

Lambeth Tall Building Study



2012


Lambeth

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Cover Images

Top left - existing tall buildings constraining views from Brockwell Park.

Top right—1960s residential point block, Kennington Lane.

Bottom left— silhouette of St Michael's Church, Stockwell Park Rd as viewed down Lorn Rd

Bottom right— post-war offices (Camelford Ho. and Tintagel Ho.) on Albert Embankment

1. Introduction

1.1 The Lambeth Tall Buildings Study (2012) provides an evidence base in support of the Design Policy outlined within the emerging draft Local Plan. It should be noted that a detailed Brixton Tall Building Study (2012) has also been prepared for the same purpose and to inform the content of the draft Brixton Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

1.2 This study examines the policy background applicable to tall buildings and contains an assessment of the borough in relation to tall buildings in order to test previous assumptions in order to inform emerging policy. The object is to identify areas within the borough that are 'appropriate', 'sensitive' or 'inappropriate' for tall development based on best-practice guidance from English Heritage / CABE.

1.3 Given the borough-wide nature of the study exact locations can not be identified.

Study Area

1.4 The London Borough of Lambeth is one of 14 boroughs which make up Inner London. It measures seven miles north to south, and about two and a half miles east to west. It is one of the most densely populated inner London boroughs. Lambeth's population is forecast to grow by 12.9% in the next twenty years to 2028 (GLA 2007 Round population projections).

Study Methodology

1.5 The methodology adopted for this tall buildings study is consistent with the approach recommended by *Guidance on Tall Buildings (July 2007)*, CABE / English Heritage. This advises (page 3) that local planning authorities identify:

"in a map-based form, areas that are appropriate, sensitive or inappropriate for tall buildings"

1.6 This study seeks to identify these definitions in relation to a series of identified characteristics within the borough. See section 4.

1.7 The end result of this evidence-based research could be a definitive map identifying all areas of the borough as either, 'inappropriate', 'sensitive' and 'appropriate' to tall building development.

1.8 The EH / CABE guidance recommends for those areas identified as 'appropriate', or 'sensitive', further urban design analysis and the commissioning of three-dimensional models should be considered. Such detailed work is currently being undertaken for Brixton and has already been prepared for Vauxhall and Waterloo to inform previous policy documents.

2. Policy Background

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

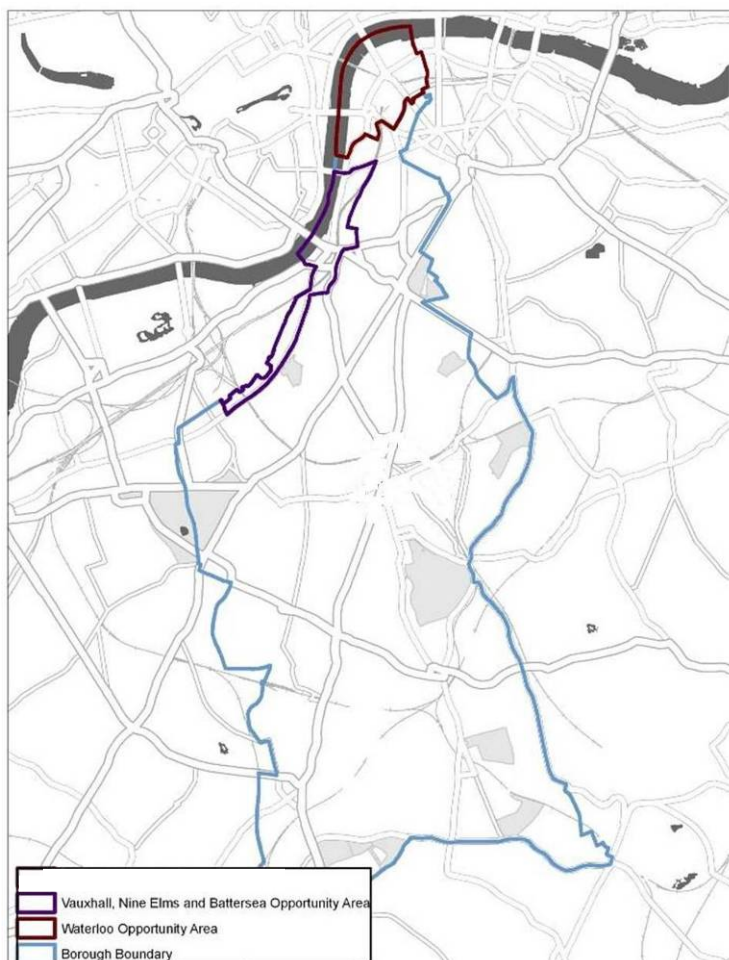
2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes that that local plans should set out opportunities for development and clear policies on what will, or will not, be permitted and where (paragraph 154). Furthermore, it states that Local Planning Authorities should set out their strategic priorities for the area, which should also include policies to deliver conservation and enhancement of the natural and historic environment, including landscaping (paragraph 156) and identify land where development would be inappropriate due to environmental or historical significance.

The London Plan (2011)

2.2 In accordance with the London Plan, Policy 7.7a, tall and large buildings should be part of a strategic approach to changing or developing an area, and should not have an unacceptably harmful impact on their surroundings. As tall buildings may be visible across local and wider views of London forming part of the skyline, it is essential that good design and sustainability be a key factor. They should be generally limited to Central Activity Zones, Opportunity areas, Areas of intensification and town centres that have good access to public transport. Design considerations include context, with an emphasis on siting tall buildings at points of significance within the city.

Lambeth Core Strategy (2010)

2.3 The areas of Waterloo, Vauxhall are identified as Opportunity Areas (see map below). The evidence to justify the location of tall buildings in these areas was summarised in Topic Paper 3 (Core Strategy Policy S9, page 57). Brixton is identified as a town centre where tall building development is considered appropriate.



Lambeth Unitary Development Plan, 2007 (Saved Policies 2010)

2.4 The Council identifies tall buildings as those over 25 metres adjacent to the River Thames and over 30 metres elsewhere within the borough. This is the threshold over which planning applications will be referred to the Mayor for his views and over which he has a power of direction of approval or refusal.

2.5 Policy 40 sets out visual design criteria and urban design criteria for tall building development where siting meets the siting criteria identified. See excerpt below.

Visual Design Criteria:	Urban Design:
If the locational criteria are met, then the tall building will need to meet the following visual design criteria:	Tall buildings should create pedestrian friendly spaces, a suitable high quality public realm, improving the sense of place and identity, and address streets (and potentially the river) with active ground floor uses. The Council will also have regard to the following considerations:
In view of the inevitable prominence of a tall building it should be of the highest architectural and constructional quality.	The development should interact with, and contribute to its surroundings at street level.
It should enhance the skyline through profile and use of materials.	Development should provide a proper setting and treatment, including the provision of mixed uses, active frontage uses where appropriate, considerable improvements to the public realm, and landscaped open space,
Bulky, solid structures or buildings with unsightly roof plant will not be permitted.	The building should achieve a harmonious relationship when viewed in context with surrounding buildings at street level and as part of the public realm.
Be constructed to the standard of quality, design, and vision of the original architect.	The development should have access, servicing, and entrances that do not detract from their surroundings; The amenities and development possibilities of surrounding sites and buildings should not be impaired. Where this cannot be demonstrated, the proposal should be part of, or accompanied by, a wider masterplan or development framework.

Discussion

2.6 The Council, in the Core Strategy, has identified tall buildings as part of as those over 25 metres adjacent to the River Thames and over 30 metres elsewhere within the borough which is the threshold set for referrals to the Mayor in the London Plan. However, the London Plan also defines a tall, and large, buildings as those that are

‘substantially taller than their surroundings, cause a significant change in the skyline or are larger than the threshold set for the referral of planning applications to the Mayor’.

This impact-led definition offers the best way of taking a borough-wide assessment forward and requires an understanding of the local context as a starting point.

3. Existing Tall Buildings in Lambeth

3.1 Within Lambeth generally the average building height is round 10m—roughly 4 storeys. However, it should be noted that this is an average—whilst many properties are 2 storeys it is not uncommon for residential apartment blocks etc. to be in the region of 6 storeys. Furthermore, tall buildings are dotted in the borough generally.

3.2 It is worth at this point considering buildings types that generally noticeably exceed the average building heights:

Point Blocks

3.3 These are perhaps the most common form of tall building in Lambeth— fitting the classic stereotype of a tall building. They generally have a small foot-print and are thus vertical in form. The footprint size, height and treatment are determinants on their visual effect. Gracefulness is normally a combination foot-print and height. There are numerous examples of these in Lambeth; the majority being residential blocks erected as public housing in the 1960s and 1970s. Normally part of a comprehensive re-development they are often part of a designed estate which includes landscaping and amenity space.

Slab Blocks

3.4 These are perhaps best described as ‘ground scrapers’. The footprint tends to be large and the massing horizontal rather than vertical. Southwyck House (AKA Brixton Barrier Block) is perhaps Lambeth’s most well-known example.

Other Built forms

3.5 These might include church towers and ‘one-offs’ e.g. County Hall, The National Theatre, The Oval Cricket Ground, Kennington Gasholders, Waterloo Station.

Local examples are illustrated on page 6.

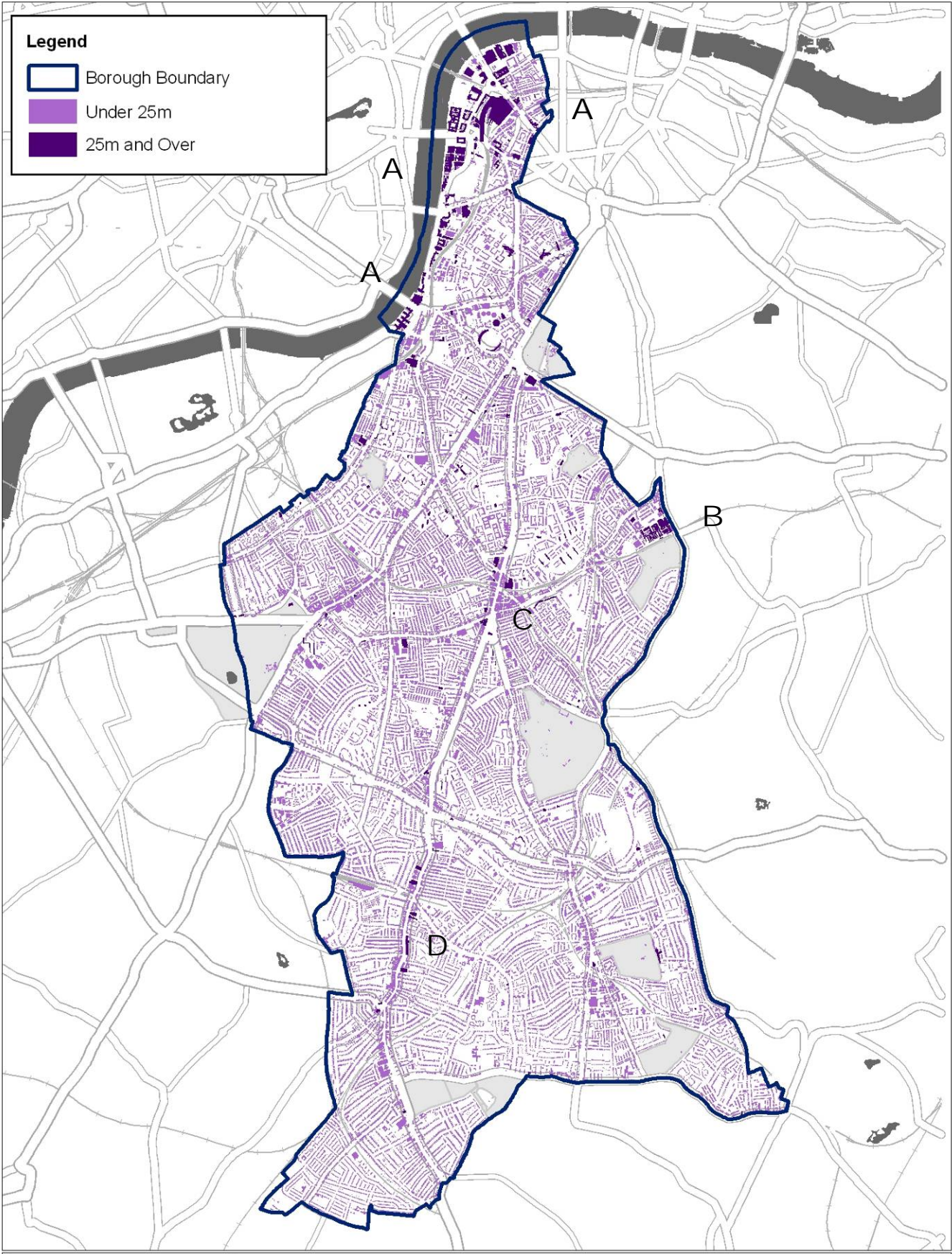
3.6. Using the Lambeth policy threshold of 25m building height as a definition of a tall building the map opposite shows Lambeth’s buildings at or above that height in dark purple.

3.7 Brief examination shows a sprinkling of tall buildings (typically point-blocks and church towers) across the borough generally lessening in number as you proceed south and:

- A An existing concentration of 25m + buildings along the River Thames at Vauxhall, Albert Embankment and South bank / Waterloo.
- B A notable cluster of 25m + buildings at King’s College Hospital, Denmark Hill.
- C Defined cluster of 25m + buildings at Brixton town centre.
- D Some large buildings dotted along Streatham High Road.

Conclusion

3.8 Existing tall building development is generally clustered in the North of the borough (North of Brixton). The presence of development 25m+ should not in itself be used to justify new tall development. Firstly because the existing development might be a ‘one off’ (see 3.5 above) or because existing tall buildings are not considered to be well placed; this may be for a number of reasons such as their adverse impact on views of the settings of heritage assets.





Some tall Buildings in Lambeth

1. Southwyck House, Brixton
2. Loughborough Estate
3. St Luke's Church, West Norwood
4. Stangate House, Waterloo
5. Bannerman House, Vauxhall

4. Analysis

4.1 A map based analysis of the borough's characteristics has been undertaken to inform this study. This has necessitated the identification of relevant information layers which would inform a reasoned approach to tall buildings. These layers are identified as areas of either 'opportunity' layers or 'constraint' layers in order to ensure a balanced and rounded approach to the topic. The 'layers' or typologies which were identified to inform the analysis are:

- Topography
- Open Space
- Local character
- Views (strategic and local)
- Listed Buildings (and Local Listed Buildings)
- Conservation Areas
- Westminster World Heritage Site
- Transport Infrastructure (National Rail and London Underground)
- Opportunity Areas and Major Town Centres

Topography

4.2 The following sections look at each of these layers individually, identifying the issues and offering conclusions in relation to tall building development.

4.3 The map opposite shows the principal contours of Lambeth's landscape. The key points of interest are:

- A. The flat topography of the north of the borough—Vauxhall, Lambeth and Waterloo.
- B. The steeply rising ground at the East of the borough—Herne Hill / Denmark Hill
- C. Rising ground at Central Hill, Gipsy Hill, Streatham Common, West Norwood (the South Eastern corner of the borough).
- D. An otherwise undistinguished topography to the Western half of the borough.

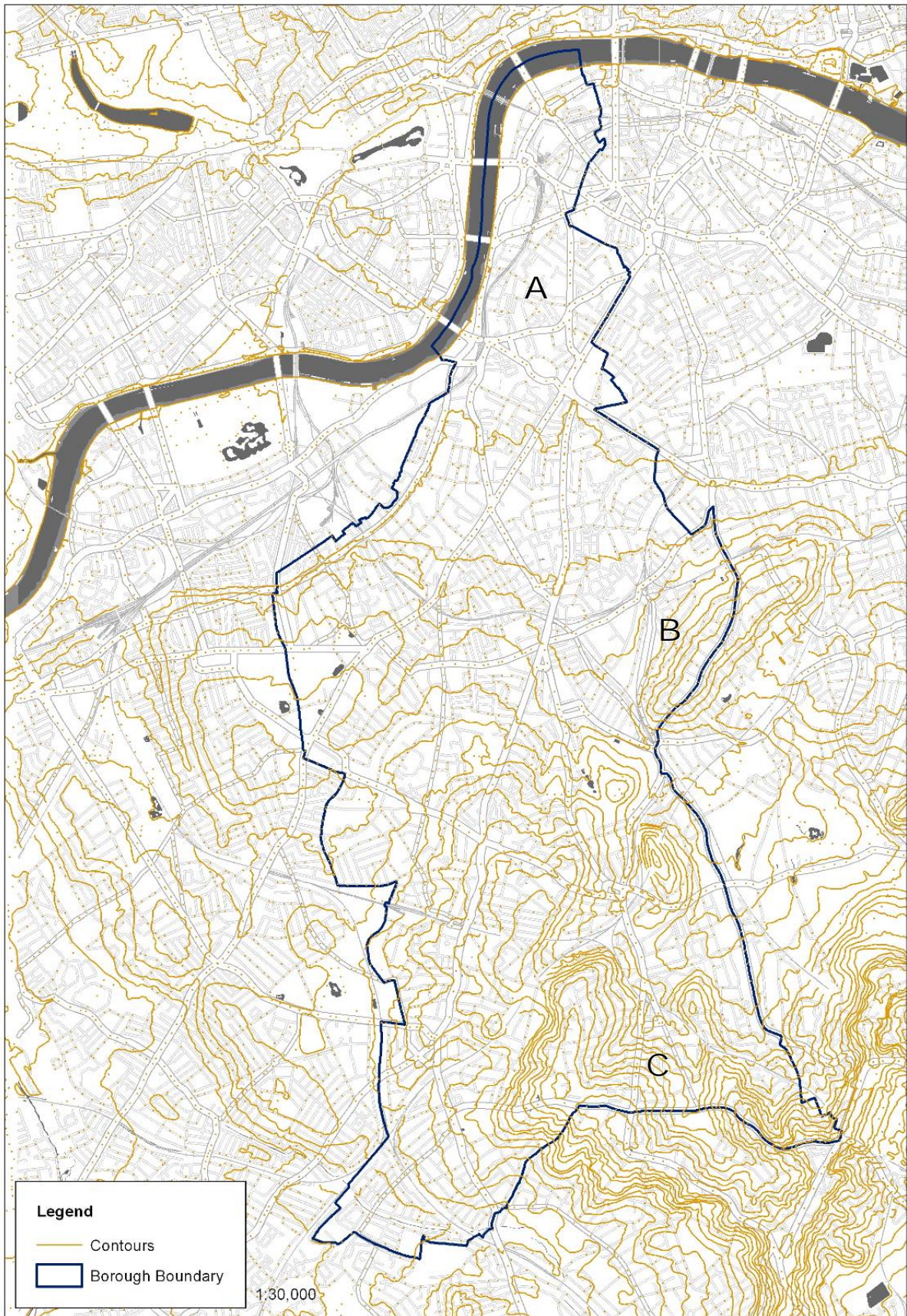
4.4 This layer can be both a constraint and an opportunity when it comes to tall buildings. Tall buildings in the elevated locations (B and C) have the potential to be highly visible over a great distance—therefore their impact may be particularly wide-ranging as a result

4.5 Conversely such elevated positions offer significant opportunities in terms of providing good views from new development. The adverse impact due to high visibility is likely to be considered to outweigh any private benefit to future residents such as good views.

4.6 Tall building concentrations at present are concentrated in the flatter Northern part of the borough. The only existing grouping in an elevated position is King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill.

Conclusion

4.7 The elevated locations at B and C on the map opposite should be considered, in very general terms to be 'sensitive' to tall building development.



Open Space

4.8 The map opposite identifies Lambeth's open spaces. These are exceptionally valuable to Lambeth as amenity spaces for residents and as ecological habitats. It should be noted that the northern part of the borough has an open space deficiency—placing great pressure on existing spaces and making them particularly vulnerable to further pressure from intensification.

4.9 Some of Lambeth's open spaces are contributory places within conservation areas. These include Clapham Common, Jubilee Gardens, Rush Common, Streatham Common and Vauxhall Park. The preservation or enhancement of their character and appearance is therefore a material planning consideration.

4.10 A number of Lambeth's open spaces are on the national Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. The preservation of their special interest is a statutory obligation. These spaces include:

Brockwell Park
Kennington Park
Myatts Fields
Ruskin Park
The Rookery
West Norwood Cemetery

At Brockwell Park tall buildings are considered to harm the setting of this designated landscapes. See page 16.

4.11 The emerging local plan policies are also identifying some spaces of purely local interest.

4.12 In some places tall buildings are present within the setting of these spaces. Existing examples identify the pros and cons of tall building development in such locations. One of the amenity values of these spaces is their openness and the opportunity for residents to enjoy space, sunshine and fresh air away from the distractions of urban life. Large development around the perimeter of open spaces can be visually obtrusive, cause overshadowing and limit outlook. The greater the number of tall buildings / the greater the density of development the worse the impact.

Conclusion

4.13 Tall buildings are not generally characteristic of Lambeth's open spaces and development within open spaces would be inappropriate.

4.14 The settings of open spaces are considered to be 'sensitive' to tall building development. The immediate settings of open spaces on the national register are considered 'inappropriate' for tall building development.

Images on facing page:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Brockwell Park | 4. Ruskin Park |
| 2. Kennington Park | 5. The Rookery |
| 3. Myatts Fields | 6. West Norwood Cemetery |



Local Character

4.15 Lambeth's built environment is largely a product of a century of growth from the early 19th century onwards. The northern part of the borough, being closest to central London, tends to be the oldest and the latest phases of development tend to lie in the south. However, subsequent redevelopment in the post-war decades has changed this to a certain degree.

4.16 There are three basic character types for Lambeth:

A. City Centre—the South Bank, Waterloo, Albert Embankment and Vauxhall riverside areas very much exhibit central London characteristics in terms of building densities, building forms and general character. Much of this dates from the 20th Century and includes various large and tall buildings. Sites are normally constrained and tall buildings (normally commercial) typically rise out of the conventional street scene with out piazzas or public spaces.

B. Urban— the northern half of the borough (north of Brixton) is generally characterised by the first phase of 19th century development (1800—1850). The character is generally that of urban streets and squares of terraced and other tightly packed development often only with small gardens. Building heights for these properties tend to be in the region of three and four storeys. Most tall buildings in this part of the borough are post-war residential blocks built as part of comprehensively designed housing estates where mixtures of house types, community facilities and open spaces were provided.

C Suburban — the Southern half of the borough (south of Brixton) is generally characterised by development from the latter part of the 19th Century and into the early 20th Century. Residential in character the properties tend to have more generous gardens than the northern part of the borough, buildings heights are general two to three storeys. The character is leafy and much quieter than the other character areas. Where tall buildings existing in suburban areas they tend to be post-war housing blocks in open landscaped settings.

Conclusion

4.17 in is highly unlikely that future comprehensive schemes for redeveloping existing urban and suburban areas will come forward. Ad-hoc development on wind-fall sites is the most likely way development sites will come forward. The suburban areas to the South of the Borough, being lower density, furthest from central London and quieter are considered inappropriate for new tall building development.



City Centre



Urban



Suburban

Strategic Views

4.18 Five of the Mayor's Strategic views affect Lambeth. They are:

- A. Protected vista King Henry's Mount to St Paul's Cathedral
- B. Protected Vista Parliament Hill summit to palace of Westminster
- C. Protected Vista Parliament Hill Oak Tree to Palace of Westminster
- D. Protected Vista Primrose Hill to Palace of Westminster
- E. Protected Vista Westminster Pier to St Paul's Cathedral.

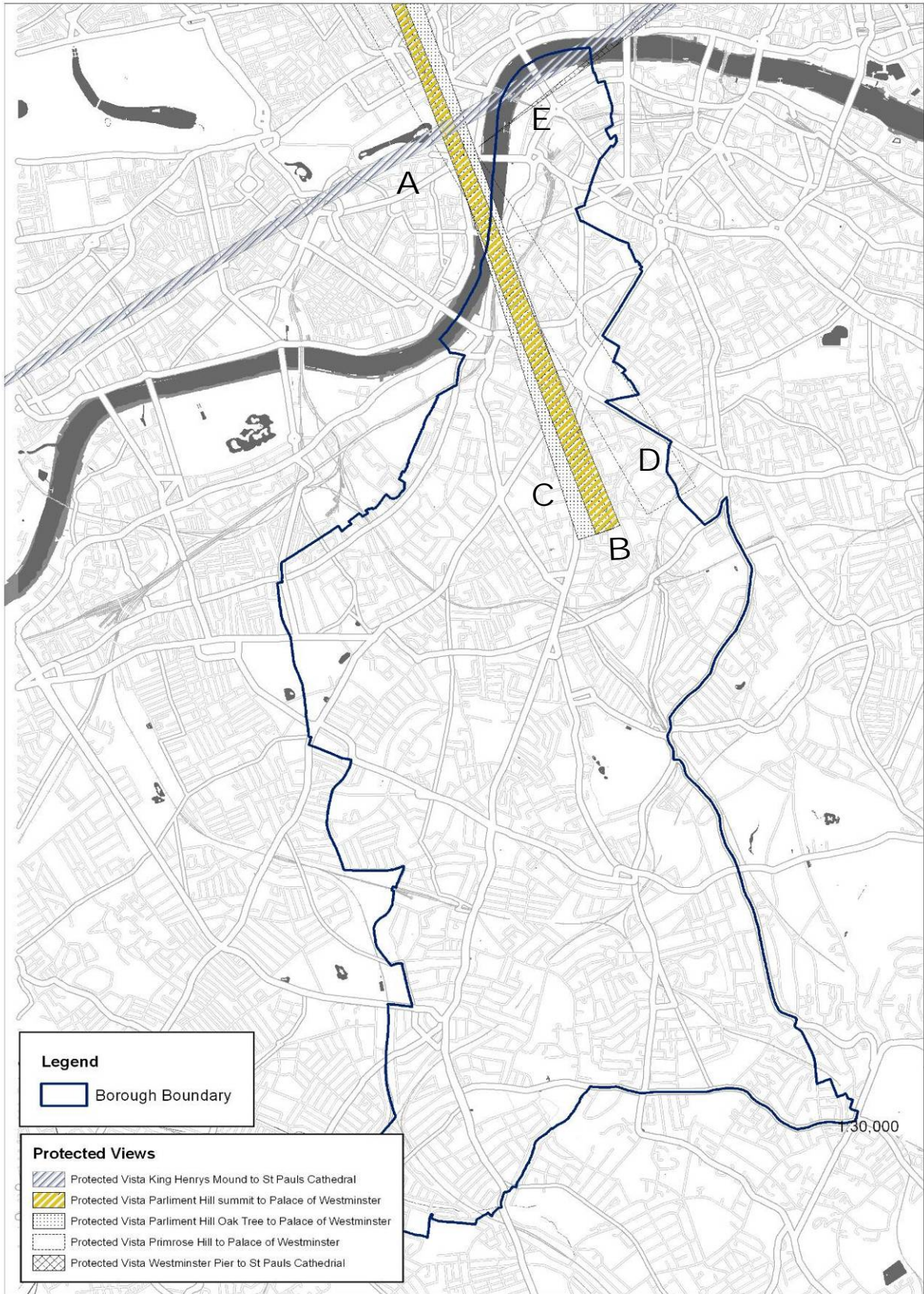
The left hand map on the opposite page shows the extent of their view corridors.

4.19 Views A and E The view cones are narrow and just clip the north-most part of the borough. The nature of these views means that no tall building development will be possible within the view corridors without harming the view of St Paul's Cathedral.

4.20 In views C, B and D the issues for Lambeth relate to the appearance of development in the backdrop of the views. This, where silhouette and clear sky is considered important, places a constraint on building heights in the backdrop. As it can be seen from the map opposite these view corridors extend some distance into Lambeth and have implications for tall building development on Albert Embankment. This matter is addressed in the emerging draft Vauxhall SPD.

Conclusion

4.21 Strategic views affecting Lambeth are considered 'inappropriate' locations for tall buildings.



Local Views

4.22 Policy 41 of the Lambeth Unitary Development Plan (Saved Policies 2010) identifies a number of views of local significance. Further ongoing evidence-base work on locally significant views has produced additional views of importance. Both sets of views (policy 41 views and newly identified views) are shown on the map on the map opposite.

4.23 Two aspects are worth considering with regard local views and tall buildings. Firstly, the nature of the view and the features within it. Secondly, the presence of existing tall buildings in the view and whether their contribution is positive, negative or neutral.

4.24 There is not scope within this study to look at each view in detail. However, a number of views have particular implications. These tend to be the longer distance views where distant features are of interest. They are:

A Brockwell Park to the Palace of Westminster

4.25 This view corridor is very narrow and cuts through the centre of the Brixton Opportunity Area. The nature of the view precludes tall building development along its length. An existing tall building (Wimborne House, Clapham Road) has a negative impact on the view.

B Brockwell Park to Brixton's historic towers

4.26 The nature of the view precludes tall building development in the foreground of the Town Hall and St Matthew's Church towers. The silhouettes of the heritage assets in this view are disrupted by tall buildings in the back-drop— Pinter House, Arden House, Beckett House.

C Brockwell Park to city

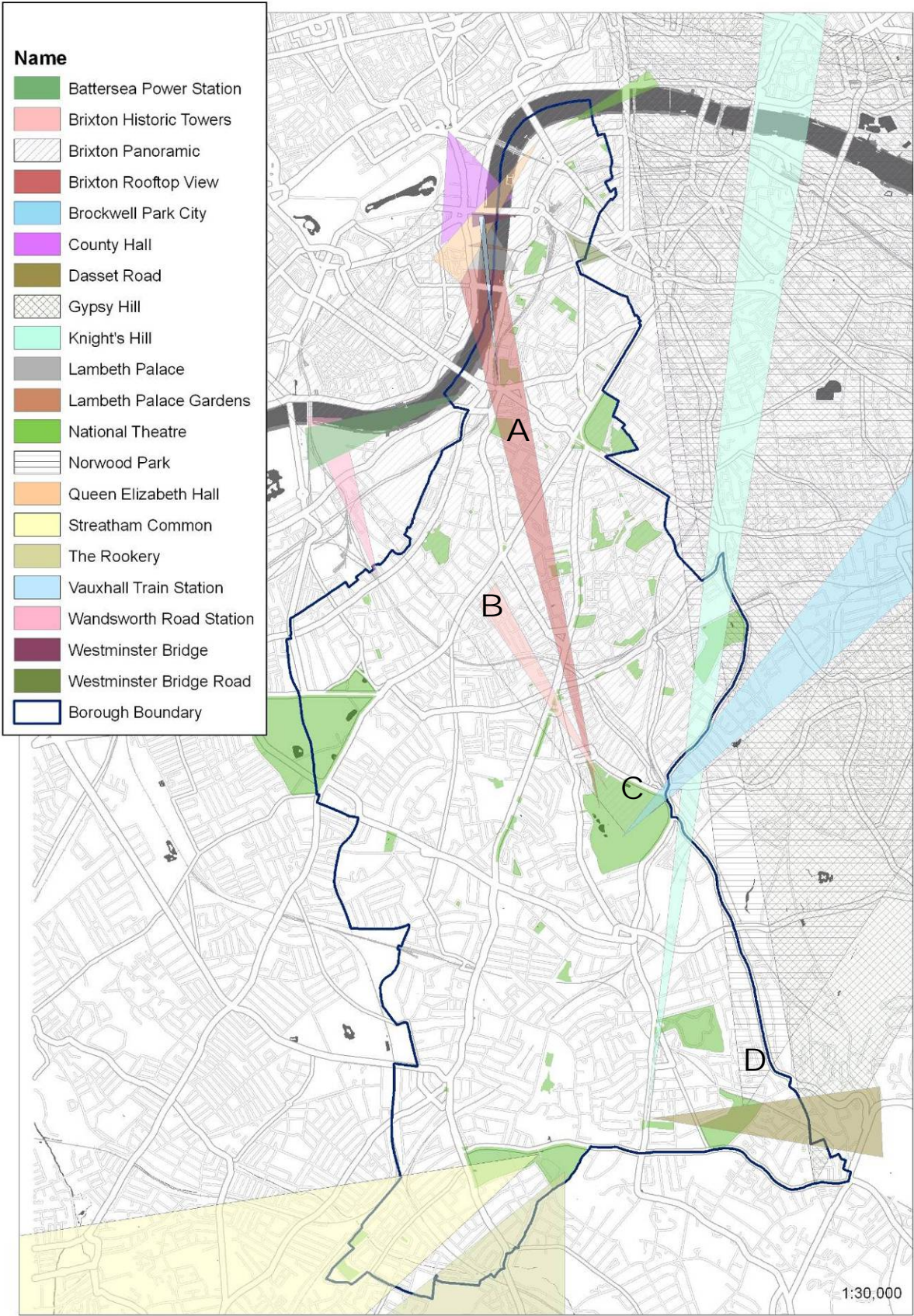
4.27 This is a particularly wide view corridor which is cast over a large part of the North of the borough. The presence of tall and or bulky buildings close to Brockwell Park (Park View House, Herne Hill House and Meath House) as well as bulky buildings in the mid view (Southwyck House, Loughborough Estate) has an adverse impact on the quality of this view.

D Norwood Park to city

4.28 Like a number of locally significant distant views most of this view corridor cuts across the neighbouring boroughs (their tall buildings policies therefore have significant implications for view management in this respect). In this case one existing tall building within Lambeth — Northwood House — due to its proximity has an adverse impact on the view.

Conclusion

4.29 The view corridors of local views (especially those identified above A - D) are largely 'inappropriate' for tall building development the closer you get to the viewpoint. However, in the distant city views (D and E above) tall building development at the end of the view is likely to be acceptable (subject to design etc) given that both views are of cityscape—one made-up largely of tall buildings. Opportunities exist in A– D to secure enhancement of the view by the demolition, height reduction or re-cladding of obtrusive adjoining tall buildings.



Listed Buildings

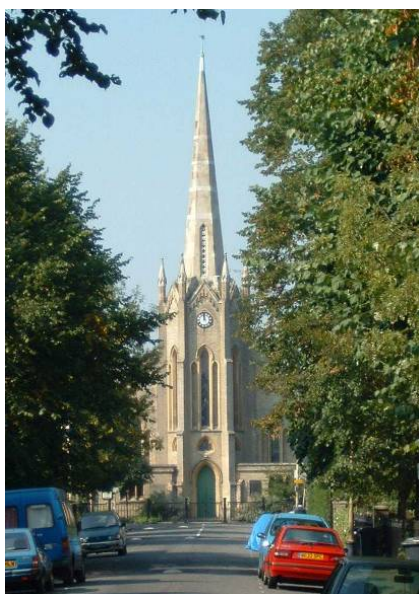
4.30 There are in the region of 2,500 statutory listed buildings in Lambeth—buildings of national importance. Furthermore, around 300 buildings are currently on Lambeth’s local list (this number is likely to increase as survey continues).

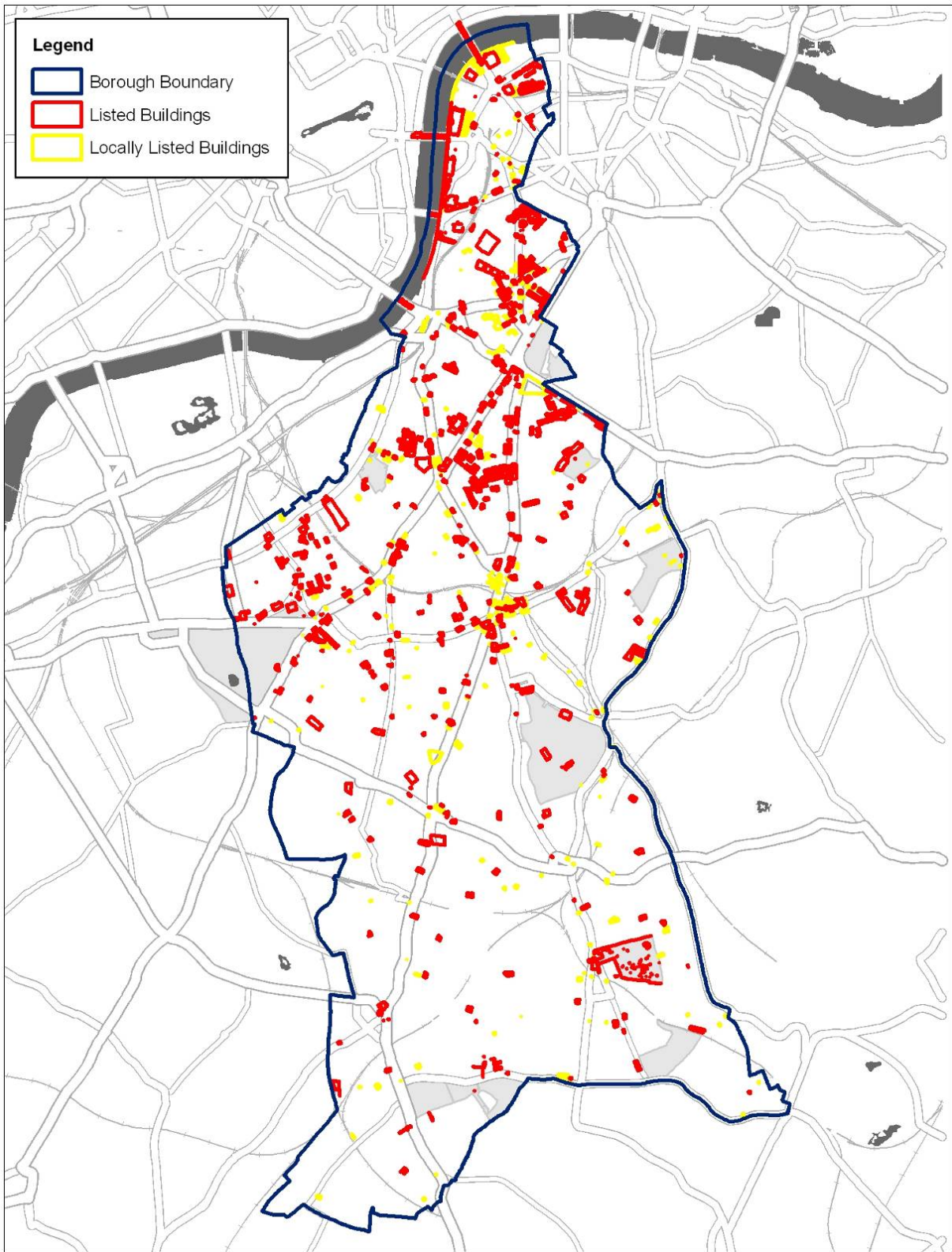
4.31 The map on the facing page shows the disposition of listed buildings within Lambeth. Both types of building are found across the borough although there are greater concentrations in the Northern half. This reflects the historic development of Lambeth which generally started from the North and crept Southwards during the 19th Century.

Conclusion

4.32 The Council has a statutory obligation to pay special regard to the preservation of the special interest of a statutory listed building (including its setting) when making planning decisions. For that reason tall building development within the curtilage of statutory listed buildings is considered ‘inappropriate’.

4.33 The setting of each listed building is different and it can be difficult to make general assumptions. However, there is significant potential for harm to be caused to listed buildings—especially those where their uninterrupted silhouette or unaltered townscape settings contributes to their significance. See some local examples below.





Images on facing page:

- 1. St Michael's Church, Stockwell Park Road
- 2. 8 Albert Embankment
- 3. The Cedars, Clapham Common
- 4. Lincoln Tower, Waterloo Road

Conservation Areas

4.34 The Council has a statutory duty to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when making planning decisions. This includes conservation areas outside the borough where development within Lambeth might have an impact. The impact of views into and out of a conservation area are material planning considerations when assessing planning applications.

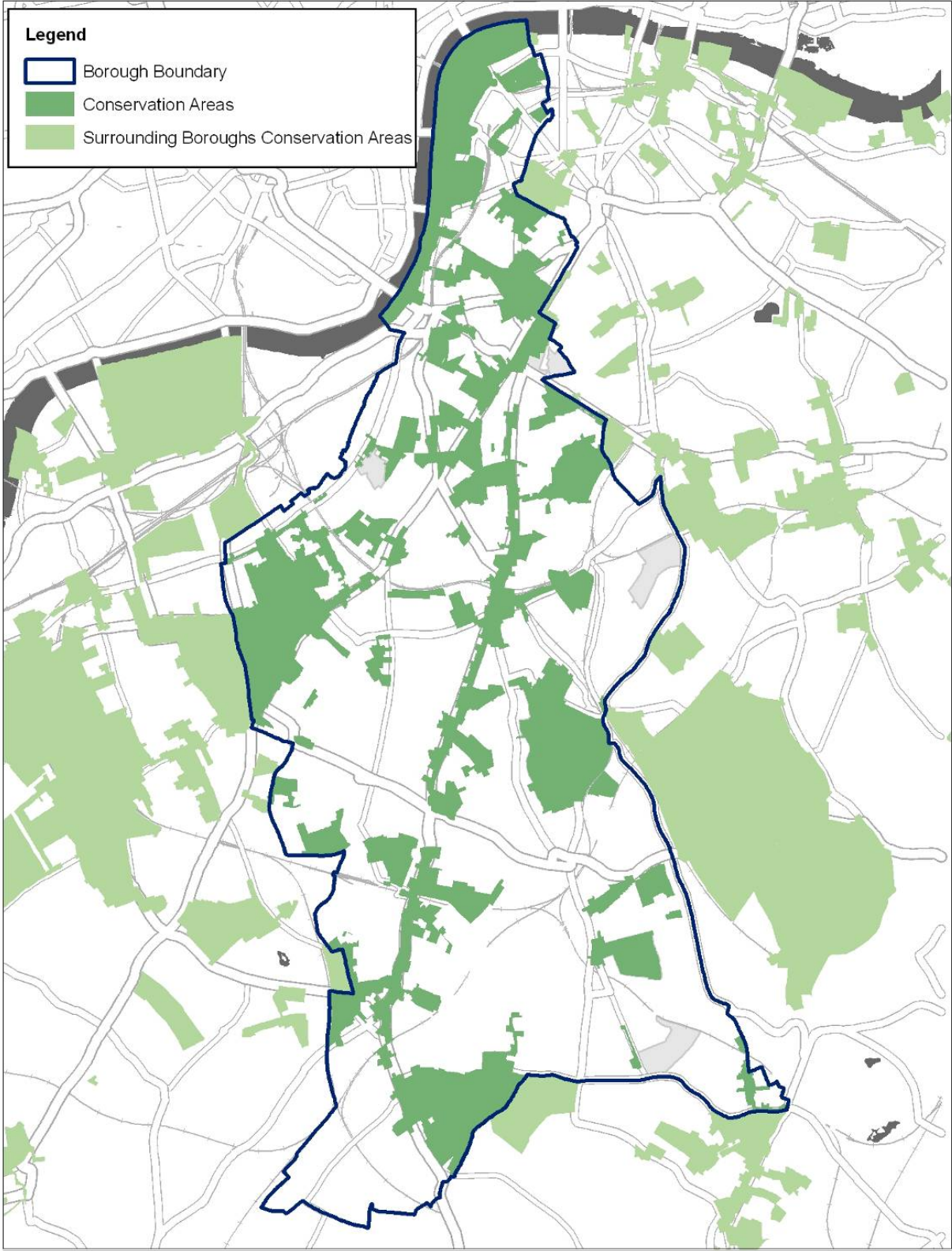
4.35 The map on the facing page shows Lambeth's 62 conservation areas as well as those in the adjoining boroughs of Croydon, Southwark and Wandsworth. It should be noted that the conservation areas in the boroughs of Bromley and City of Westminster are not shown (this information not being readily available in a digital format at the time of survey).

4.36 The distribution of conservation areas is relatively even across the borough. There are more, but smaller conservation areas to the North and fewer but larger conservation areas to the South. Most conservation areas in Lambeth (and indeed in the adjoining boroughs) comprises of development predominantly from the 19th Century. It is largely characterised by buildings between 2 and 5 storeys. The South Bank Conservation Area is Lambeth's most note-worthy exception; having the Shell Centre tower at its heart. Most of Lambeth's existing tall buildings (tower blocks and slab blocks) are outside conservation areas; although buildings with tall features such as church towers are often located within conservation areas.

4.37 Given the dense urban nature of the Northern part of borough it is not unusual for existing tall building development to be visible from within many of its conservation areas. The impact such development has is very much dependent on the quality of the tall building, its orientation and materials. The existing stock of tall buildings is of varied quality.

Conclusion

4.38 In most instances tall building development is considered 'inappropriate' within conservation areas. The settings of conservation areas are 'sensitive' to tall building development.



Westminster World Heritage Site

4.39 The map on the facing page shows Lambeth's three opportunity areas and the gold star identifies the location of the Westminster World heritage Site. The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of The Palace of Westminster is acknowledged in its designation as a World Heritage Site. It has global significance and is a significant tourist destination drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Big Ben is generally accepted as the landmark of architectural composition as such is photographed and appreciated by the vast majority of visitors to Parliament Square.

4.40 The focus of attention in relation to the Elizabeth House proposal is the visibility of the proposal in the gap between Big Ben and Portcullis House. At present for much of the view through this gap the only building that is visible is County Hall – its low form silhouette presented against a clear sky. This gap is important as a visual space which allows Big Ben to appear as the key architectural component silhouetted against a clear sky. The presence in the gap of County Hall adds historic significance as it was the home of regional government in London. The clear sky gives these elements a defined silhouette.

4.41 The adopted Westminster World Heritage Site Management Plan (May 2007) states:

'Para. 1.6.4.2... Other important views beyond the World Heritage Site are also numerous. Particularly famous views of features include:...

... Big Ben from all angles and in particular for Parliament Square, Westminster Bridge and Albert Embankment, and from Trafalgar Square and when travelling south down to Whitehall.

Para. 3.1.3.2 There is currently no buffer zone, as defined in the operational guidelines, which would help to sustain the special qualities of the setting of the WHS. Without appropriate consideration of the sensitivities of the WHS and its setting, development beyond the WHS boundary of a large scale may pose risks to this key element of Outstanding Universal Value. Any changes to the style or backdrop of the WHS from many angles, must be carefully balanced against the need to preserve the iconic value of the site.

4.42 World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO with technical support from ICOMOS. In recent years UNESCO has been concerned about the potential harmful impact on new development on the setting of the Westminster World Heritage Site. The chronology is set out below:

4.43 In 2006 ICOMOS / UNESCO undertook a monitoring mission to London to consider the threats to the World Heritage Site. In 2006 UNESCO recommended were:

"5. Notes with concern that the State Party acknowledges that major developments currently being considered could have a potential impact on the property;

6. Requests the State Party to evaluate the impact of proposed changes to the visual setting of the property on its Outstanding Universal Value, and to develop and apply effective mechanisms for the protection of the setting as a matter of urgency;

7. Also requests the State Party to refrain from approving any new development project until an adequate protection of the setting of the property is in place."

4.44 In response to the concerns raised in 2006 The Mayor of London introduced additional LVMF views within parliament Square and other work was done to strengthen

planning policy and guidance around World Heritage Site designations. In December 2011 a Reactive Monitoring Mission was undertaken to Westminster by ICOMOS for UNESCO. It was acknowledged then that the most pressing threat to the OUV of this World Heritage Site was development outside the City of Westminster but within the setting of the World Heritage Site. Lambeth's proximity to the World Heritage Site makes development at Waterloo and Vauxhall particularly sensitive in this respect. At the time of the Mission the Elizabeth House scheme was already in development and at pre-application stage. Mindful of the controversy surrounding the previous Elizabeth House scheme in their report the assessors stated:

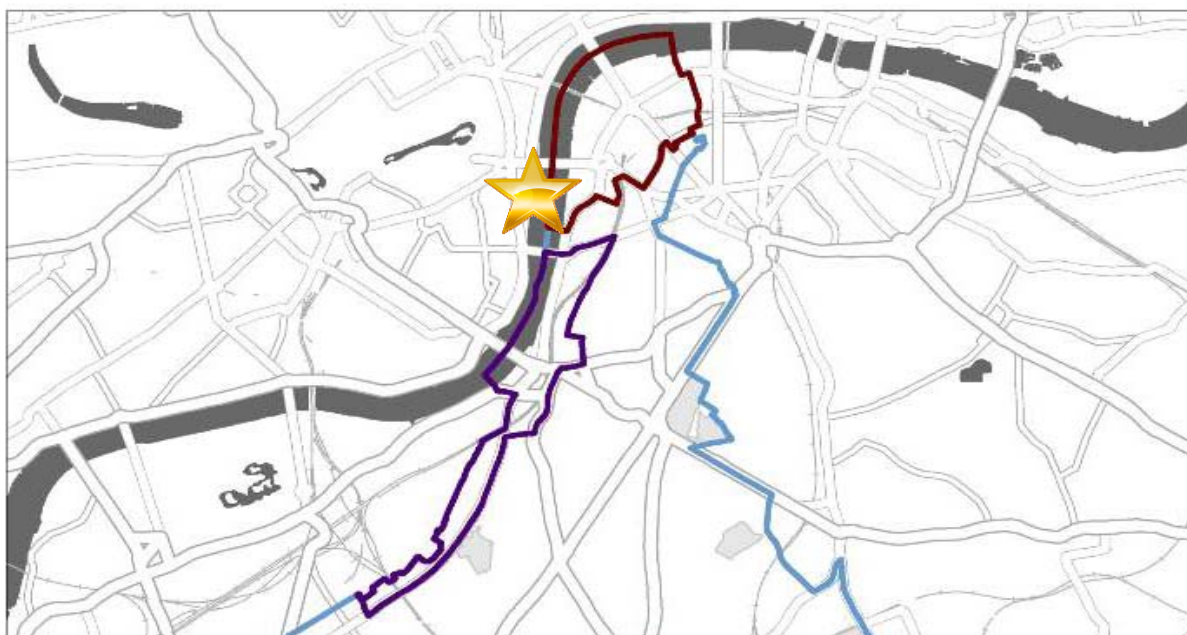
“The redevelopment project of Elizabeth House will be a litmus test as regards the robustness of the national planning system vis-à-vis the protection and conservation of London’s World Heritage sites.”

“...., the redevelopment of Elizabeth House, adjacent to Waterloo Station, will be a litmus test for the sitting Mayor and his administration to demonstrate the robustness of the planning system and their sensitivity towards protecting London’s prime heritage assets. If a planning proposal for a tall building is put forward that threatens to destroy the visual integrity of the World Heritage Site of Westminster, which will be given planning consent and a permit in spite of the negative impact, the inevitable conclusions will have to be drawn concerning the effectiveness of the management system put in place.”

4.45 The Elizabeth House application is currently being considered on its planning merits.

Conclusion

4.46 The proximity of Waterloo and Vauxhall to the WHS and their designation as Opportunity Areas may appear in some respects to be contradictory. However, the Mayor of London has identified these parts of Lambeth as appropriate for tall building development and views from the World heritage Site towards Lambeth are limited. These areas are particularly sensitive to tall building development and specific sites are likely to be considered inappropriate. It is understood that the preparation of a setting study is currently being considered.



Transportation Accessibility

4.47 Accessibility to good transport links is considered when considering high density new development such as tall buildings. For this reason, when developing a constraint for transportation, a decision was taken to limit the surrounding area to 800m, which is approximately 10 minutes walk. This was taken as an acceptable walk for a commuter.

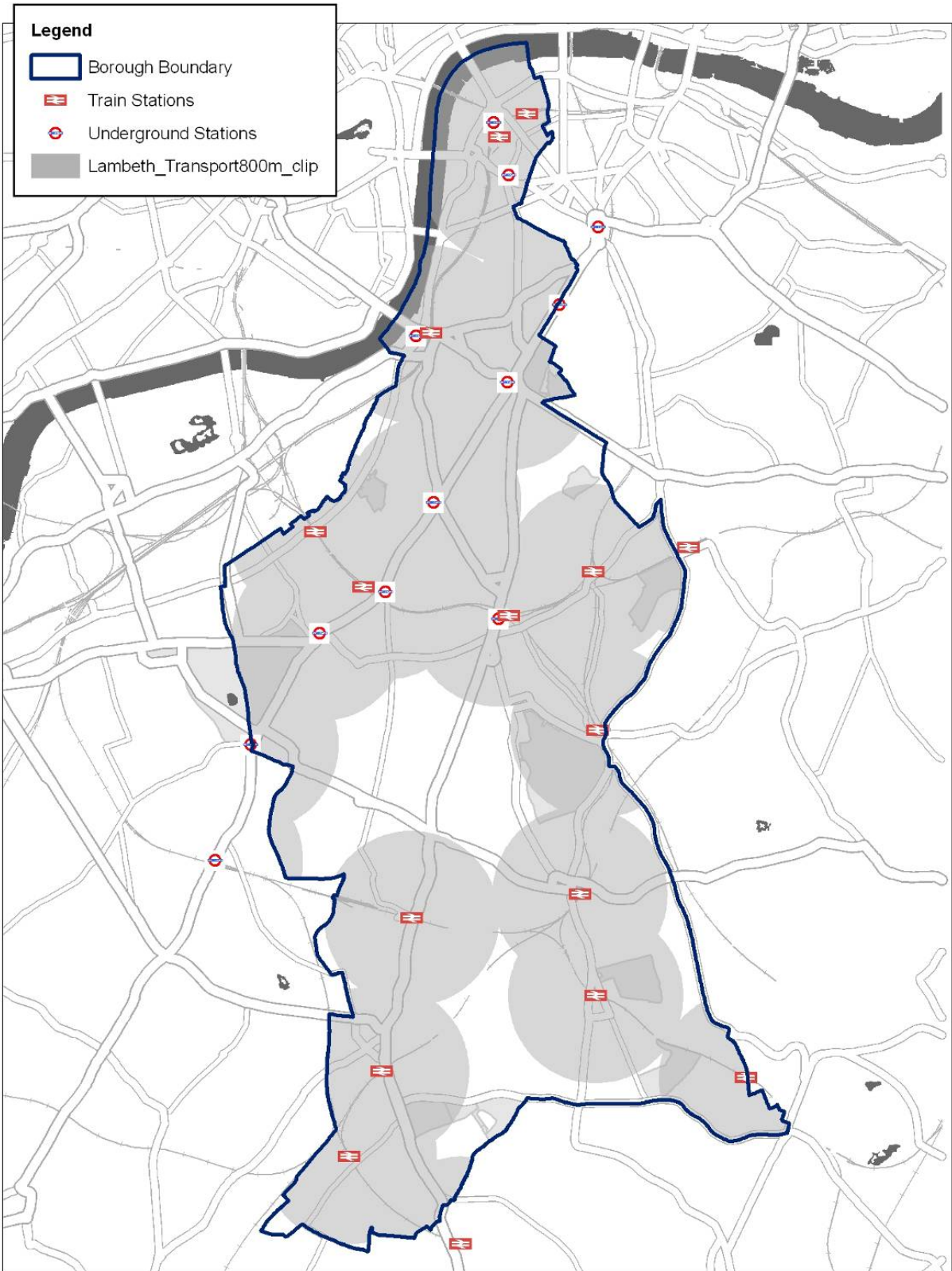
4.48 The map on the facing page shows the borough's railway stations and London Underground stations. The grey areas show an 800m radius from each station. When considering transport links along it is considered that denser development is potentially possible in these accessible grey shaded areas.

4.49 It should be noted that all stations outside Lambeth are not shown; in this instance the absence of this information is not considered to have affected the conclusions made given the good accessibility (grey areas) generally around the borough boundary.

4.50 The carrying capacity of some underground and railway stations is a consideration for future development. Vauxhall London Underground station is nearing the limit of its carrying capacity and is expected to exceed that by 2014. Similarly it is understood that Waterloo Railway Station is currently functioning at capacity.

Conclusion

4.51 The map on the facing page shows that accessibility is generally good with exceptions at Brixton Hill and Streatham Common North. Tall buildings are considered 'inappropriate' in these less accessible areas.



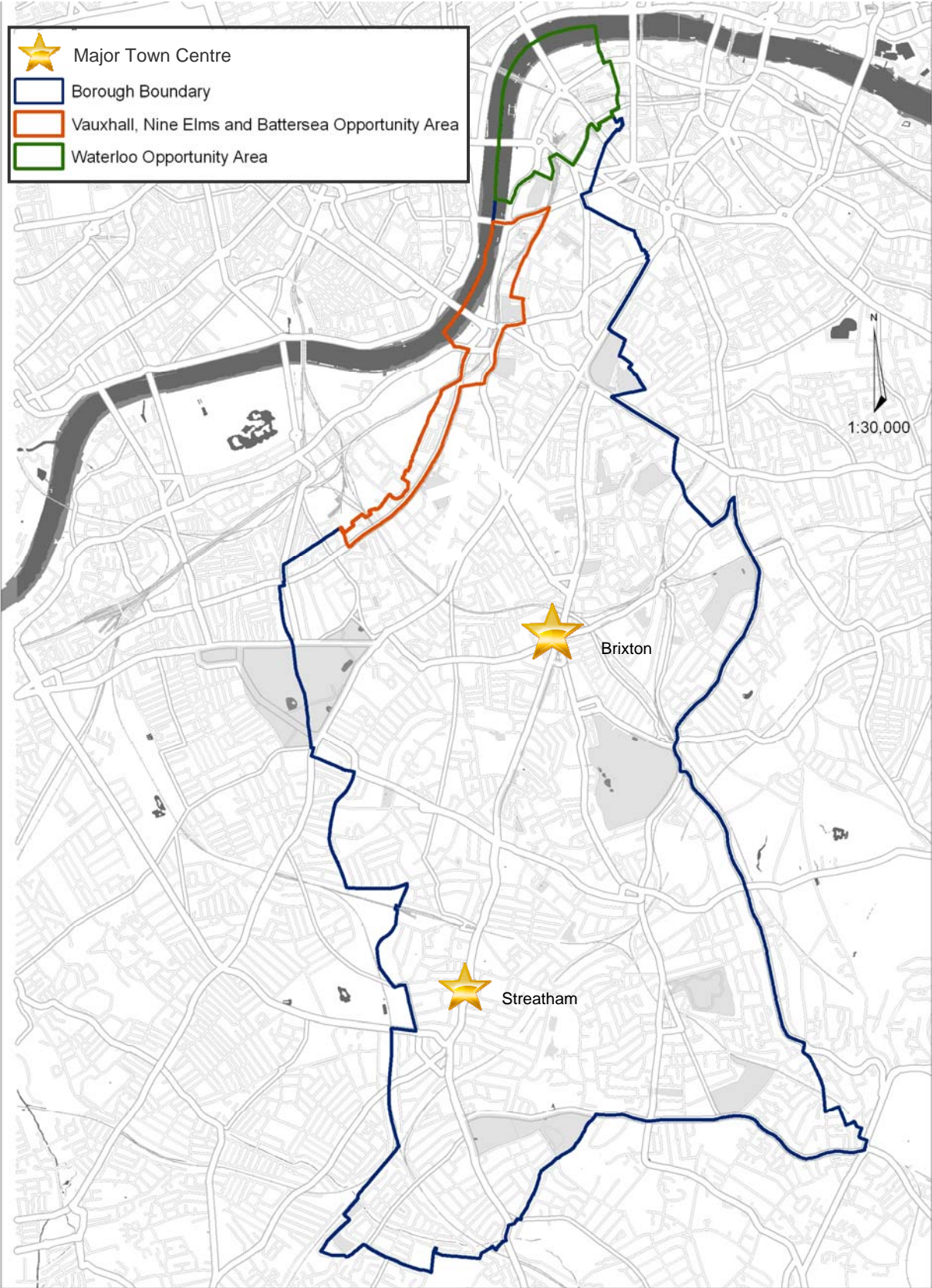
Major Town Centres

4.52 The Lambeth Core Strategy identifies Brixton and Streatham as Major Town Centres. Brixton is located in an urban context in the centre of the borough and has a generally compact town centre.

4.53 Streatham has a linear town centre which stretches along the length of Streatham High Road. It is essentially a town centre thoroughfare flanked by suburban residential development. This means that only a short distance from Streatham High Road the character changes quickly to that of suburbia.

Conclusion

4.54 Brixton is considered suitable for tall building development; a separate detailed study is currently being prepared to identify sites. Streatham, given its southern situation and its linear form in a suburban context is considered less appropriate for tall buildings than Brixton which has a compact, very urban town centre characterised by existing tall buildings.



Opportunity Areas

4.55 Waterloo and Vauxhall areas are identified as Opportunity Areas in the London Plan. The London Plan also identifies such areas as being suitable for intensification and high density development. This does not necessarily mean tall buildings in the form of point blocks. However, land ownership patterns (many small sites in separate ownership) and property values, as well as the existence of tall buildings in these areas already, have made them, in the Council's opinion, suitable for tall buildings. The current Elizabeth House proposals entail a significant slab block with a tower element at one end.

4.56 These have already been subject to detailed analysis and assessment in relation to tall buildings and SPD documents are being prepared for both areas.

Waterloo Opportunity Area Map

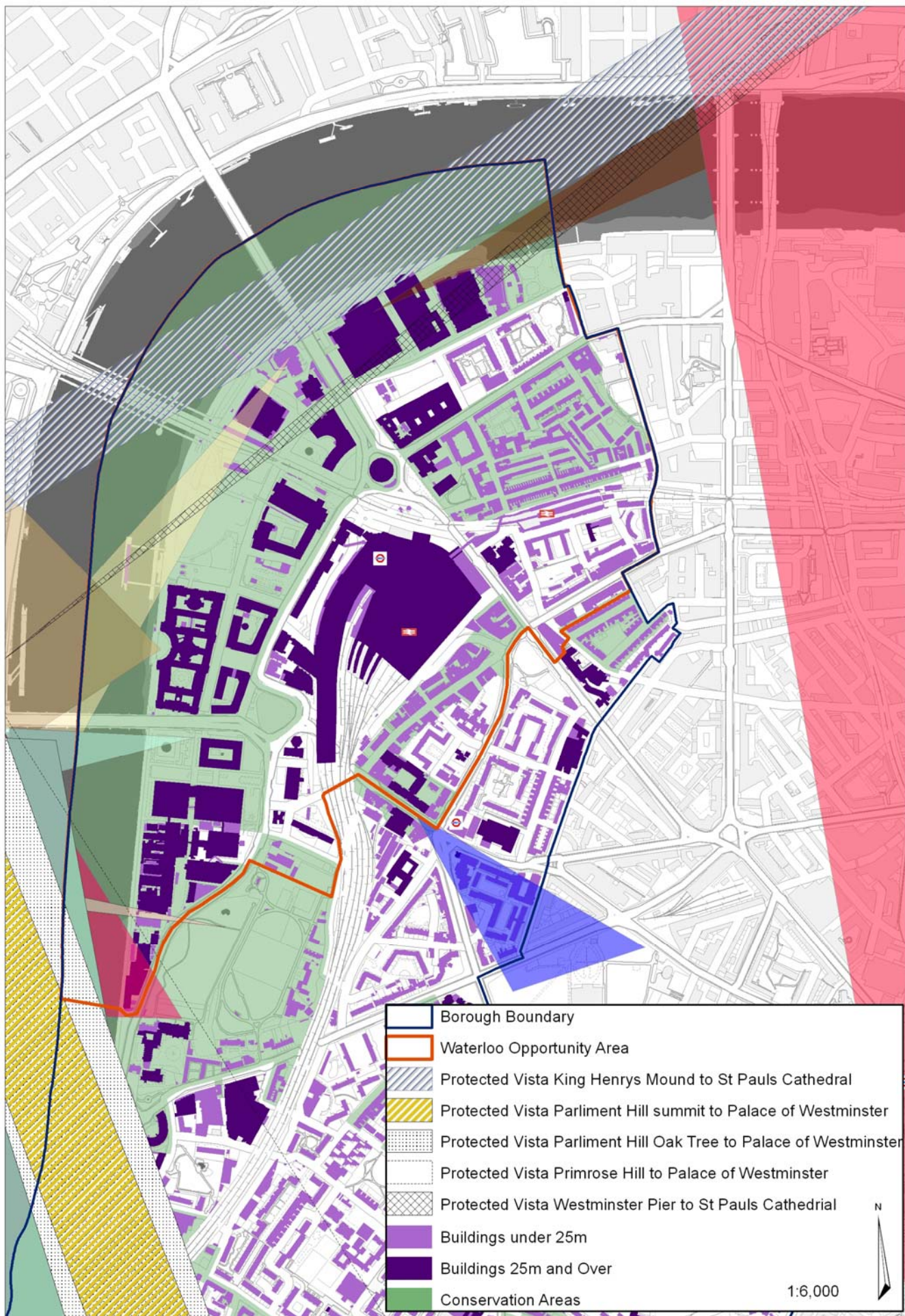
4.57 The map on the facing page shows the area covered by the Waterloo Opportunity Boundary and the impact of the various urban analysis layers within this boundary. Building heights are visible in their present format as are the conservation areas, protected vistas and listed buildings. The Waterloo Opportunity Area is most notably covered by the South Bank, Roupell Street, Lower Marsh and Waterloo conservation areas.

4.58 Additionally the area is significant for both Protected/Strategic Views and Local Views designated by Lambeth Borough Council.

4.59 These areas (identified in green on the map) contain tall buildings, and whilst they may be inappropriate in the most part to site tall buildings within Conservation areas, the settings of conservation areas should be considered '**sensitive**' to tall building development. Given the high density of development within this northern part of the borough, many tall buildings located within this area are visible from other conservations within the Borough and also from outside of the Borough. The decision to site tall buildings within this area should give consideration to views from other parts of the borough.

Conclusion

4.60 Given the density of the constraints within the Waterloo Opportunity area, this site should be considered '**sensitive**' to tall buildings.



Vauxhall Opportunity Area Map

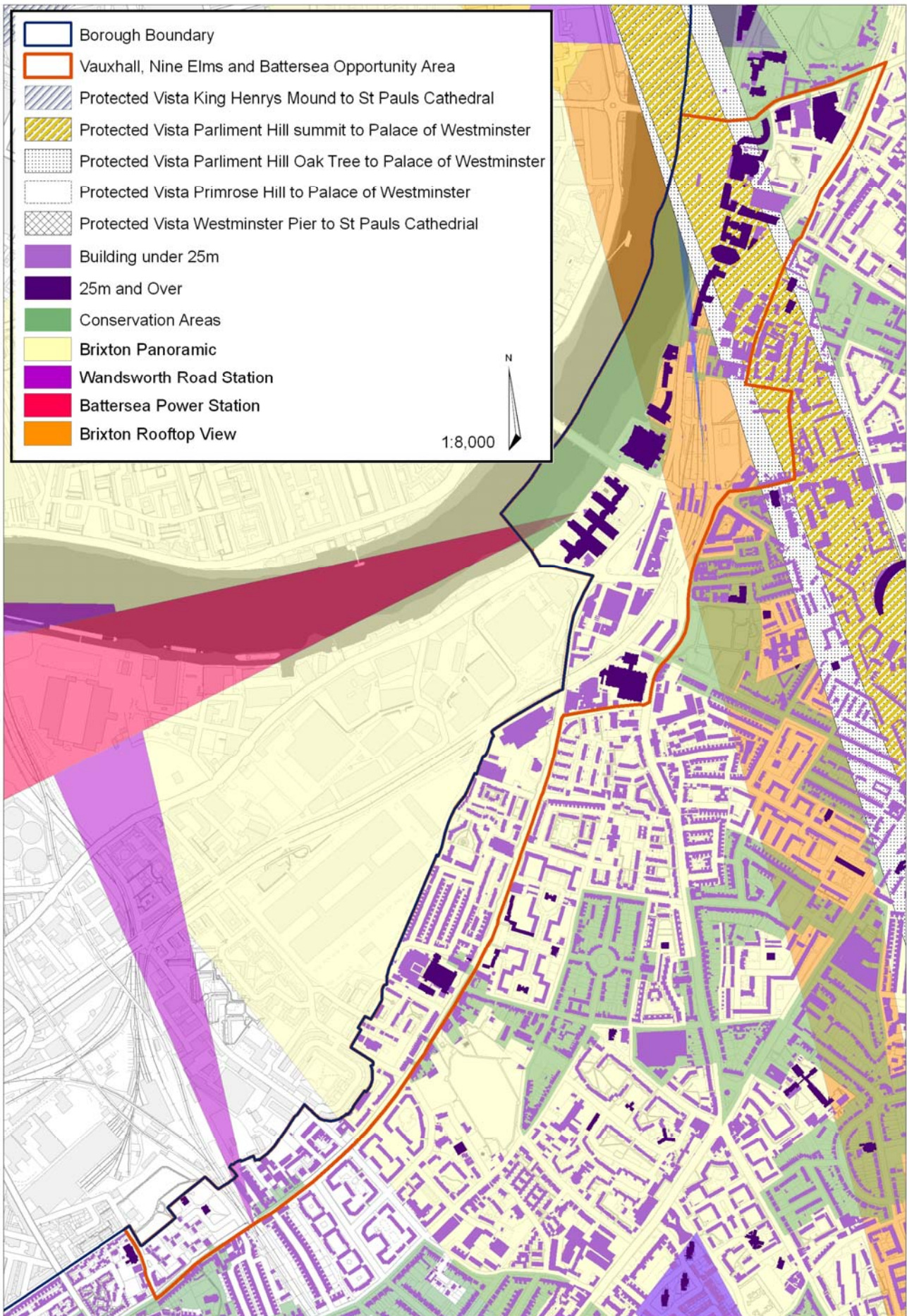
4.61 The map on the facing page shows the area covered by the Vauxhall Opportunity Boundary and the impact of the various urban analysis constraints within this boundary. Building heights are visible in their present format as are the conservation areas, protected vistas and listed buildings. The Vauxhall Opportunity Area is most notably impacted by the Albert Embankment Conservation area.

4.62 Additionally the area is significant for both Protected/Strategic Views and Local Views designated by Lambeth Borough Council.

4.63 The Vauxhall Opportunity Area contains a significant number of Strategic Views as identified by the Mayor of London and also the Local Views identified by the Borough of Lambeth. This area, whilst containing a number of Tall Buildings presently, should be considered '**sensitive**' to further development and the views identified on the map taken into consideration when setting new buildings.

Conclusion

4.64 Given the proximity of this Opportunity Area to the River Thames and also it's impact on neighbouring boroughs, the significance of the number of Strategic and Local views, this area should be considered '**sensitive**' to tall buildings.



5. Conclusion / Recommendations

5.1 Existing tall building development is generally clustered in the North of the borough (North of Brixton).

5.2 The elevated topography to the east and south east of the borough is generally considered sensitive to tall building development. The settings of open spaces are considered to be 'sensitive' to tall building development. The immediate settings of open spaces on the national register are considered 'inappropriate' for tall building development.

5.3 The suburban areas to the South of the Borough, being lower density, furthest from central London and quieter are considered inappropriate for tall building development.

5.4 Strategic views affecting Lambeth are considered 'inappropriate' locations for tall buildings. The view corridors of local views (crossing central Brixton) are largely 'inappropriate' for tall building development the closer you get to the viewpoint at Brockwell Park. However, in the distant city views from Brockwell Park and Norwood Park tall building development at the end of the view is likely to be acceptable (subject to design etc) given that both views are of cityscape— the noteworthy features of the view largely being tall or landmark historic buildings. Opportunities exist to secure enhancement of local views by the demolition, height reduction or re-cladding of obtrusive tall buildings.

5.5 Tall buildings present significant potential for harm to listed buildings that have uninterrupted silhouettes or unaltered townscape settings that contribute to their significance. In most instances tall building development is considered 'inappropriate' within conservation areas. The settings of conservation areas are 'sensitive' to tall building development.

5.6 The setting of the Westminster World Heritage is very sensitive to tall building development.

5.7 Most of the borough is within a ten minute walk from a railway station of London Underground Station.

5.8 Streatham, given its southern situation and its linear form in a suburban context is considered less appropriate for tall buildings than Brixton which has a compact, very urban town centre characterised by existing tall buildings.

5.9 The following recommendations are made:

- 1) The existing Opportunity Areas and Brixton Town centre should remain identified as suitable for intensification in the form of taller development (subject to site-specific study). No additional areas have been identified in this study.
- 2) The setting of Westminster World Heritage Site is key sensitivity for both Opportunity Areas.
- 3) Suburban character, distance from the centre of London, open spaces and the historic environment generally render large parts of the borough inappropriate for tall building development.
- 4) Point blocks tend to be much more successful in townscape and local views terms than slab blocks. Consideration should be given to encouraging the former and discouraging the latter through policy.
- 5) Opportunities should be taken in policy to encourage the removal / enhancement of tall buildings that blight caused local and strategic views.

This document was prepared by Lambeth Council's

Conservation & Urban Design team

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