Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan

Tall Buildings Appraisal
July 2010
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1.0 Introduction

This Design Appraisal has been prepared to provide broad design advice to inform and support the preparation of the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP). The AAP is a plan that will be used as the basis for rejuvenating the town centre. It is being prepared by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with the support of the Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead (PRoM).

The appraisal includes the core baseline conditions and context analysis. It builds upon previous work undertaken by PRoM, the council, DTZ, BDP and other consultants. The baseline plans have been prepared on the basis of published information and strategies, data supplied by PRoM, the council, as well as discussions with key stakeholders, bespoke research and site surveys.

Guidance on Tall Buildings (July 2007) published by English Heritage / CABE has been followed in the methodology and has been reflected in the structure of this report. A careful argument has been constructed, through an analytical approach, for the tall buildings policy outlined and presented in the Draft AAP.

The report outlines some key baseline facts and interprets them in the context of the aspiration to intensify development and enhance Maidenhead Town Centre. This is in line with the Vision for Maidenhead Town Centre which was prepared by PRoM, RBWM, DTZ and BDP in 2008. As per the recommendations of CABE’s Guidance on Tall Buildings historic context, urban grain, topography, scale and height, significant views, and existing buildings have been reviewed and have helped define the character areas. This baseline analysis and character area assessment have informed the level of sensitivity for development of tall buildings in various part of Maidenhead Town Centre.

The analysis has also helped to define what a tall buildings is in the context of Maidenhead. Building height in Maidenhead Town Centre generally vary between 2 and 12 storeys and the predominant height is from 3 - 6 storeys (10 - 20 meters). Tall Buildings are in principle buildings which are significantly higher than its neighbours and/or which recognisably change the skyline. Therefore tall buildings in Maidenhead would be buildings noticeably higher than 20m.

To build up the tall buildings strategy areas of sensitivity where such buildings might be less appropriate and elements which will influence the delivery have been identified. Further principles for the development of tall buildings which will enhance Maidenhead Town Centre have been drafted and recommendations on where higher buildings would be most appropriate have been drawn.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

The baseline analysis in this chapter follows the CABE and English Heritage Guidance for plan-led approach to tall buildings and By Design (DETR/CABE, 2000) recommendations for detailed urban design study. It has been prepared in the context of previous studies undertaken by the council and PRoM and aspirations shared by local residents at public consultation events for medium to high level change in the Maidenhead Town Centre.

The analysis includes a review of the historic context, natural topography, urban grain, significant views, scale and quality of buildings and spaces, local landmarks and character areas.

The aim of the urban design analysis has been to identify the most sensitive areas where development of different scale to the existing might be inappropriate and define key principles which for making Maidenhead Town Centre more legible and attractive.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

2.1 Historic Context

Maidenhead originally developed and grew as a town between the 1600’s and 1800’s as the introduction of stage and private coaches increased the importance of the river crossing and the minor route to the West Country. The town’s focus was The High Street and Castle Hill area to the east. In the Victorian period, and with the development of the railway by 1835, Maidenhead’s population increased further and the town emerged as an attractive location to live and commute to work in London.

The town centre has retained its key historical urban components – The High Street, Queen Street and King Street. Both this and the adjacent Castle Hill area designated conservation areas containing a number of listed buildings and buildings of local importance. Some of the most recognisable buildings on an individual basis or in groups are marked on the plan to the right include the High Street Methodist Church (1) Post Office (4), Lloyds TSB and Coffee Republic (4), Cresset Towers (3) and The Bear (4) on the High Street, Atkinson Keene (7) on Queen Street and The United Reform Church on West Street (6). The clock tower (8), located next to the station is the most prominent historic landmark outside of the historic core.

Early in the 20th century the York Stream was realigned and a new library designed by ABK Architects was built. Maidenhead Railway Station was further extended and more developments, including employment, started to appear west and south of it.

The construction of the M4 motorway in 1972 confirmed Maidenhead’s position as a commuter town for London and increased the town’s attraction as an office and business location.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

2.2 Urban Grain

The urban grain in Maidenhead Town Centre today is the result of the growth explained briefly above, starting from the 17th century, through to Victorian times and further interventions in the middle of the 20th century.

The historic maps analysis included in the Baseline report for the Area Action Plan shows that the block patterns in the area enclosed by West Street to the north, York Road to the south, King Street to the west and Park Street to the east, forming today the core of Maidenhead centre have not changed much since the early 20th century. Interventions like the ring road and a number of larger scale developments had a significant impact on the urban structure in other parts of the Town Centre. On many occasions these interventions have had a negative impact on the urban grain by creating poorly defined blocks and streets with inactive frontage.

The buildings along historic streets like the High Street and Queen Street have retained, to a great extent, their fairly narrow frontages, whilst more recent developments like the cinema and the Sainsbury’s store have much larger footprint and form blocks of different proportions and scale.

Maidenhead is located in the Thames Valley and the natural topography is generally flat. It only gently slopes from west to east and from north to south, but this is not reflected in the urban pattern. The railway viaduct is the only man-made higher structure which provides views across the town.

The High Street significantly runs West to East and is the most legible historic route in the town centre. This is the core of the conservation area and therefore has the biggest impact on sensitivities for development of tall buildings.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

2.3 Building Heights

Building height across Maidenhead town centre varies between 2 and 12 storeys. The predominant height, as illustrated on the diagram to the right, is from 3 - 6 storeys (10 - 20 metres), however, heights vary from 2 storeys in residential areas to 12 storeys (or approximately 36 metres) in the commercial core.

A tall building is one which is significantly higher than its neighbours and/or which recognisably change the skyline. It stands therefore that tall buildings in the context of Maidenhead town centre would be buildings noticeably higher than 20m.

There are already a number of buildings in Maidenhead Town Centre which could be defined as tall buildings: Berkshire House, Costain Tower and Nicholson House which are located to the south of the High Street. The height of these existing tall buildings is up to 12 storeys (or approximately 36 metres)

The Town Centre core including the Nicholson shopping centre is predominantly from 10 to 20 meters height. The houses within Maidenhead Town Centre are generally lower ranging from 2 to 3 storeys.

Contrasts in height often make the higher element read as a tall building although it might be only just above the average building height. Footprint to height proportions influence also whether a building is read as tall or not. As an example, the picture below shows King Street and the Nicholsons Car Park staircase which is not higher than a four storey building but looks taller because of its proportions in the context of the surrounding lower, large footprint buildings. Gradual stepping up and larger footprint buildings have opposite effect. Buildings like the Sainsbury’s development by Providence Plan and BT Exchange on West Street might not seem high at first because of its overall mass but they are actually higher than the average building height in the Town Centre.

A group of tall buildings like these occurring close together form a cluster. The Nicholson House, Costaine House and Berkshire House form a cluster of tall buildings due to their proximity to each other. When viewed from most directions, they read more as one entity rather than separate vertical elements.

The Railway Station area also accommodates some higher buildings. The eastern parts of the centre between York Stream and Moor Cut includes mostly two storey buildings. There are only a few exceptions around Moorbridge Road and St. Cloud Way.

Very few of the existing higher buildings in the centre are of architectural merit but they play a significant role in the townscape. Existing and new higher buildings could potentially improve legibility and enhance the sense of arrival into Maidenhead town centre. The areas around the Railway station and around the Frascati Way / Bad Godesberg Way Roundabout which currently accommodate higher buildings will play a key role in making arrival in Maidenhead a special experience and are therefore considered to present opportunities for taller buildings. For similar reasons development along Bad Godesberg Way and around its intersection with Marlow Road are identified as areas with similar potential.
The sections on these two pages illustrate the current tall buildings distribution. As shown with blue arrows although a number of existing tall buildings are in proximity to the High Street only Berkshire House is visible in its entirety from street level to the top floor. Whilst not as apparent as Berkshire House, Nicholsons House is also visible from the High Street in the node by the central entrance to the shopping precinct.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

2.4 Topography

Maidenhead is situated in a low lying part of the Thames Valley. Long distance views to the town centre are available from the north and east from higher land.

The natural topography within the town centre is generally flat, however, there is a gently slopes from west to east and from north to south. The more pronounced changes in levels occur in proximity to the Castle Hill area, including the railway station, which is generally higher and the York Stream and the Moor Cut which is generally lower. Excluding buildings, the railway viaduct is the only higher man-made structure which provides views across the town centre.
2.0 Analysis

2.5 Frontages and Quality of Spaces

Maidenhead Town Centre has a number of welcoming streets and spaces which are defined by active frontages and buildings of appropriate scale. Good examples are the High Street and to a certain extent King Street and Queen Street.

Conversely, there are a number of streets and spaces which are defined by blank facades, are inaccessible or unattractive so contribute little to the town centre. West Street is the longest area of inactive frontage within the town centre and would most benefit from improvement.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

2.5 Landmarks and Key Views

Landmarks are prominent buildings or structures that provide identity of a place. By being recognisable and familiar, they help legibility and allow people to find their way around an area more easily.

There are considered to be a number of landmarks throughout the town centre. While most are historic buildings, the more modern Berkshire House is considered to be a landmark due to its prominence both within and from outside the town centre. In addition, others have become landmarks for other reasons such as the library and Town Hall on St Ives Road being part of the Civic area and Sainsbury by Providence Place because of its contemporary design which departs from the typical red brick buildings of Maidenhead town centre.

Existing landmarks are concentrated within vicinity of the High Street. Legibility throughout the town centre could be improved through the creation of additional landmarks, particularly at gateway locations.

Key views for Maidenhead Town Centre are views both from outside the centre into it and views along some of the main streets.

An important distant view opens up from the elevated railway line. Visual landmarks like some of the existing higher buildings south of the High Street and a number of historic landmarks in the centre contribute to framing other key views like the ones from west from Castle Hill and from north from Cookham Road and Marlow Road.

Distant Views from Bridge Road into the Town Centre are also very important for the relationship between the riverside area and the Town Centre.

The continuous frontages, termination and curves along the main streets in the Maidenhead Centre contribute to creating a number of dynamic views within the centre itself.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

Berkshire House as one of the tallest buildings in Maidenhead Town Centre is a prominent landmark due to its height and location on the High Street at the south end of Market Street and is highly visible from higher land at some distance from the centre at Cookham Dean and Taplow, and on arrival along the main routes such as the Bath Road and Cookham Road. Costain and Nicholson House above the Nicholsons Centre are tall buildings which form a cluster with Berkshire Tower and act as landmarks on approach by train. However due to the fact that they are set back from the edges of the Nicholson Centre they are not very visible from street level and play a little role in orientation in the town. As a cluster these buildings are visible from higher land around the town centre.
2.0 Baseline Analysis

2.3 Gateways
A gateway is a group of buildings and spaces that define an entrance or arrival point into the town centre. There are considered to be five gateways into the town centre, marking key arrival points by road and rail. The gateways are generally marked by the change of density, building lines and termination of long distance views.

North-western Gateway (A)
The north west gateway is focused on the Frascati Way and Bad Godesberg Way roundabout but historically formed the transition from the commercial High Street to the residential Castle Hill area.

The High Street Methodist Church and Kidwells Park are key features, however, the positive experience is weakened by the view to utilitarian building extensions to the High Street buildings and rear service yards, the West Street Car Park and the BT building (refer to photo on page 14). Whilst the massing of the BT building might be appropriate for this location, it is dated architecture and considered unsightly.

This is one of the most important gateways into Maidenhead Town Centre. Redevelopment of the area between West Street and Bad Godesberg Way with high quality buildings would significantly improve the sense of arrival. Higher buildings which will terminate the long views from west; this will also be appropriate for this area as long as they do not have negative impact on the Maidenhead Town Centre Conservation Area, however, it is accepted that views from the vicinity of Castle Hill are diminished by the planting on the roundabout and the angles at which the High Street is visible from public vantage points.

Southern Gateways (B and C)
The presence of Maidenhead Railway Station results in two gateways into the town centre from the south.

The railway station gateway marks the arrival point by train and the subsequent pedestrian route into the town centre. The key feature is the clock tower, however, its role as a feature is undermined by the busy road and pedestrian crossing. There is little at ground level to attract and lead visitors into the core of the town centre and further towards the High Street. Public realm and traffic improvements alongside high quality development between Queen Street and King Street would improve arrival experience and legibility.
Vehicular arrival from south is marked by Stafferton Way / Braywick Road roundabout. The key features of this gateway are the railway bridge and the office building on the east side of Braywick Road. The lack of any other enclosure around the roundabout and the presence of the railway as a visual barrier make this gateway less important and naturally shifts the real town gateway towards the station. This could be changed if further development of an appropriate scale is delivered at the north-eastern corner of the roundabout and along the railway.

**Eastern Gateway (D)**

The stone bridge across the river Thames marks the gateway into the town from east, whilst arrival into the centre is further west where the road crosses the Moor Cut (D). As shown on the photo to the right this gateway is not very well defined but it is helped by the bridge across the Moor Cut and the long views toward the High Street and Berkshire House.

**Northern Gateway (E)**

The northern gateway is represented by Cookham Road/Market Street roundabout (E). It is characterised by long views to the south along Market Street, towards Berkshire House. The eastern side of this view is now framed by the recently completed office building adjacent to Sainsbury’s at Providence Place. The western side has the potential to accommodate a taller building to help define the views on arrival not only from north but also from east. A new building in this corner will have to also reinforce the relationship between Kidwells Park and Town Centre core.
2.0 Analysis

2.6 Character Areas

The council’s Townscape Assessment provides a strategic review of urban form across the Royal Borough. Maidenhead town centre is classified into two townscape types: Town Historic Core (1A) and Town Historic Fringes (2A). The Historic Core includes mostly the area around the High Street and the north end of Queen Street. The Town Historic Fringe surrounds the historic core.

The Historic Core is characterised by the linear through route of the High Street and includes the majority of historic buildings. This is the area which will be most sensitive for taller buildings. The Town Historic Fringes is characterised by wide range of architectural styles, periods and building materials.

The plan to the right includes a further breakdown of character areas based on predominant uses, building height and quality of buildings and spaces. Each area is described below.

High Street

The High Street area accommodates predominantly fine grain three storey high buildings with active ground floor use. As the historical linear route, this area contains a number of the most noticeable and important buildings and spaces in the town centre.

Queen Street

The Queen Street area similarly to the High Street has retained its historic urban grain and accommodates active uses at ground floor.
There are a number of notable and important buildings, however, many of the buildings especially to the south end are of smaller scale and lesser architectural merit.

Nicholsons/King Street
This area includes buildings of varied scale and use. Many of the buildings contribute little to the character established in the High Street and Queen Street. They have fairly large footprints and on streets like the Broadway lack active frontage. Two of the existing tall buildings in the centre are above the Nicholson Centre but because they are set back they are not apparent from within the town centre. The area provides some opportunities for development, so that it better reflects the streetscape qualities of the surrounding streets.

York Stream
York Stream Area currently includes mostly single use large footprint buildings with very little active frontage and mostly underused and poorly defined spaces. The scale of the buildings very depending on their use and very few of them currently respond to their setting next to the stream. The Town Hall and the listed Maidenhead Library are the only buildings in the area the setting of which should be respected.

To the south of York Road, the York Stream Area built form is generally single story and lacks focus. The backdrop of the railway embankment would allow higher forms of development.

West Street
The West Street Area is located between the High Street and the ring road. The area has a poor appearance with dated architecture and little active frontage. The entire south side forms the rear service access and parking for properties in the High Street. On the north side is dominated by the BT Building with the listed United Reform Church, and the Portland Arms and Society of Friends meeting house valued for their appearance or function.

The area presents very good opportunities for redevelopment due to its proximity to the High Street and Kidwells Park. The area could accommodate taller buildings as long as they are not apparent from the High Street, are overbearing to Kidwells Park or harm the limited views into this conservation area. New development should create an active ground floor and create where appropriate a Ring Road frontage.

Stafferton Way
The Stafferton Way Area is characterised by larger office and industrial buildings with a variety of architectural styles. The area has potential to accommodate more extensive redevelopment.

2.0 Analysis
3.0 Recommended Approach

3.1 Areas of Sensitivity and Opportunity

As the urban design analysis illustrated in chapter two of this report Maidenhead Town Centre has diverse character throughout. Therefore delivery of tall buildings will be more sensitive in some locations described on page 16 - 17.

A number of key factors will also affect the level of sensitivity in specific parts of the centre:

• Conservation Area
  Maidenhead Town Centre conservation area focuses in the oldest part of the town - The High Street which included mostly coaching inns with gardens and stables in the 19 century. The urban structure has not changed much since then although many of the buildings date from much later. Due to its unique character and prevailing height of 3 to 4 storeys the area will be highly sensitive to development of new taller buildings.

• High Street
  The High Street runs West to East and is the most legible historic route in the town centre. This is the core of the conservation area and therefore has the biggest impact on sensitivities for development of tall buildings.

• Kidwells Park
  The park is the most important public space in Maidenhead. Development in the surrounding area would have the potential to enhance its quality, but heights would have to be sensitively dealt with as to not cause overshadowing and blocking views to the park.
• **Listed Buildings**
The listed buildings in the town centre define also more sensitive areas for development of tall buildings. They are mostly concentrated in or in proximity to the two areas already mentioned: along the High Street and close to Kidwells Park.

• **Existing Landmarks**
As illustrated in chapter 2.5 the existing landmarks include prominent buildings and structures and important civic buildings. The context of existing historic landmarks will present a high level of sensitivity. If new development is proposed in the vicinity of these buildings view corridors to them will have to be considered and their setting will have to be enhanced.

• **Existing Tall Buildings**
Groups of tall buildings are currently concentrated south and north of the conservation area. These have been reviewed in chapter 2. The distribution of new tall buildings in Maidenhead should relate to the existing tall clusters and particularly to those of good quality. The tall buildings of poor quality can either be refurbished or replaced by higher quality buildings but not necessarily of the same scale.

• **York Stream and the Moor Cut**
York Stream and the Moor Cut are important nature habitat and recreation elements in Maidenhead and the areas adjacent to them will be more sensitive to tall buildings development.

• **Railway Embankment**
The mainline railway running through Maidenhead is 5 to 6 metres above surrounding areas. Therefore buildings adjacent to it could be higher than the predominant height in the town.

• **Views on arrival into the Centre**
New tall buildings have the potential to frame key views into the town centre and act as landmarks for those approaching the Town Centre.
3.0 Recommended Approach

As the CABE and English Heritage Guidance on Tall Buildings define, tall buildings can make a positive contribution to the life of a town because they:

- can affect the image and identity
- can serve as beacon of regeneration and stimulate further investment
- act as landmarks making the form of the town easier to understand
- can form a group which marks important civic or public facilities.

However, due to their size and prominence tall buildings could also harm the qualities that people value about a place. Therefore it is very important that location of tall buildings is carefully considered within the town centre context and the highest quality of design encouraged. A number of key principles have been drafted to assist with developing the strategy for tall buildings in Maidenhead Town Centre. The overall methodology applied has been illustrated to the right. The principles included here refer back to the areas of highest sensitivity like the conservation area and influential elements like existing taller structures in the centre which have been identified in the previous chapter.

**Conservation Area**

- No further tall buildings should be developed in the conservation area because it might have negative impact on the character of the area.
- Enhancement of the existing tall buildings within the conservation area should be explored. If any of these are considered for redevelopment solutions which enhance the character of the conservation area would be considered more appropriate.

**High Street**

- If taller buildings are proposed in the areas surrounding the High Street exhaustive analysis should be undertaken to ensure that the setting of the High Street is not disturbed or adversely affected.

**Listed Buildings**

- Tall building in close proximity to listed buildings should be designed to enhance the setting of the listed building and highlight their importance but not dominate it.

**Kidwells Park**

- In order to retain the character of Kidwells Park as one of the key open spaces in Maidenhead Town Centre, tall building development around it should be limited. However, the area south of Bad Godesberg Way, between Kidwells Park and the conservation area forms the effective edge of the Town Centre and could be appropriately intensified to further highlight the compact Town Centre core.

**Existing Landmarks**

- Landmark buildings help legibility and new tall buildings should frame views to them and/or provide an appropriate back drop.

**Existing Tall Buildings**

- Quality of the existing tall buildings should be improved if they are retained. The highest quality of design will be required if they are redeveloped.

**Railway Embankment**

- South of the High Street as one moves away from the conservation area the sensitivity of building height decreases. As one of the main routes into the Town Centre and the effective southern limit of the town centre the area around the railway line provides an opportunity to develop a tall building cluster.

**York Stream and the Moor Cut**

- New development should enhance the character of the York Stream and the Moor Cut. Tall buildings on the edge of the water courses will be inappropriate.
- In Maidenhead new development of 5 storeys would not be a significant change but over 8 storeys would constitute a tall building because of contrast. The town should not really be developed over the height of the existing 12 storey towers (approximately 40m) because in a flat river valley tall buildings over this height would be visible from a great distance and might have negative visual impact on the landscape and the surrounding settlements. A rise in scale over 12 storeys would be also out of character in the fairly small and compact centre of Maidenhead.
3.0 Recommended Approach

3.3 Strategy
Tall Buildings
Tall buildings are playing an ever-increasing role in the future development of town and cities. Tall buildings can be iconic structures for an individual use, signify areas of regeneration or act as symbols of economic activity and global positioning.

In the context of Maidenhead tall buildings can serve a number of functions that:

• Create a distinctive skyline that projects a new image for the Town Centre;
• Form key landmarks within a legible centre;
• Contribute to a cluster signalling a key gateway or area;
• Mark important public, civic or institutional uses;
• Demonstrate a growing economic position;
• Set a precedent for sustainable development through the application of best practice requirements, maximising densities, and proximity to public transport.

To achieve any of these aims it is important to control where clusters of tall buildings are and how extensive they are and to make sure they seamlessly relate to the existing structure of the town centre.

Drawn upon the urban design analysis and the identified sensitivity areas, and based on the key principles described on the previous page the tall building strategy for Maidenhead Town Centre proposes two main 'Tall building areas':

• Northern tall building area
• Southern Group tall building area
3.0 Recommended Approach

Each ‘tall building area’ is an area of search and not an indication that tall buildings will be appropriate across the whole extent of these identified locations of opportunity.

The strategy has been developed based on the following ideas:

- Tall buildings bracket the town centre from the north and south and create distinctive edges to the compact core. Thus the conservation area will be protected and the northern edge of the Town Centre and Kidwells Park better defined.
- The Southern edge of the town centre presents a good opportunity to create a cluster of tall buildings which are arranged linearly alongside the railway line. This additionally allows for increasing densities in close proximity to a major transport hub.
- Both the northern and the southern clusters are parallel to the High Street emphasising the historic grain of Maidenhead as a reminder of how the town developed to accommodate people travelling between London and Bristol.
- The existing tall buildings form a scattered linking group and as such they will contribute to the concept for tall building clusters along the northern and southern edge of the Town centre. The sections to the right illustrate how the existing buildings will fit into the concept for the two tall buildings clusters.
- The existing Berkshire House, Costain House and Nicholson House present an opportunity to be refurbished to a much higher standard so that they contribute to the character of the town.
- Gateways which define the arrival into Maidenhead Town Centre play a key role for its image. Areas and buildings which frame or terminate the main arrival points in these gateways are to be enhanced and/or redeveloped.
- If taller than the predominant height buildings are proposed at gateway locations they are to frame rather than terminate the distant views into the Town Centre
- Buildings or structures of exceptional design quality will be required at some key location. They will help legibility and create interest.

The strategy makes the following recommendations with regards to specific areas:

**Northern tall building area**

This is created south of Bad Godesberg Way and west of the new medium height cluster around Sainsbury’s by Providence Place. Tall buildings are not proposed north of Bad Godesberg way as they would not help define the town and they would also start to have impact on Kidwells Park.

One line of tall buildings along the park and separated by the road is acceptable but any others would reduce the definition of the town centre and impact too much on the Park.

The western tip of this cluster should have a distinctive and attractive tall building that announces the town as a landmark and emphasises its quality.

**Southern tall building area**

The railway line is well away from the conservation area and as such is not a sensitive area for tall buildings. The station would benefit from a cluster of tall buildings directly around it but the economics of development at the moment are such that it is unlikely to be developed for some time. The car parking sites around the station south of the railway line have the greatest potential at present. If the cluster is being developed in a piecemeal way then east-west orientation and grouping should be emphasised from the first development in order to prevent the tall buildings from not matching the concept.

**Gateways**

- **Gateway A** - this gateway defines main arrival by car from north and west. The Methodist Church, West Street car park and backs of the High Street buildings and rear service areas, the BT building are the structures which are most prominent in this location; unfortunately the latter makes a negative impression. If the BT site is appropriately redeveloped alongside the backs of the buildings at this end of the High Street this historic gateway would become again the most exciting entrance to Maidenhead Town Centre with Kidwells on one side and the Town Centre to the other.

- **Gateway B** - this gateway marks the main arrival in Maidenhead by train. Today the area is dominated by cars but with the arrival of Crossrail and the potential for new transport interchange which provides better pedestrian linkages to King and Queen Street this gateway will shape the first visitor experience of the Town Centre.
This gateway could accommodate not only transport facilities and a station square but also new buildings which clearly define the route to the core of the town. An important role in framing this approach is serviced by the corner building between King Street and Queen Street and the buildings on the east side of King Street.

- Gateway C - as arrival by car from south this gateway is currently dominated by landscaping. Good quality buildings of larger scale in the north-east corner would be appropriate to better define the arrival in Maidenhead Town centre.

- Gateway D - this is the main approach from the river Thames and the area will benefit from structures and/or landscaping which will define better the views and pedestrian approach to the High Street.

- Gateway E - with the main view terminating at Berkshire House this gateway is one of the better expressed gateway. The new office development adjacent to Sainsbury's on the east side of Market Street will have to be complemented by a building of appropriate scale and quality on the west side of Market Street. If Berkshire House is redeveloped it would have to be replaced with a landmark building of appropriate scale and quality.

Landmarks - Existing Towers
(Berkshire House, Costain House and Nicholsons House)

The three existing towers are of a particular period and as such are not the best examples of architectural style or ambition. Berkshire House plays an important role for defining an important part of the Town Centre and terminating views from outside.

There are now many well-documented examples of tower block refurbishment that show that structures like these can be transformed into attractive and contemporary landmarks. In sustainability terms this is a better approach than redevelopment. In the case of redevelopment, a new argument would have to be made for any replacement buildings to be as tall. The location of the towers that could be refurbished is such that they do not relate cohesively to the tall building strategy and would therefore also fail tests on impact and locational desirability if considered for redevelopment.

Upper Height Limit

The concept plan indicates that buildings conforming to the predominant building height of 5 - 6 storeys (21m) would not be considered as tall buildings. A substantial increase over this base height of more than one or two storeys would reclassify the buildings as tall buildings and would therefore mean they would have to be in an area designated for tall buildings. Each application where changes of height of this order would have to be considered on its merits and subject to all the analysis discussed above.
4.0 Summary

4.1 Summary
The tall buildings strategy is simple and unambiguous and based on an approach to protecting the characteristics of the town whilst allowing for future expansion in scale and density. The analysis presented here is an extrapolation of that undertaken for the AAP and therefore consistent in outcome.

The strategy for the tall buildings described above is consistent with that presented at the AAP consultations in 2009 except that there is now more detailed explanation of the logic of the proposals. It is presented to ensure that the logic of the AAP recommendations is fully recorded and accessible.