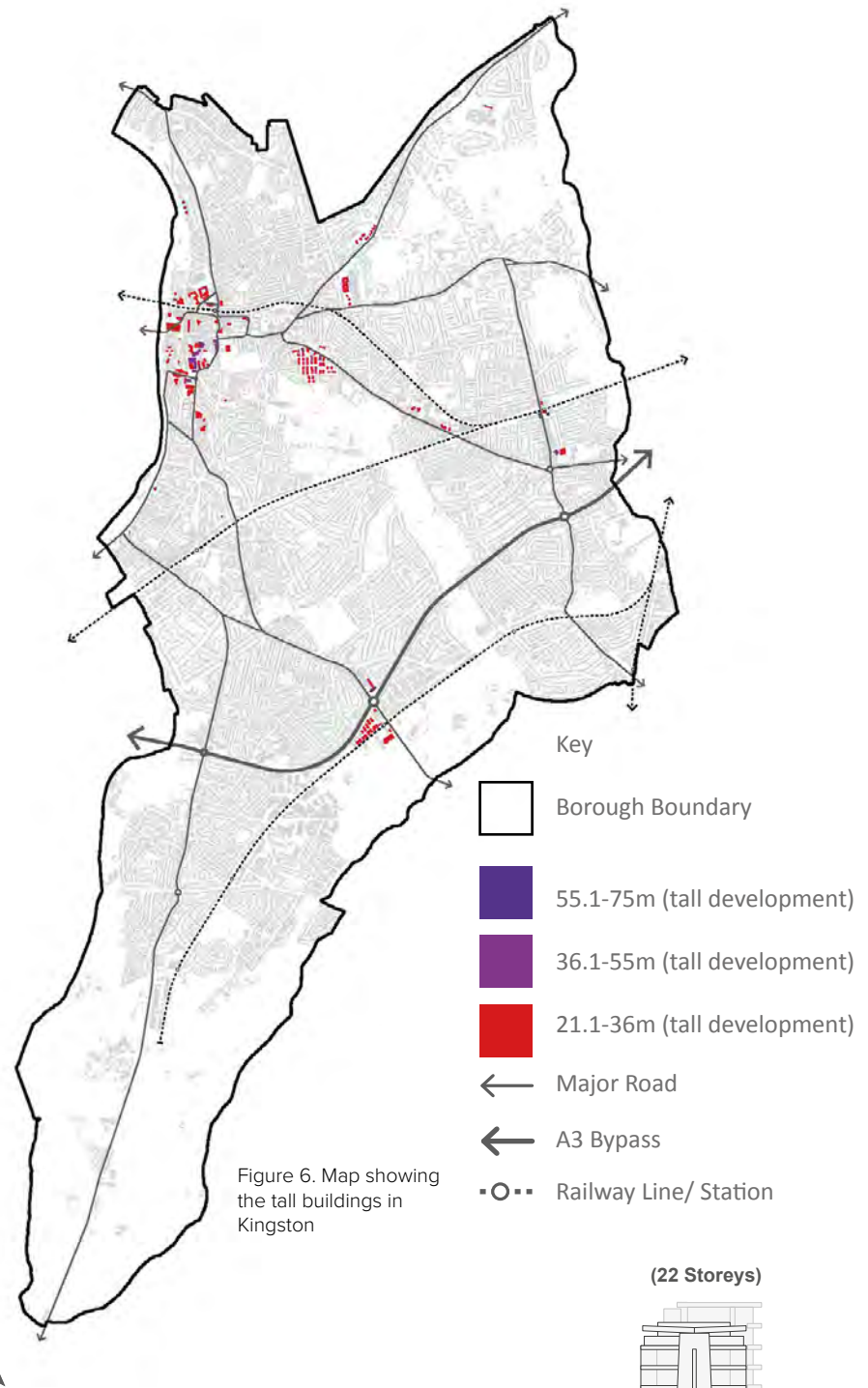


Figure 6. Map showing the tall buildings in Kingston

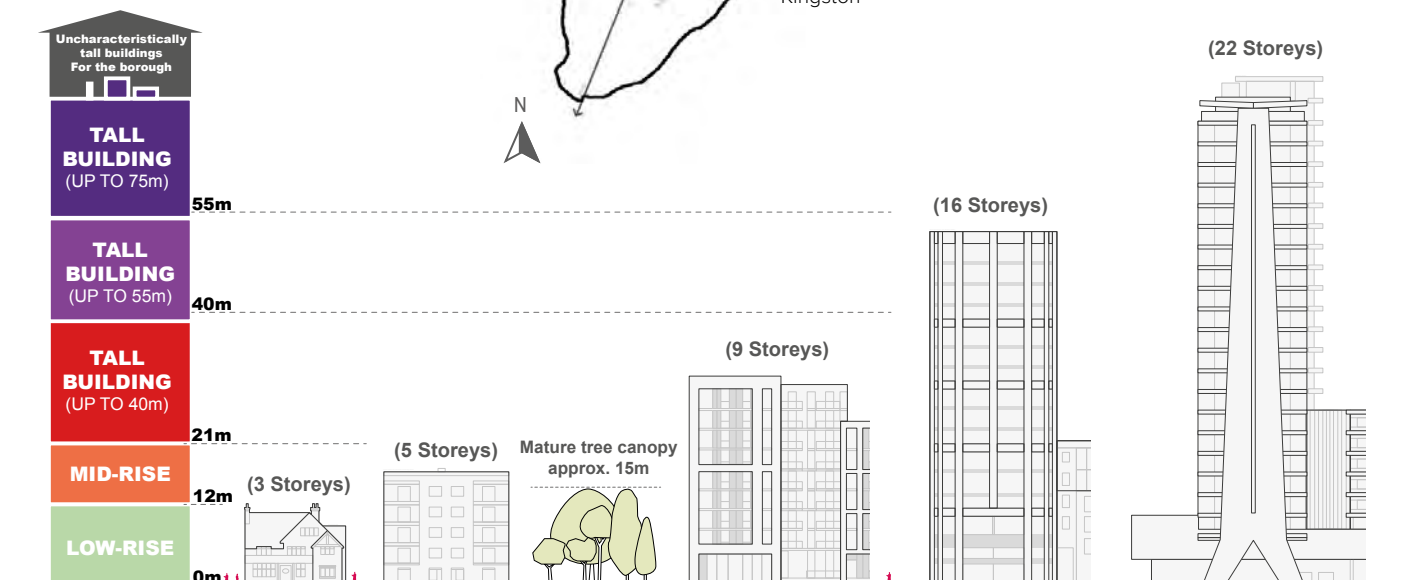


Figure 7. A diagram illustrating what low rise buildings, up to 12m, mid-rise buildings from 12m to 21m, and tall buildings up to 40m, 55m and 75m, looks like in Kingston.

Kingston's prevailing character

Kingston is a low-rise borough, with tall and mid-rise buildings clustered in and around its main town centres.

Low-rise detached, semi-detached and some terraced housing, of a generally low-medium density, together with a high proportion of open space forms the prevailing character of the borough.

In addition to low rise neighbourhoods, the borough is also characterised by its open spaces which provides public amenity to local residents.

These areas are generally not suitable for tall buildings due to their prevailing character of low building height and/or green space.



Victorian villas



New mid-rise housing



New family housing



Listed buildings



New tall buildings



New high density housing



Suburban shopping parades



Heritage character buildings



Listed buildings and heritage assets



Town centre high streets



Interwar homes & legacy tall building



Metropolitan Open Land



Public open space



1930s terraced housing



New mid-rise housing



Victorian semi-detached homes

Public transport accessibility

One of the most important factors in determining a location's relative suitability for tall buildings is access to public transport. This is supported by the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

High density development in areas well served by public transport helps reduce reliance on higher-carbon forms of transport such as private car use.

Locating homes and jobs close to this infrastructure also reinforces ongoing investment in infrastructure and services.

Areas with a good Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 4 and above are generally considered to be the most suited to the development of tall buildings.

Sustainability of locations as measured by Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) vary widely across the borough.

Areas with a good Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 4 and above (assessing level of access to the transport network, combining walk time to the public transport network with service wait times) are generally considered to be the most suited to the development of tall buildings, which also correlates to them being the most sustainable locations. This map shows Kingston town centre as the most sustainable location with levels of 6a and 6b across a wide area.

Parts of Surbiton town centre also score highly as a sustainable location. New Malden town centre and Tolworth have moderate levels of public transport accessibility, and are therefore considered moderately sustainable locations for tall buildings.

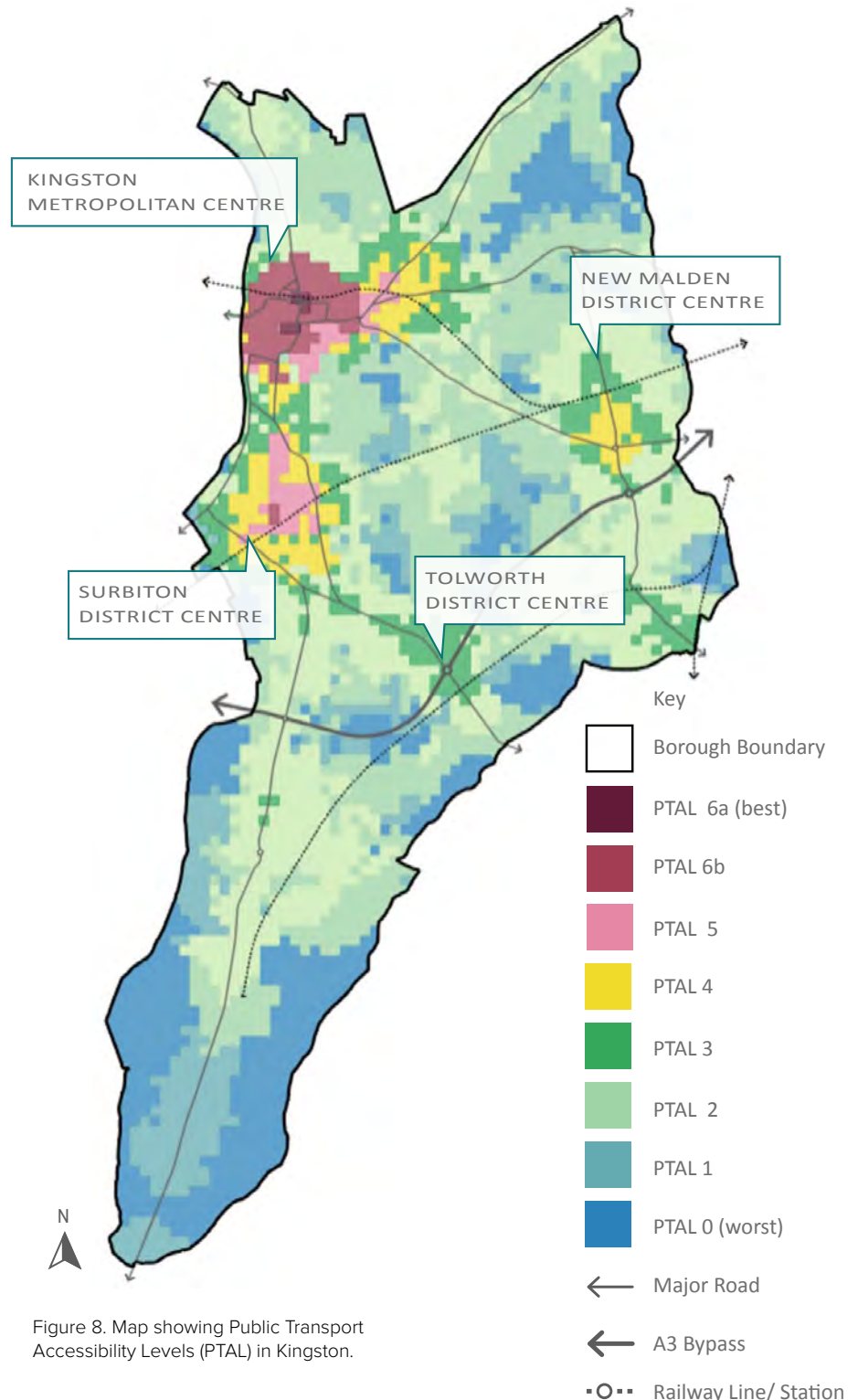


Figure 8. Map showing Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL) in Kingston.

Time mapping analysis, which assesses connectivity through the transport network or, in other words, how far a traveller can go expressed as a series of travel time catchments, is also an important tool. Although some areas such as New Malden and

Tolworth do not benefit from high PTAL levels (level of access), when looking at time mapping, they perform relatively well, and therefore should not be discounted in terms of locations for tall buildings.



Centres of activity

The borough's main centres of activity are the four main town centres of Kingston, New Malden, Surbiton and Tolworth.

These areas contain the highest combined concentrations of retail, hospitality, work spaces, and other services. This makes them among the most sustainable locations for tall buildings. The London Plan designates Surbiton, New Malden and Tolworth as District Centres.

Kingston Town Centre is designated as a Metropolitan centre in line with the London Plan. The town centre and its surrounding area, including parts of Norbiton, is where many of the allocated development sites are. With new housing, commercial development and supporting infrastructure likely to come forward it is therefore considered a suitable location for tall buildings.

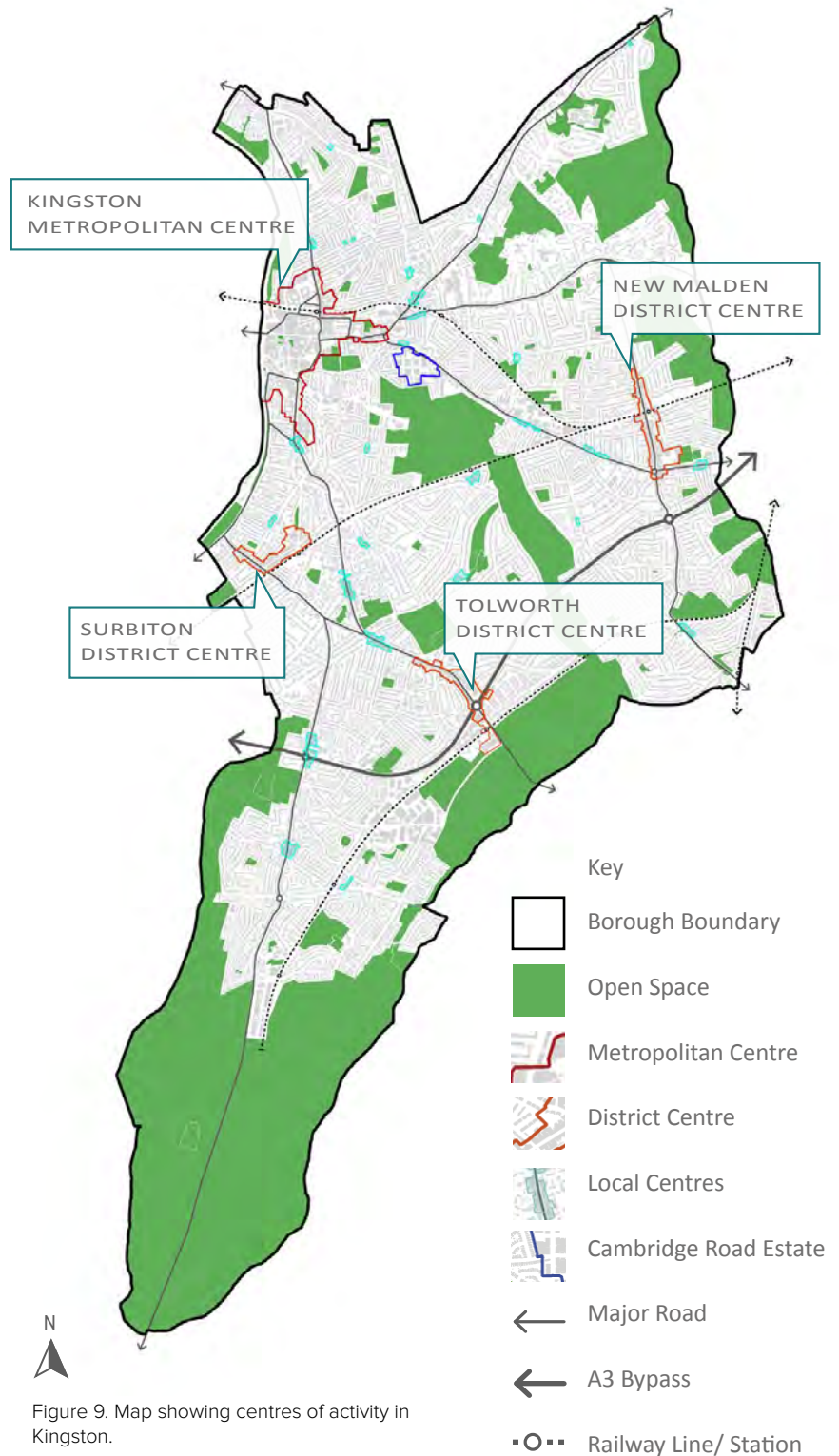


Figure 9. Map showing centres of activity in Kingston.



Combined suitability for tall buildings

This map provides a combined overview of suitability factors for tall buildings across the borough.

The factors combined in this map are:

- Area identified in the Vision for Kingston Town Centre
- Town centre boundaries
- TfL's Walkability Dataset (from TfL's Playbook)
- Public Transport Accessibility Level contours 4-6 (from TfL)
- Existing tall buildings (with a max height of 21m or above) and a 50m buffer*.

*The existence of a tall building in a location should not in itself be seen as justification for further tall buildings. However, their development to date is a broad indication of urban density and character which assists in identifying areas which may have greater suitability.

The areas with the greatest combined suitability for tall buildings correspond to the borough's main town centres and surroundings.

Kingston town centre, displays the overall highest suitability for tall buildings, however it is also the borough's most sensitive location, which is explored this strategy.

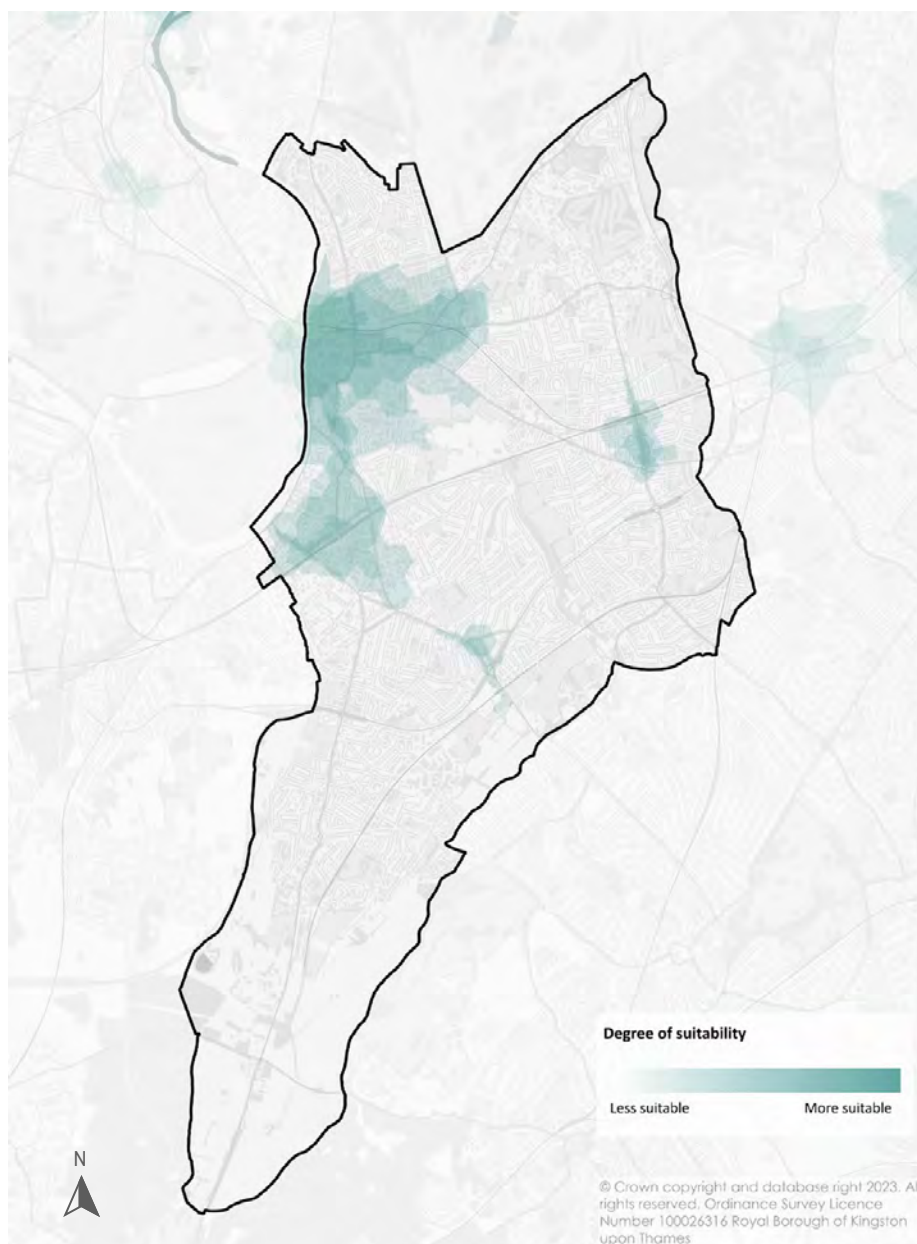


Figure 10. Map showing the combined suitability factors for tall buildings to highlight areas potentially suitable for tall buildings.

Kingston Borough

Suitable and unsuitable areas for tall buildings

Areas with high levels of suitability

This map highlights the four key areas of the borough that have the best suitability for tall buildings based on the combined criteria as outlined in this strategy.

These key areas are:

1. Kingston town centre and central Norbiton
2. New Malden town centre
3. Surbiton town centre
4. Tolworth town centre

However within each of these key areas, there factors such as heritage, character and views sensitivities which limit the locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development. These sensitivities have been taken into consideration when identifying specific sites in this strategy.

Areas not suitable

Outside of the four key areas with high suitability, the remainder of the borough is generally considered to be unsuitable for the development of tall buildings. This is because of its prevailing low rise character and low levels of public transport accessibility.

Areas not identified as being suitable for tall buildings may be suited for other forms of high density development, including mid-rise building heights.

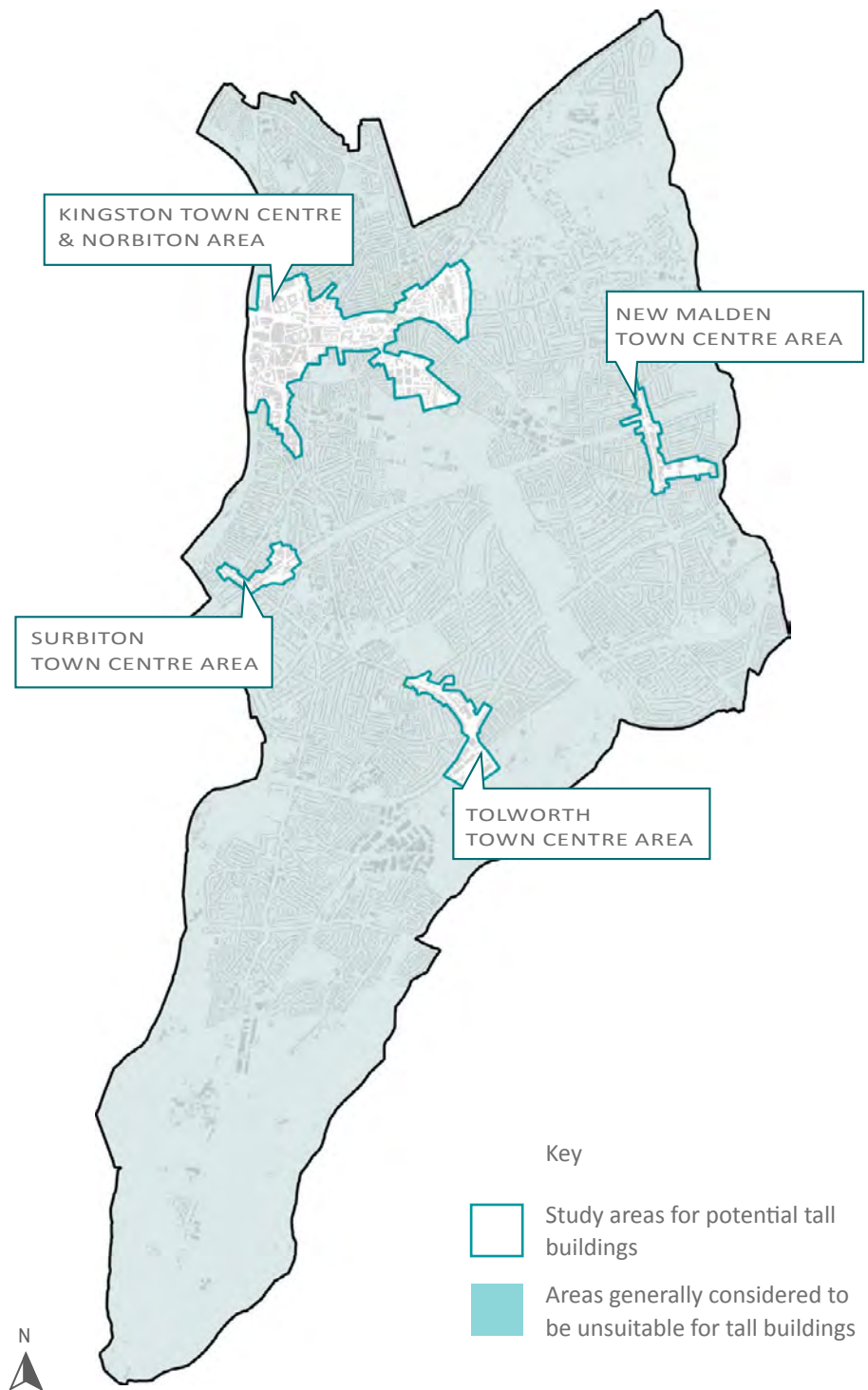


Figure 11. Map showing suitable and unsuitable areas for tall buildings.

Analysis of Kingston's four areas most suitable for tall buildings

The next few pages look at the four areas identified in more detail, including the existing building heights and the appropriate definition of a tall building in each area.

Kingston Town Centre and Norbiton

Kingston town centre and its surroundings are characterised predominantly by low (up to 12m) and mid-rise (up to 21m) building types.

Tall buildings (21m in height or above) are present in clusters and scattered locations including to the north of the railway line, at the south of the town centre and to the east along and around Wheatfield Way.

The town centre also contains heritage tall buildings, All Saints Church and the Guildhall. These buildings are considered landmarks which provide the town centre with its identifiable sense of place.

East of the town centre towards Norbiton, there are clusters of tall buildings around the Cambridge Road Estate, with others present at Kingston Hospital and along Kingston Hill.

The overall prevailing low and mid rise character of the town centre and Norbiton means that the appropriate definition of a tall building for this area is set at 21m and above.

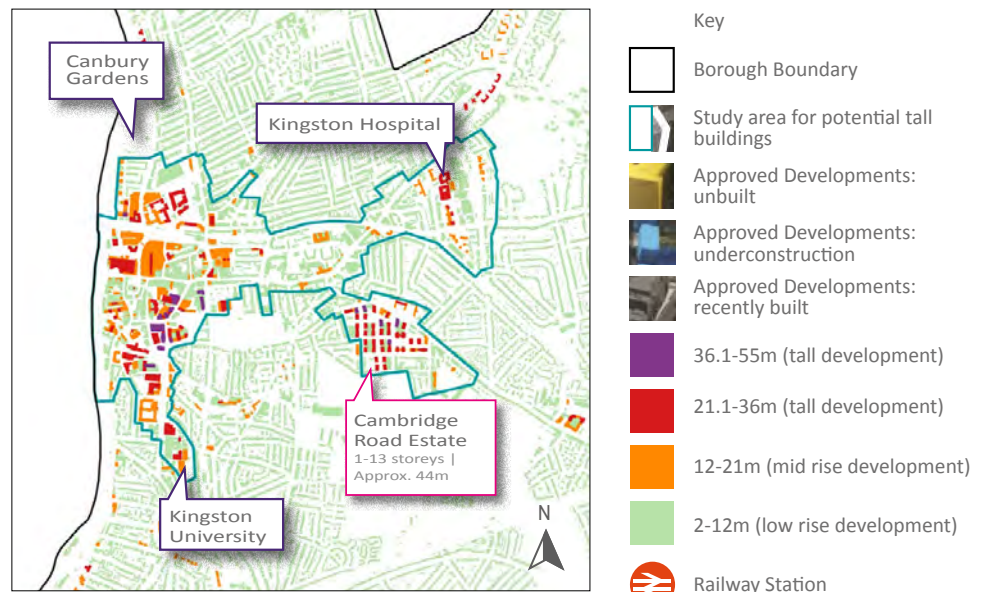


Figure 12. Map showing building heights in Kingston town centre and Norbiton of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.

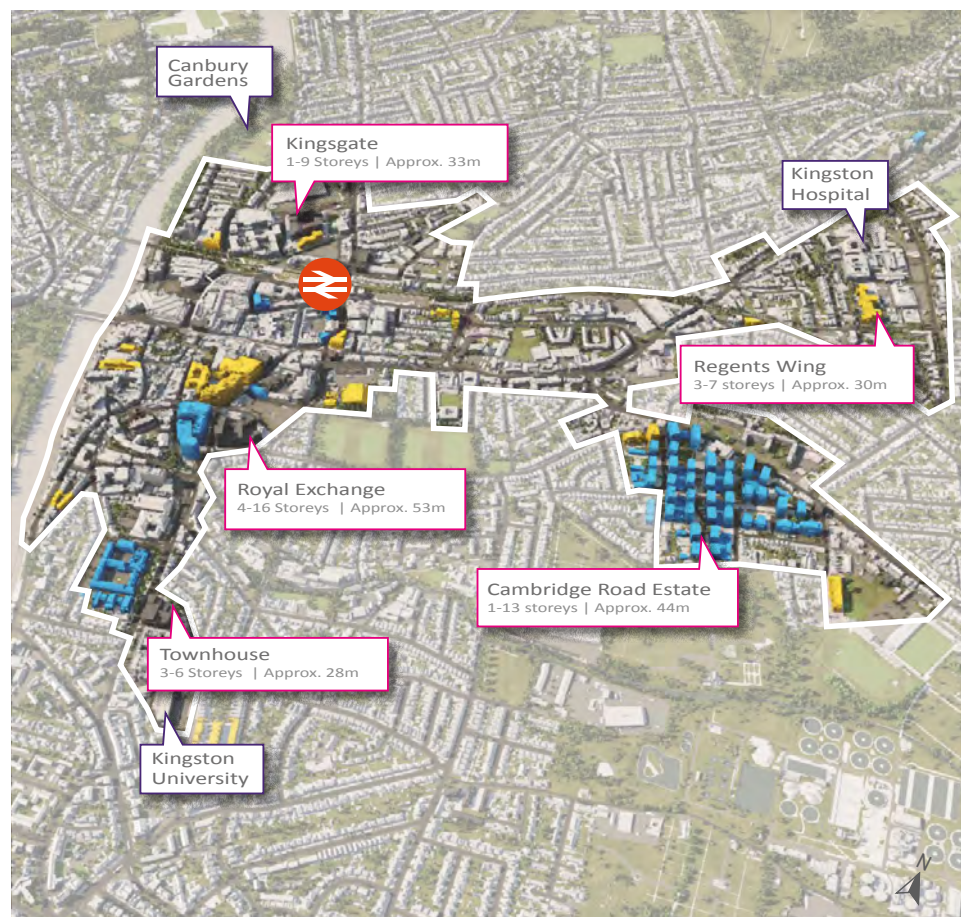


Figure 13. 3D map showing building heights in Kingston town centre and Norbiton of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.



New Malden

New Malden town centre is characterised predominantly by low rise (up to 18m) with some mid-rise (up to 21m) building types.

Tall buildings (21m+) are present in a handful of locations, including two tall buildings directly next to the train station.

The prevailing lower rise character of the town centre, and its surroundings means that the definition of a tall building for this area is set at 21m.

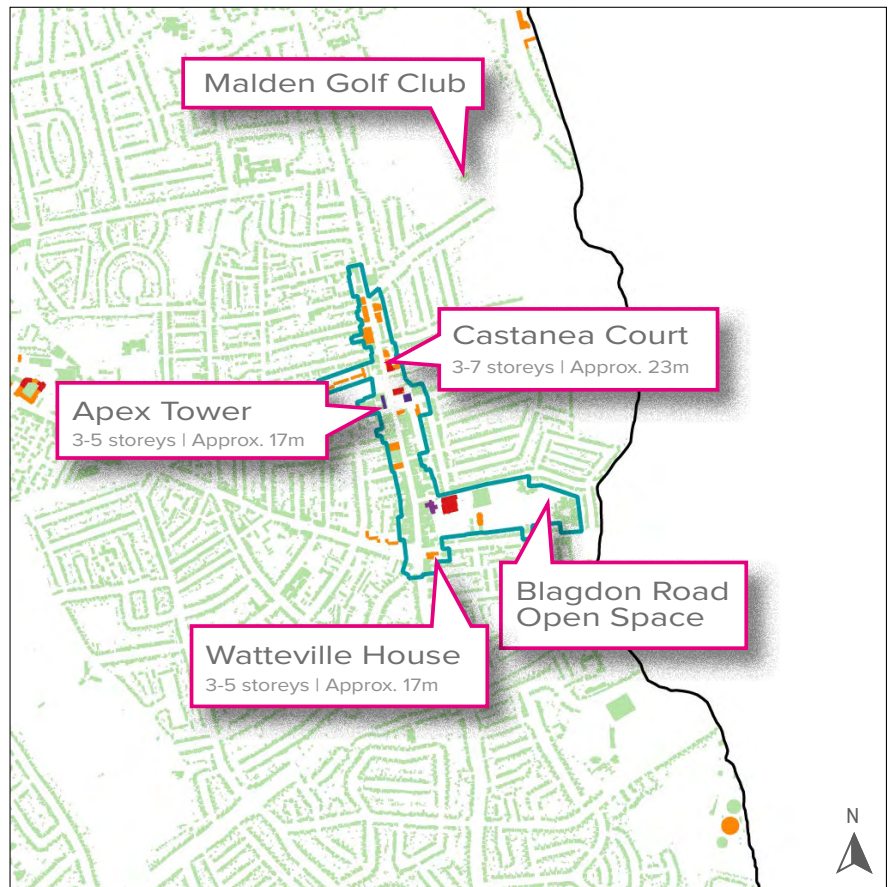


Figure 14 Map showing building heights in New Malden of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.



Figure 15. 3D map showing building heights in New Malden of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.

Key

-  Borough Boundary
-  Study area for potential tall buildings
-  Approved Developments : unbuilt
-  Approved Developments : recently built
-  36.1-55m (tall development)
-  21.1-36m (tall development)
-  12-21m (mid rise development)
-  2-12m (low rise development)
-  Railway Station

Surbiton

Surbiton town centre is characterised predominantly by low rise buildings (up to 18m or 4 storeys) but with a number of mid-rise (up to 21m or roughly 5-7 storey) building types in and around the area.

Tall buildings (21m or 7 storeys and above) are not currently present in Surbiton town centre.

The prevailing lower rise character of the town centre, and its surroundings means that the definition of a tall building for this area is set at 21m and above.

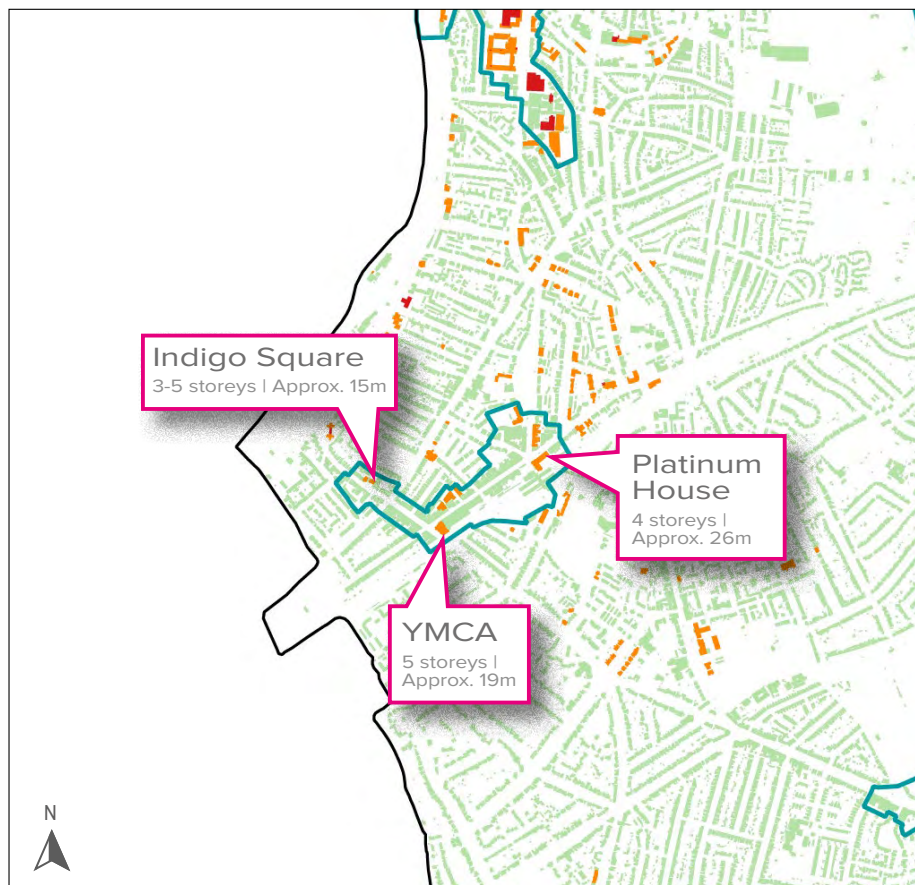


Figure 16. Map showing building heights in Surbiton of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.



Figure 17. 3D map showing building heights in Surbiton of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.



Tolworth

Tolworth town centre is characterised predominantly by low (up to 18m or 4 storeys) with a small number of mid-rise (up to 21m or 6-7 storeys) building types in and around the area.

Tall buildings (21m or 7 storeys and above) are currently present or under construction in a couple of locations in Tolworth (see map).

The prevailing lower rise character of the town centre, and its surroundings means that the definition of a tall building for this area is set at 21m and above.

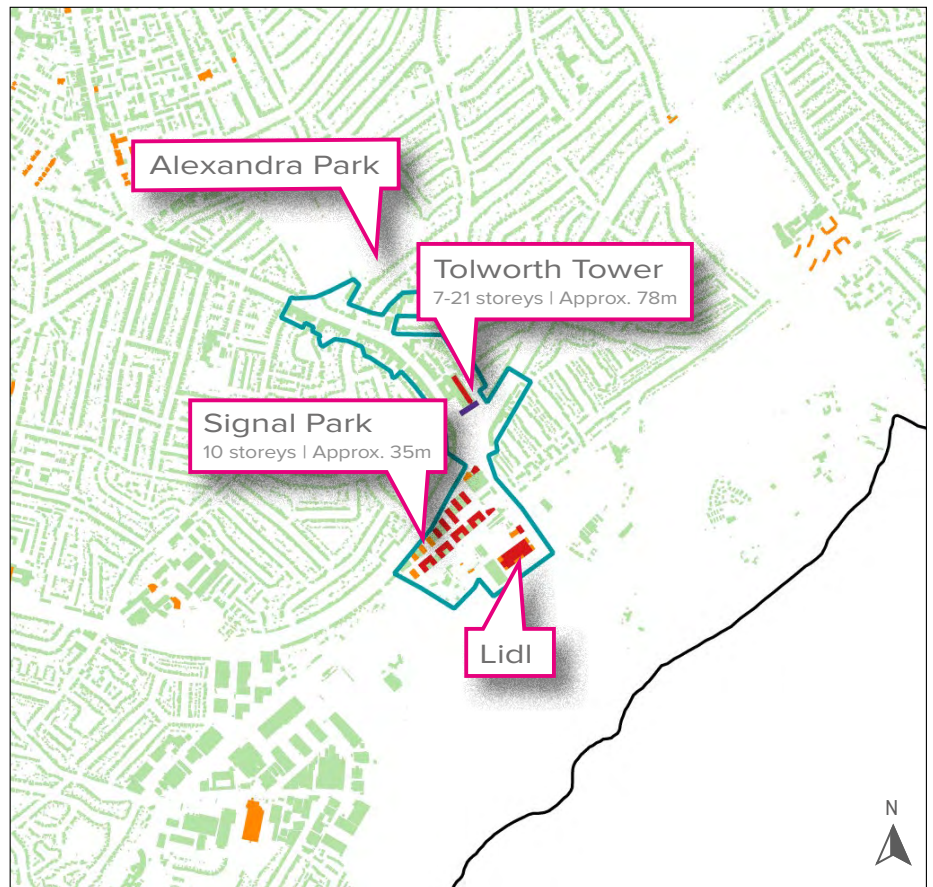










Figure 18. Map showing building heights in Tolworth of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.



Figure 19. 3D map showing building heights in Tolworth of both existing buildings and those approved but not built.

Key

-  Borough Boundary
-  Study area for potential tall buildings
-  Approved Developments : recently built
-  55.1-75m (tall development)
-  21.1-36m (tall development)
-  12-21m (mid rise development)
-  2-12m (low rise development)
-  Railway Station

This section analyses various aspects which contribute to making an area more or less sensitive to the development of tall buildings.

We have used the list of criteria set out in the London Plan Guidance: Characterisation and Growth Strategy 2023 to map the areas that each criteria covers and combine them into a single map. This assists in identifying an area's sensitivity to tall building development.

Sensitivity to tall building development criteria from London Plan Guidance.

1. Areas that do not have any buildings that exceed the borough's tall building definition
2. Within or near Areas of Special Local Character
3. Within a Conservation Area or likely to affect its setting
4. Within a protected view or its background
5. Within Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land
6. Within green open spaces and nature reserves
7. Close proximity (for example, 50m radius) or within the setting of listed buildings
8. Poor levels of public transport accessibility (for example, PTAL score 0-3)
9. Within the Thames Policy Area
10. Within the setting of a World Heritage Site
11. Within a Civil Aviation Authority Public Safety Zone

The following pages outline:

- Areas where there are currently tall buildings
- Heritage, conservation, key views and open spaces
- Public Transport Accessibility Level (to address point 8)
- The study also takes into account centres of activity (e.g. Metropolitan and District Centres)

Points 10 and 11 in the table are not applicable to the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.



Existing tall buildings

Distinguishing between areas characterised by low scale buildings and those characterised by a greater variety of mid-rise and tall buildings, helps to understand sensitivity to new tall buildings.

This does not mean that the introduction of tall buildings can never happen, but low rise areas - such as traditional suburban neighbourhoods - generally benefit from a harmonious scale that unifies their character, even when comprising a combination of different building types and styles.

This map layer is helpful to understand where the introduction of a tall building could disrupt the continuity of an area, but is not considered a sole reason to refuse tall buildings. Site specific analysis is often needed to understand the relative sensitivity or opportunity a tall building could contribute towards any given location.

The borough's existing tall buildings are clustered in a few locations; Kingston town centre, New Malden town centre and the Cambridge Road Estate. Outlying tall buildings are present in Tolworth, and Kingston Hill.

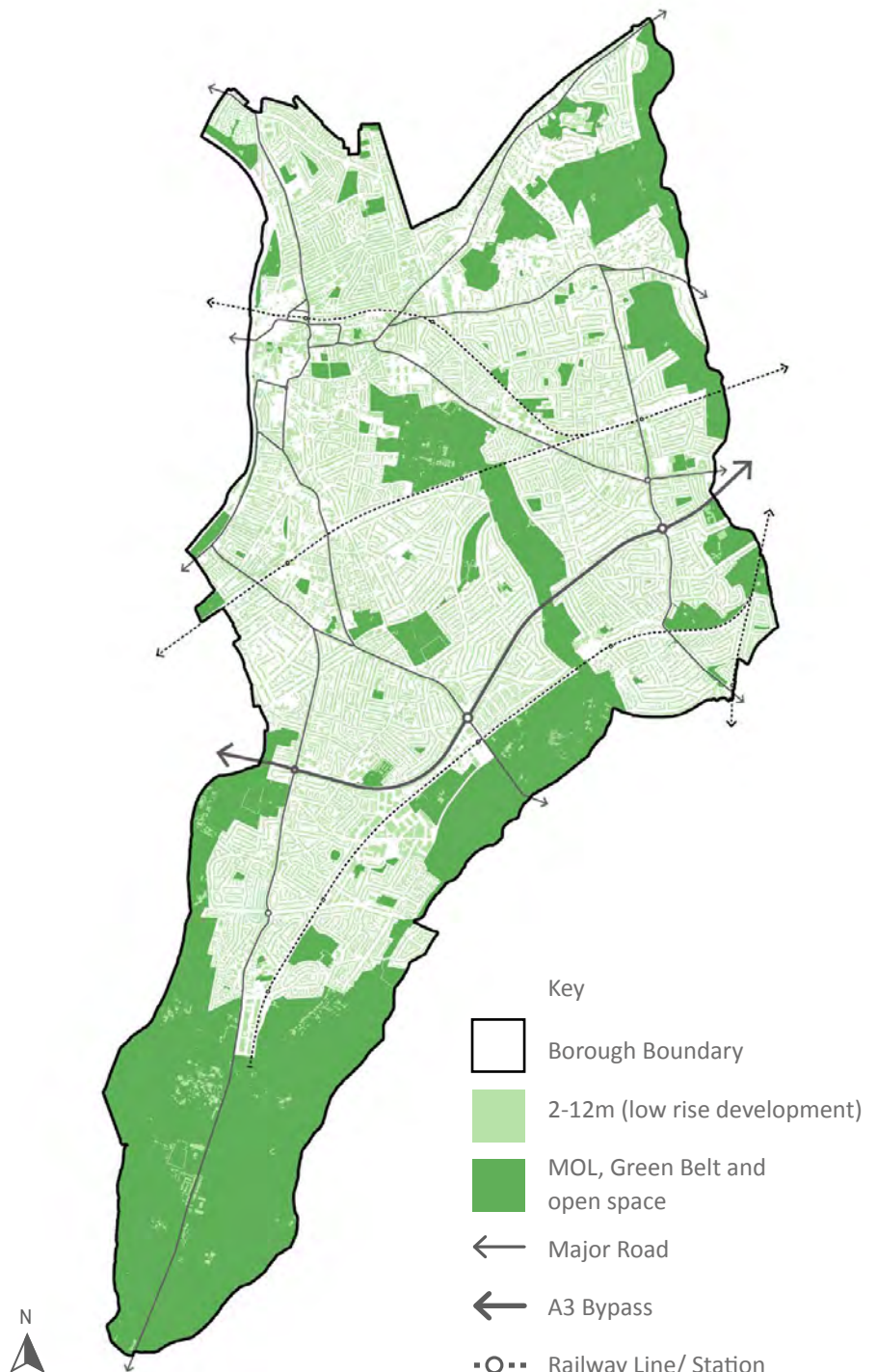


Figure 20. Map showing Kingston's low rise buildings, open space, Metropolitan Open Land MOL, Green Belt and open space.

Heritage, conservation and key views

Conservation Areas are a long-established statutory designation employed by local planning authorities to manage areas of special architectural or historic interest. The historic environment is a vital part of creating a sense of place; communities value the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment and the desirability of these areas as a place to live.

Conservation Areas can potentially be areas that are suitable for tall buildings, and are not mutually exclusive. However, proposals for tall buildings need to ensure that the special attributes and significance of Conservation Areas and other historic assets are preserved or enhanced.

Other heritage assets including listed and locally listed buildings are an important consideration in the planning of tall buildings. Special regard needs to be had to the desirability of preserving a heritage asset or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Preservation in this context means not harming the interest in the building, rather than keeping its setting unchanged. Site-specific analysis will be required to determine the potential impact of new tall building proposals on such heritage assets.

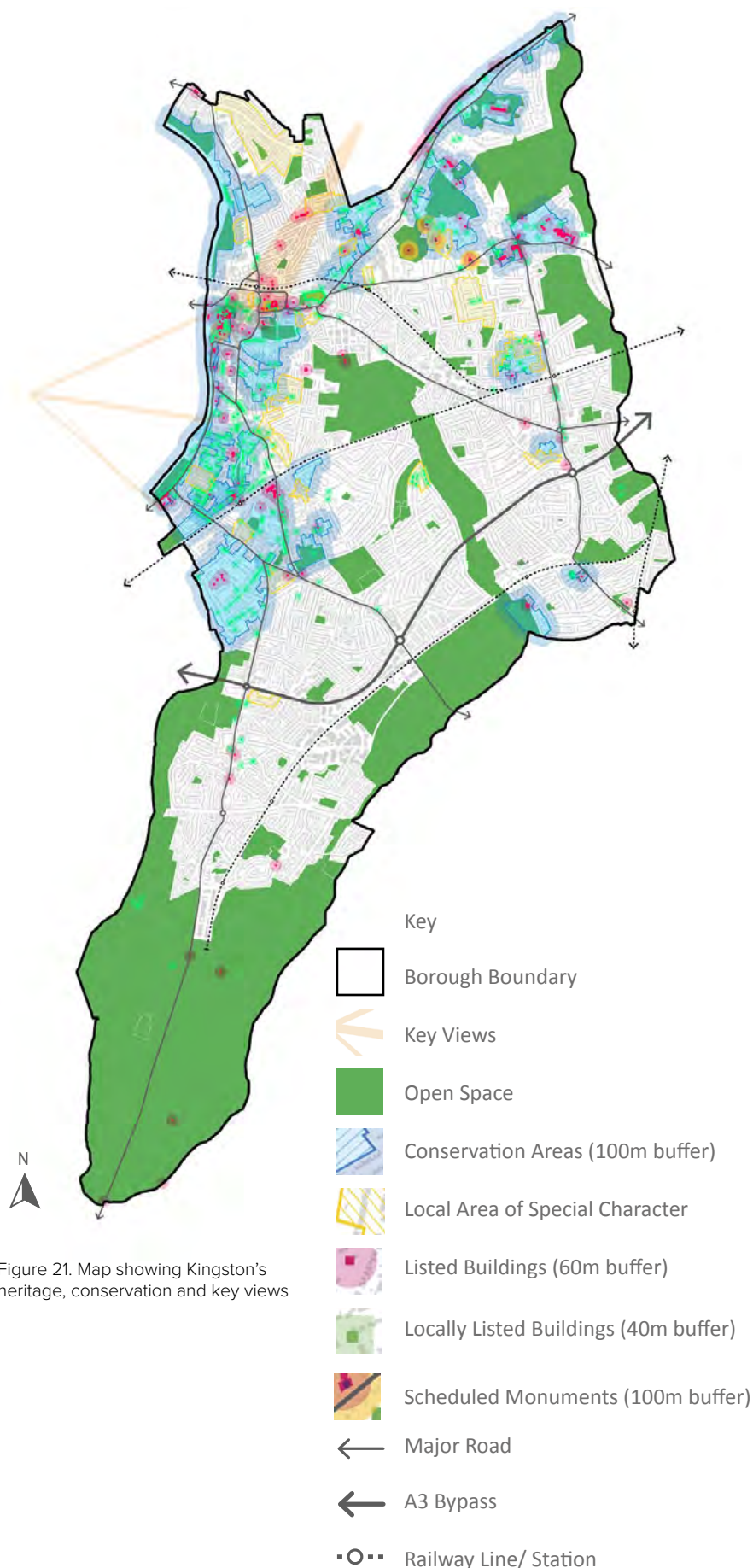


Figure 21. Map showing Kingston's heritage, conservation and key views



Open space & protected nature

This map illustrates the borough's green spaces including parks, recreation grounds, nature reserves Metropolitan Open Land and the Green Belt.

Green spaces can be highly sensitive to tall buildings through visual impact on their natural or open landscape character, impacts on biodiversity through changes to microclimates and more intense use associated with higher development densities.

Green space characterises large parts of the south of the borough, with large areas of green space also present along the Hogsmill valley, in Coombe and along the borough's eastern boundaries.

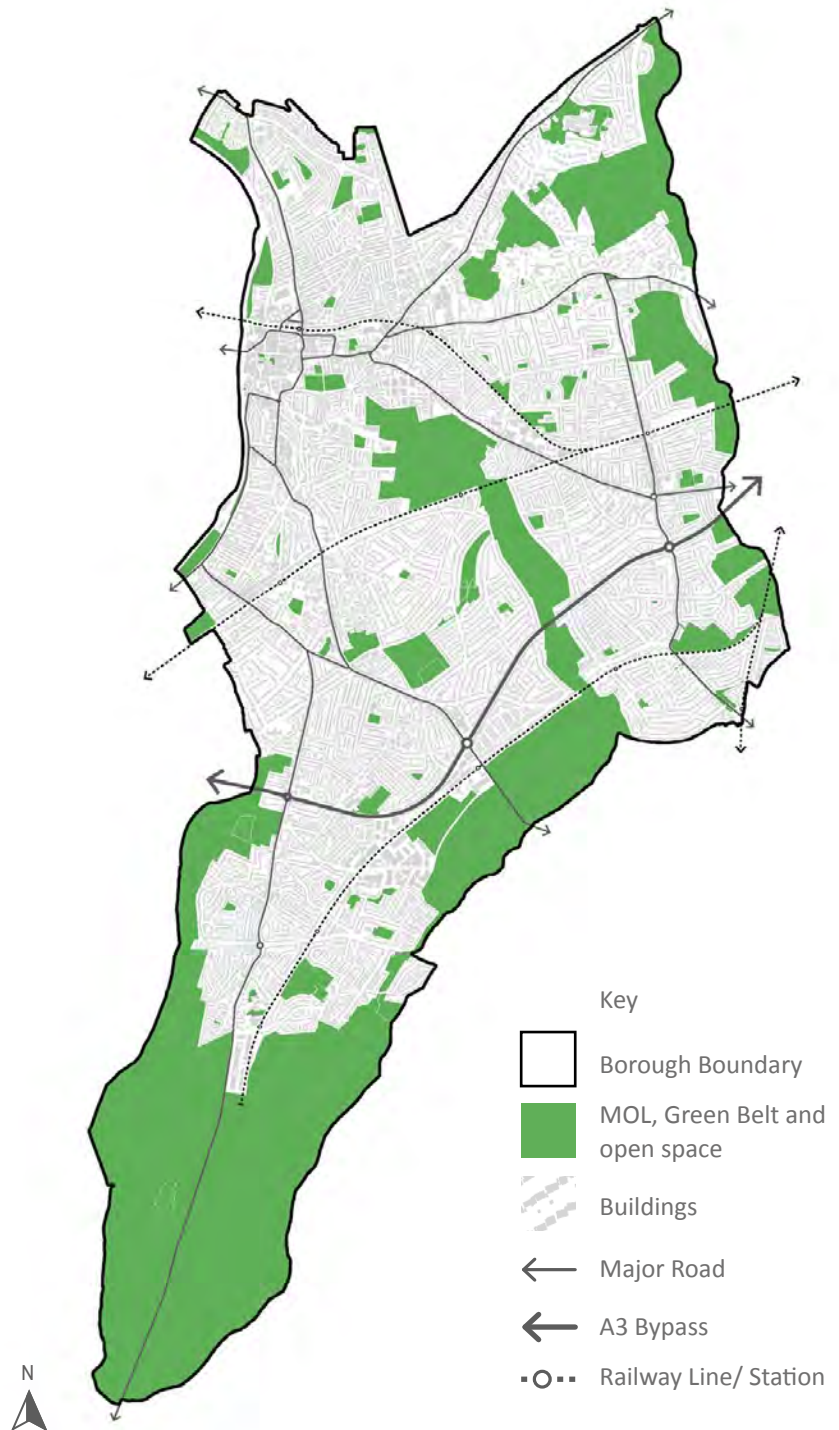


Figure 22. Map showing open space, Metropolitan Open Land and Green Belt in Kingston



Combined sensitivities to tall buildings

- Areas of a consistently low building scale (buildings with a max height of 12m or below)
- Local Areas of Special Character
- Conservation areas and a 100m buffer
- Views identified in the RBK Views Study Report (2018)
- Protected open spaces (including Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and Public Open Spaces)
- Listed buildings and a 60m buffer
- Locally listed buildings and a 40m buffer
- Scheduled monuments and a 100m buffer
- Low Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) (0-3) areas
- Thames Policy Area

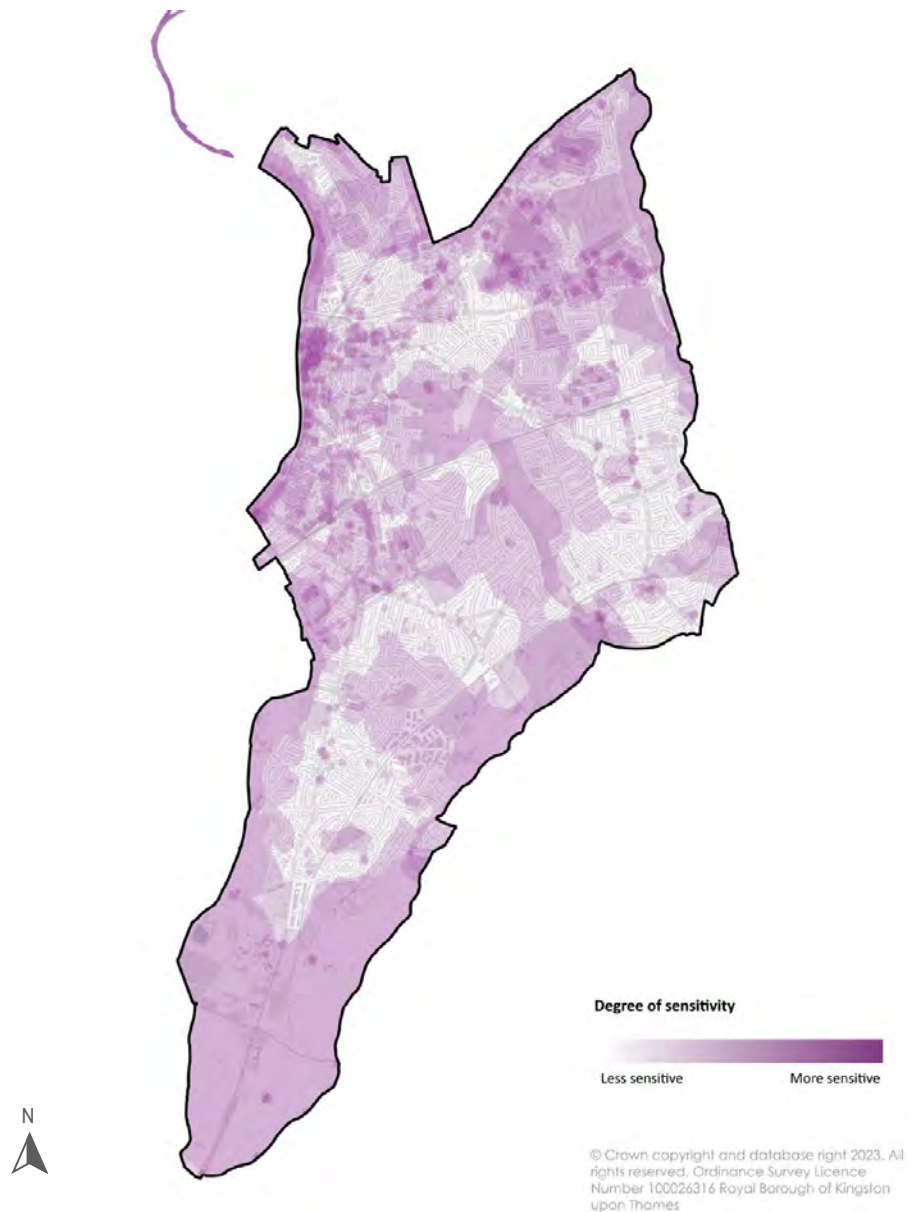


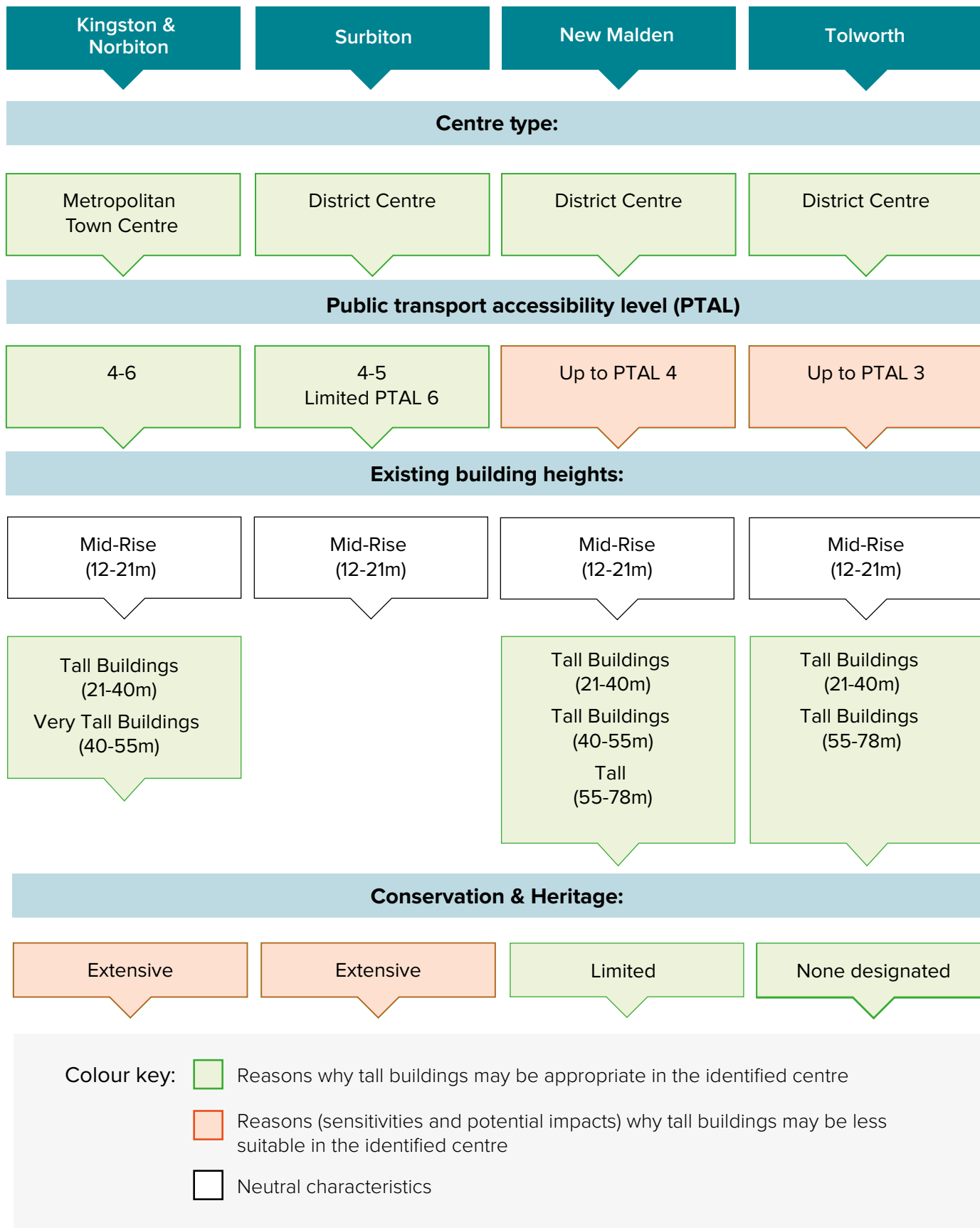
Figure 23. Map showing the combined sensitivities including conservation and heritage, views and open space to highlight areas potentially sensitive for tall buildings.

Kingston Borough

Summary of centre characteristics



Set out below is a summary of the characteristics of each centre and their potential suitability for tall buildings.





“The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Views Study Report” published in 2018 is a significant consideration in assessing the impact of tall buildings.

Some areas of the borough, and in particular Kingston Town Centre, have been identified as being suitable for tall buildings through the combined suitability process, but is subject to special sensitivities relating to important views and settings of particular landmarks.

The views study is intended to highlight the sensitivities to be considered when tall buildings are proposed within the context of each view.

This tall buildings strategy is not intended to duplicate the analysis and recommendations made in the views study, but will be used when assessing the impacts of future proposals.

There have been further developments in the town centre since the 2018 study which may have impacted some of the identified views, with additional schemes currently under construction.

Proposals for tall buildings are expected to fully reference all relevant identified views, taking into account any changes that have taken place since, and outlining how the proposal would impact and contribute to the view.



Sensitivities

Whilst Kingston Town Centre is the borough's most suitable location for tall buildings in terms of access to public transport, shops and town centre amenities, it also contains the highest concentration of sensitivities to tall buildings.

The town centre contains Kingston Old Town Conservation Area, and adjoins Fairfield Conservation Area where all development within, or affecting their setting, is expected to either preserve or enhance their special character. Kingston's Ancient Marketplace is a special location, highly sensitive to change.

The town centre also includes many listed as well as locally listed buildings, where tall buildings have the potential to harm their setting or significance.

This study has taken into account the town centre's heritage assets and added buffers of sensitivity, where extra consideration needs to be taken into account when proposing tall buildings.

Kingston's principal heritage landmarks, All Saints Church and the Guildhall themselves are above 21m in height so are considered tall buildings. These buildings are important as local landmarks which help give Kingston its characteristic sense of place, and views of these could be harmed by additional tall buildings either in the foreground or background, where their prominence and discernibility can be eroded.

In addition to heritage assets, there are a number of other important views both to and through parts of the town centre, which are sensitive to change. Further information on these is contained in the Kingston Views Study 2018.

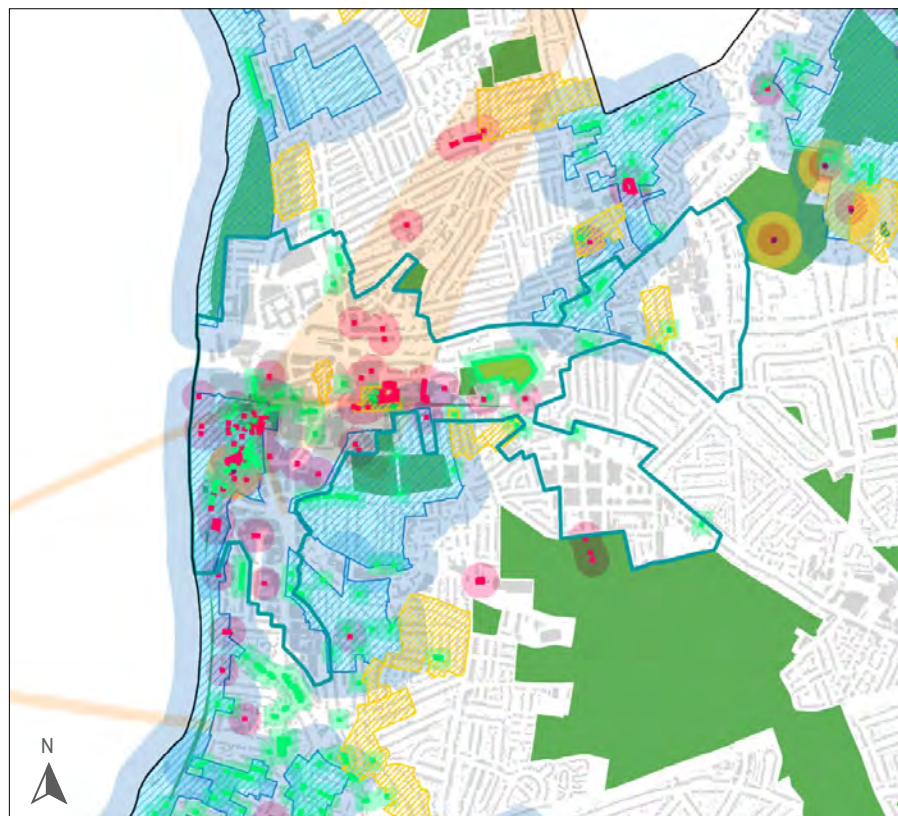











Figure 24. Map showing different sensitivities in Kingston town centre and Norbiton

Key

-  Borough Boundary
-  Study area for potential tall buildings
-  Key Views
-  Open Space
-  Conservation Areas (100m buffer)
-  Local Area of Special Character
-  Listed Buildings (60m buffer)
-  Locally Listed Buildings (40m buffer)
-  Scheduled Monuments (100m buffer)



Areas suitable for tall buildings

The relatively compact nature of Kingston town centre means that tall building development in any location has the potential to impact sensitive parts very easily.

The area along Wheatfield Way contains existing tall buildings, however these dramatically contrast with low rise areas to the east, including Fairfield Conservation Area. New tall buildings in envelopes on the edge of the town centre should address this change in scale by stepping down, and mediating their massing to reduce their visual impact.

The wider town centre and Norbiton is a diverse area that encompasses distinctly different characters, and building typologies. The Cambridge Road Estate including Cambridge Gardens, contains a number of existing mid-rise and tall buildings. This area is considered suitable for exploring building heights up to 40m but with some pockets where taller elements up to 55m could be appropriate.

Most locations identified as being suitable for tall buildings in Kingston town centre and Norbiton, are appropriate to explore heights up to a 40m height threshold. A handful of locations have been identified as being appropriate to explore heights up to 55m.

There are no locations in this area that have been identified as being appropriate for building heights above 55m.

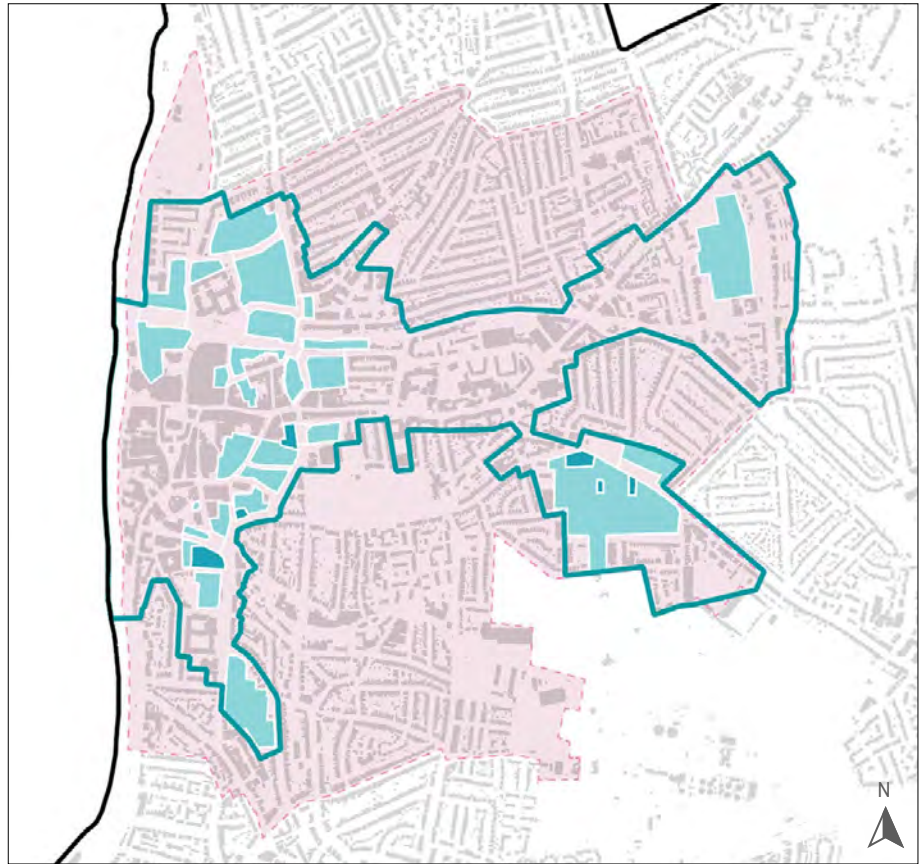
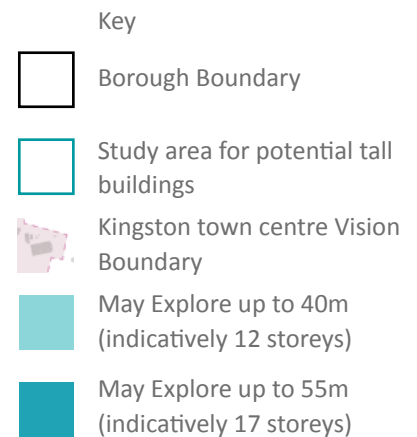


Figure 25. Map showing areas which may be suitable for tall buildings in Kingston town centre and Norbiton.



Sensitivities

New Malden town centre itself is not covered by conservation area status, however there are two conservation areas and a Local Area of Special Character within the wider context.

The High Street contains a wide variety of architectural styles but a broadly consistent frontage height of 2-4 storeys.

There are locally listed buildings situated along the High Street at various points.

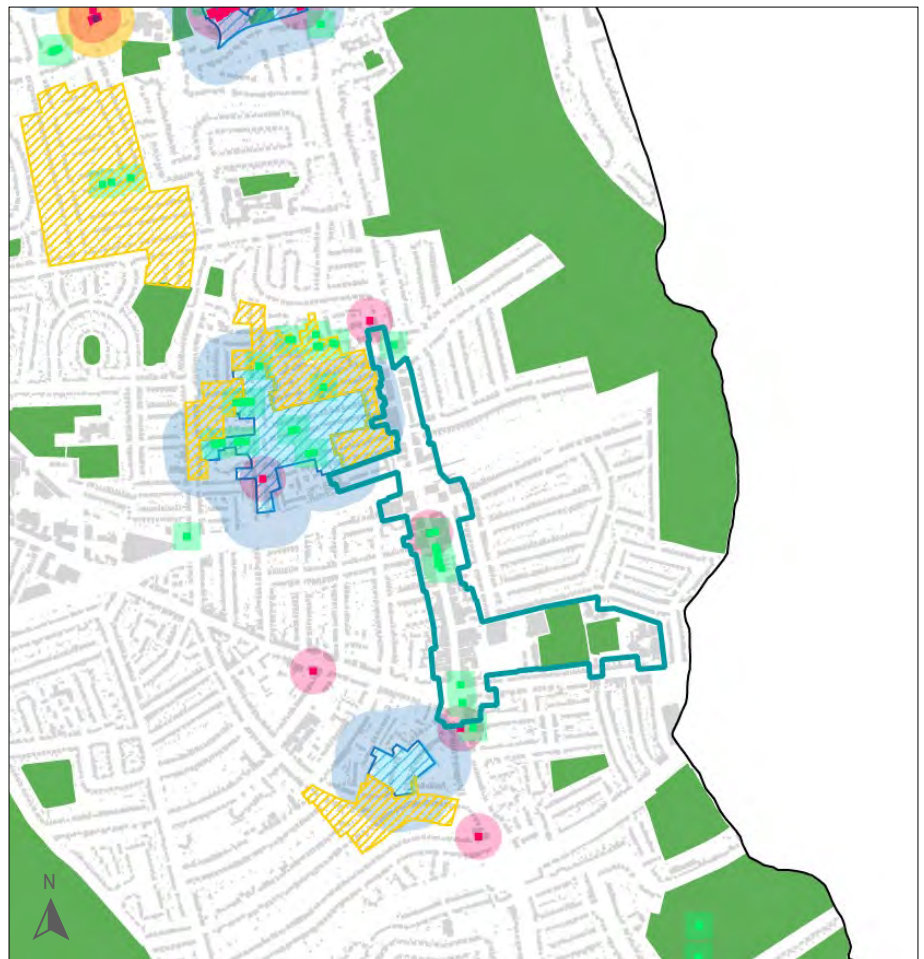
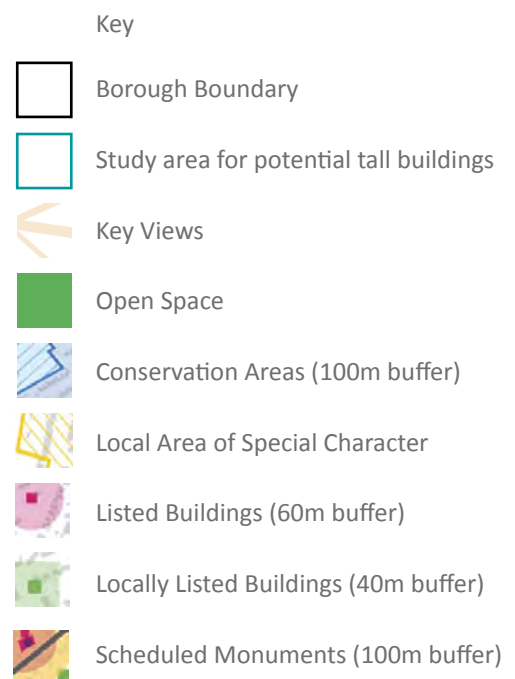


Figure 26. Map showing different sensitivities in New Malden.





Appropriate locations for tall buildings

New Malden town centre has a high level of suitability for tall buildings by having good access to public transport, services and amenities.

The town centre has historically developed in a linear formation along the High Street from the railway station, principally in a southerly direction to the Fountain Roundabout.

The character of the town centre and surroundings is predominantly low rise, with a cluster of mid-rise buildings along and adjacent to the High Street.




The principal tall buildings cluster, consisting of both existing and consented schemes sits around New Malden railway station and St George's Square. There are opportunities to explore taller buildings on some sites adjacent to this.

A secondary area of existing tall buildings sits around Cocks Crescent towards the southern end of the town centre. Here there are also opportunities for tall buildings to be explored with future development proposals.

The existing heights of legacy tall buildings in New Malden should not be seen as a marker for what is appropriate for this location. All proposals for buildings above 21m should demonstrate a positive relationship with the predominantly low rise surroundings of New Malden.



Figure 27. Map showing areas which may be suitable for tall buildings in New Malden.

Key	
	Borough Boundary
	Study area for potential tall buildings
	May Explore up to 40m (indicatively 12 storeys)
	May Explore up to 55m (indicatively 17 storeys)

Sensitivities

Surbiton town centre and its surroundings contain a high concentration of sensitivities.

Most of the town centre north of the railway line has conservation area status, with a high number of additional conservation areas and Local Areas of Special Character sitting adjacent.

There are also significant numbers of listed and locally listed buildings throughout the area.

There are important views of Surbiton station approaching along Claremont Road, and Victoria Road is characterised by a broadly consistent height of building frontage of between 2-4 storeys.

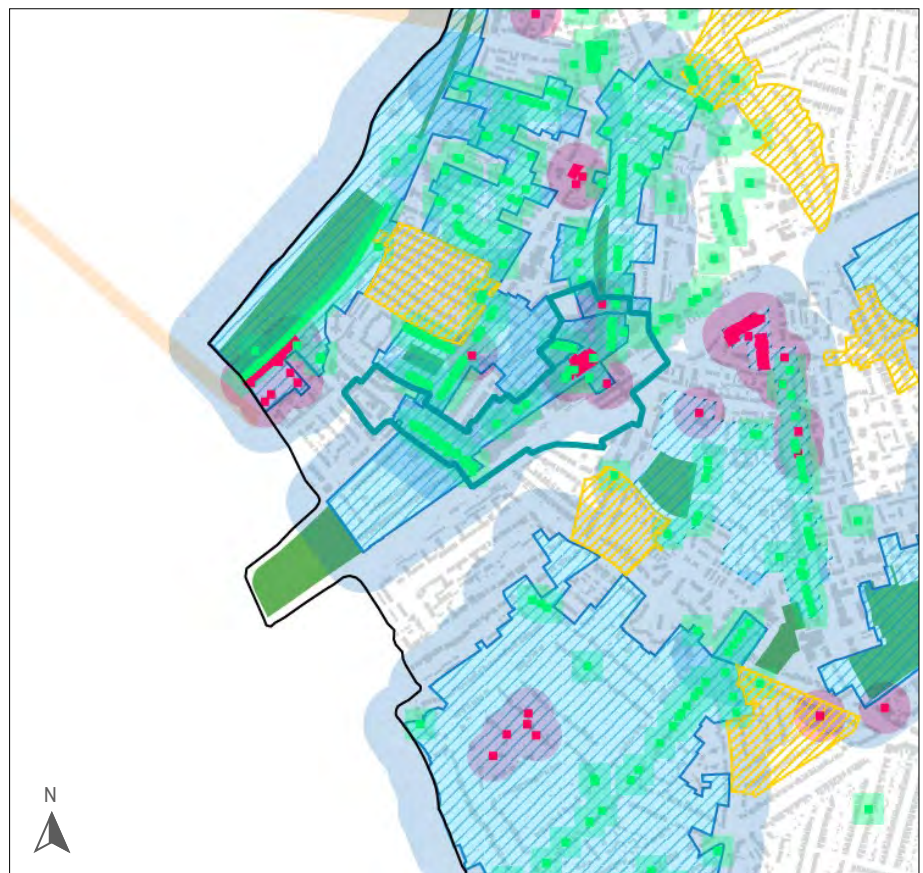
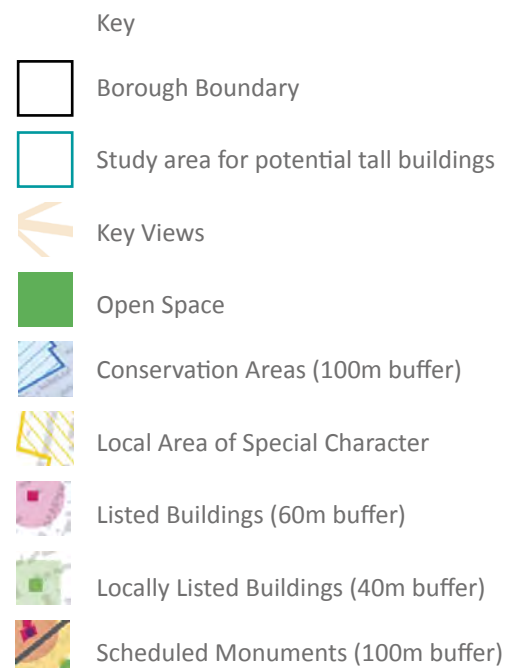


Figure 28. Map showing different sensitivities in Surbiton.





Appropriate locations for tall buildings

Surbiton town centre has high suitability for tall buildings based on its high level of access to public transport, shops and amenities but also contains a high concentration of sensitivities.

The town centre has developed in a largely linear formation from the area surrounding Surbiton station, west along Victoria Road and up Brighton Road.

There are no tall buildings (those above 21m) in Surbiton town centre itself, however the surrounding area is characterised by a relatively high number of mid-rise buildings between 12m and 21m.

Surbiton's high concentration of sensitivities mean that tall buildings may be suitable in only two identified locations, within the wider Surbiton station site (shown in map opposite).

These two locations may be suitable to explore elements with heights of 21m or above, however full modelling of impacts based on the design will be necessary in order to assess any harm to views and setting of the station, in particular the clock tower, and wider town centre.

Mid rise development of between 12m and 21m is considered to be the most appropriate form of high density development in and around Surbiton town centre.

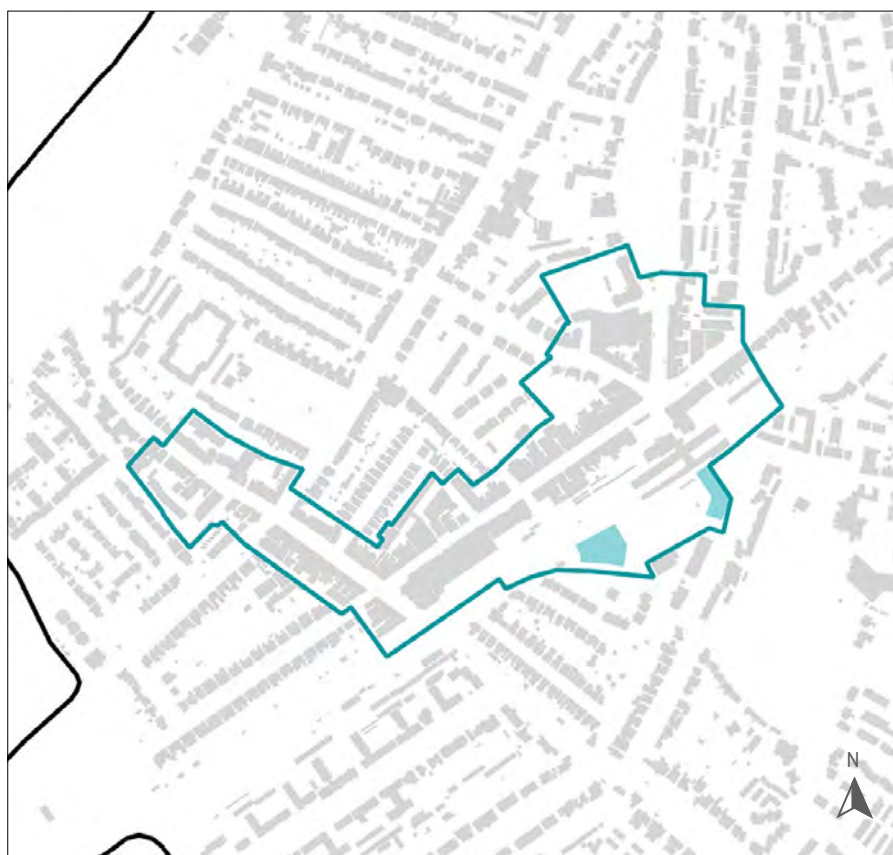





Figure 29. Map showing areas which may be suitable for tall buildings in Surbiton.

Key	
	Borough Boundary
	Study area for potential tall buildings
	May Explore up to 40m (indicatively 12 storeys)

Sensitivities & Approach

Tolworth is surrounded by some substantial areas of green space, to the north at Alexandra Park, and to the south at Tolworth Court Farm. These areas are sensitive to tall buildings.

Tolworth town centre consists of a linear retail core along Tolworth Broadway, with a broadly consistent building height around 12m along its western and north eastern sections. There are views south along the Broadway which take in Tolworth Tower as a landmark.

The southern section of the town centre area consists of the A3 cutting and its roundabout intersection with wide spacing between buildings either side. This section does not at present form an area of consistent character.

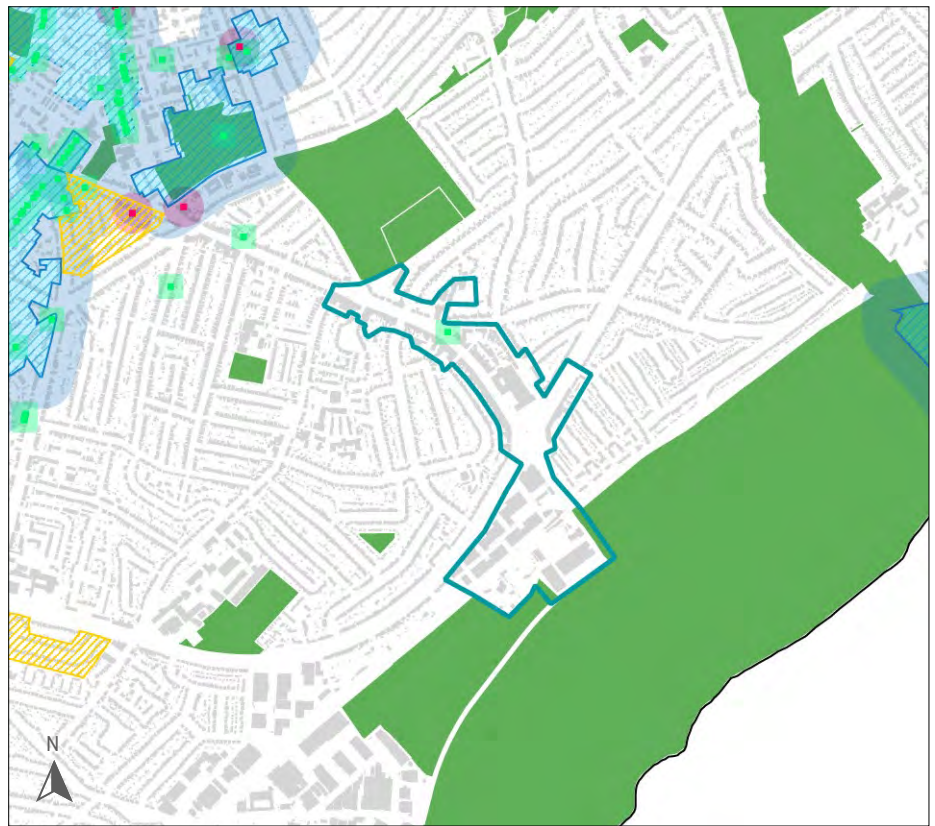
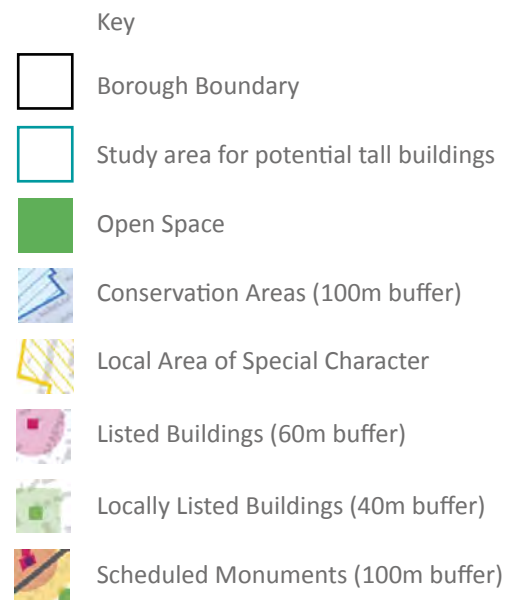


Figure 30. Map showing different sensitivities in Tolworth





Appropriate locations for tall buildings

Areas closest to Tolworth Station enjoy the best overall access to public transport. The future development of Crossrail 2 would result in more frequent train services in this location.

Tolworth Tower is a 78m high development which has formed a landmark adjacent to the A3 and Tolworth Roundabout since the 1960s.

Within Tolworth town centre, there are further opportunities for exploring tall buildings development on the site adjacent to Tolworth Tower as well as those alongside the railway line and train station.

The maximum height of Tolworth Tower should not itself be seen as a marker for what is acceptable on adjacent sites. All elements of tall buildings above 21m should demonstrate an appropriate relationship to the predominately low rise character of Tolworth Broadway and the surrounding residential areas.

To the south of Tolworth Roundabout, the Signal Park development currently under construction, has introduced tall buildings to previously derelict land in between the A3 and the railway line. There is potential to add a taller element of up to 55m in this area given the generally open aspect of the A3 corridor, and significant separation from local areas of low rise housing.

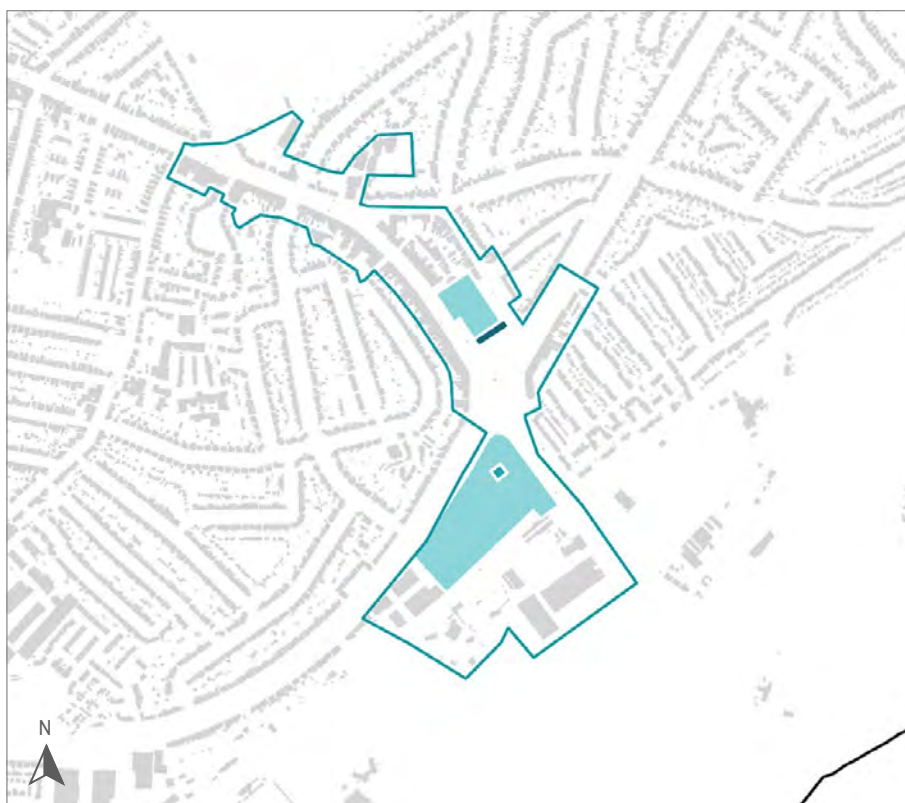







Figure 31. Map showing areas which may be suitable for tall buildings in Tolworth.

Key	
	Borough Boundary
	Study area for potential tall buildings
	May Explore up to 40m (indicatively 12 storeys)
	May Explore up to 55m (indicatively 17 storeys)
	May Explore up to 78m (indicatively 24 storeys)

All tall buildings must be of exemplary design quality. Key principles for the development of tall buildings within appropriate locations in the borough have been identified. Proposals will need to demonstrate how they address these principles.



Sensitively scale down towards that of adjacent low rise areas

Tall buildings close to areas of more consistently low building scale, including at the edge of town centres, should scale down, minimising large contrasts in height to its surroundings.



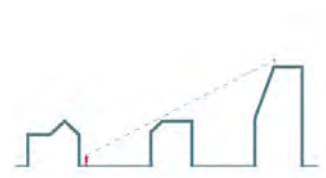
Retain the human scale of main shopping streets

Tall buildings fronting, or in very close proximity to main shopping streets should pay particular focus to retaining a human scale along frontages. Taller elements should be set back to avoid overshadowing and creating an overbearing feel to these vital social spaces. This is key in areas around Fife Road, Eden Street, Castle Street or Clarence Street in Kingston town centre, New Malden High Street, Victoria Road in Surbiton, and Tolworth Broadway.



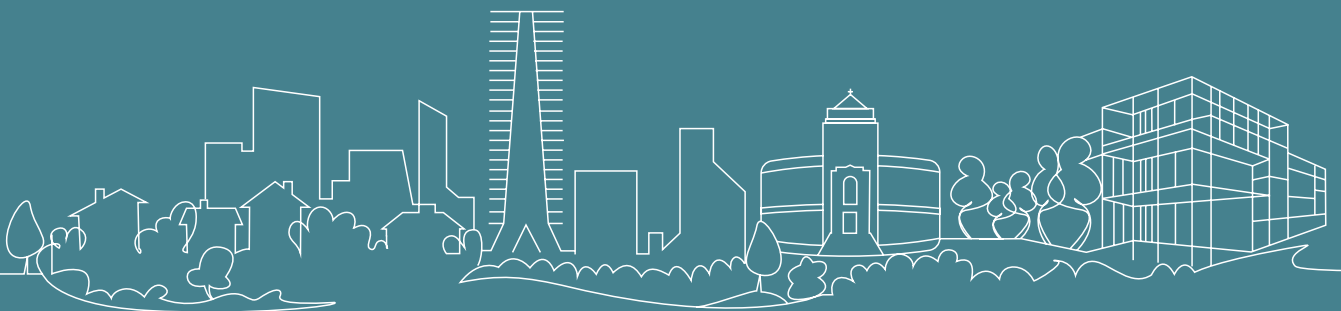
Preserve views of heritage landmark

Exemplary tall buildings can act as new landmarks themselves, but they should not impair existing views of the borough's heritage landmarks such as All Saints Church tower or the Guildhall tower in Kingston, or Surbiton station and its clocktower, from streets and public spaces within and approaching the town centre, taking into account any cumulative impact that may arise.



Conserve the setting of Kingston Market Place

Kingston Market Place is a historic and highly sensitive space, central to the town's identity and sense of place. Proposals for tall buildings that may visually impact views to, through and beyond the Market Place should avoid or minimise disruption to the roofline, or to views out of the space.



Kingston Council is sharing this draft Tall Buildings Strategy document for comment between 7 November to 19 December 2023. If you think there is anything incorrect or missing you can:

- Complete the online form by visiting <https://www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/planning/draft-tall-buildings-strategy>
- Email localplan@kingston.gov.uk
- Call the council's contact centre on 020 8547 5000 and ask for a member of the Spatial Planning Team to call you back.
- Write to Spatial Planning Team,
The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Guildhall 2, High Street, Kingston, KT1 1EU

If you need the draft Tall Buildings Strategy in a more accessible format or if you have any questions please email localplan@kingston.gov.uk or call our contact centre on 020 8547 5000.