

**RICHMOND ROAD SHD
DUBLIN 3**

**ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE
IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

10th December 2021

**Historic Building Consultants
Old Bawn
Old Connaught
Bray**

1195/01

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Background

This report has been prepared for Birkey Limited as part of the documentation to be submitted with an application for planning permission for a Strategic Housing Development comprised of a mixed-use development at Richmond Road, Fairview, Dublin 3.

The site was inspected on a number of occasions, the most recent of which was on 26th May 2021 on which occasion the majority of the photographs incorporated in the report were taken.

Historical research was carried out on the background history of the property and the results are set down below.

While this report contains comment on aspects of the condition of the buildings it is not a condition report or a structural report and must not be read as such.

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Historical background

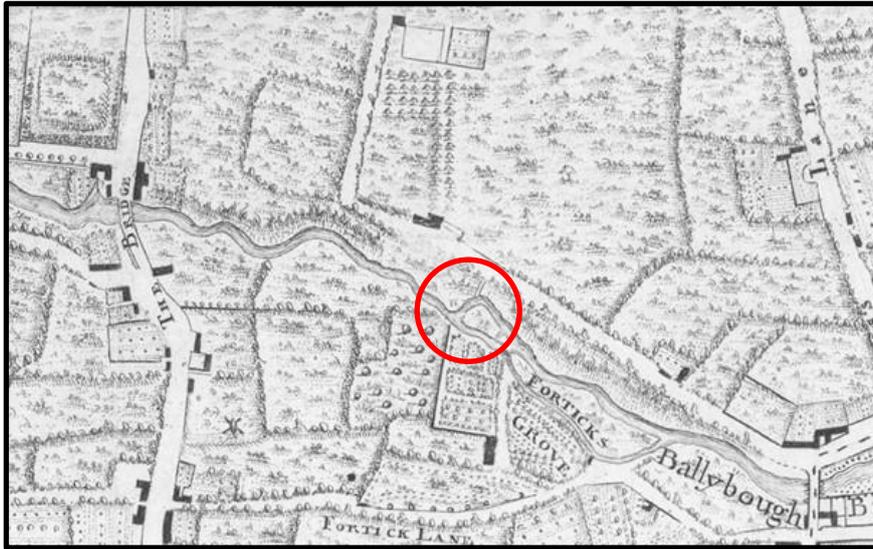


Figure 1: Detail of Rocque's map of 1757

Richmond Road is a thoroughfare of some antiquity, connecting Fairview and Ballybough with Drumcondra. In its original form the road ran westward from Fairview to a point to the west of Grace Park Road, where it turned north to Drumcondra Church, before turning westward again along Church Avenue. In the mid-eighteenth century there appears to have been little development along the road, according to the map prepared by John Rocque in 1757. Notable on this map is a significant bend in the River Tolka, with the main channel turning north-eastward and then back to the south-east, with a smaller channel running more directly to leave an island in the river.



Figure 2: Detail of Taylor's map of 1816

By 1816, when John Taylor published his map of Dublin, development had occurred along Richmond Road and there was a weir at the bend in the river.

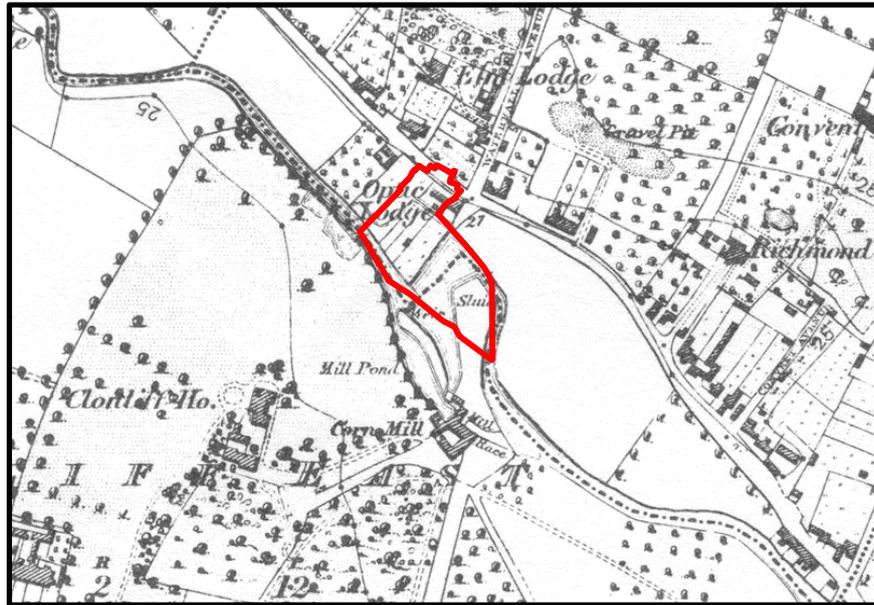


Figure 3 : Ordnance Survey six-inch map of 1849

The Ordnance Survey's six-inch map series showed a greater level of detail. The bend in the river is very evident and has been accentuated by the construction of the weir that was seen on Taylor's map. The Ordnance Survey map shows that the weir had been constructed to facilitate the supply of water to a corn mill on the southern bank of the Tolka. Yet more detail is shown on the Ordnance Survey's large-scale plan that was prepared in 1889. By that time the land to the east of the bend in the river had been developed. A new company had been established to build a whiskey distillery using the latest technology work commenced on the site in 1872. The map shows that the corn mill on the southern side of the Tolka had been replaced by a larger structure and was used as a paper mill. To the north and west of the bend in the river houses had been built, three opposite the end of Waterfall Avenue and three more closer to the distillery.

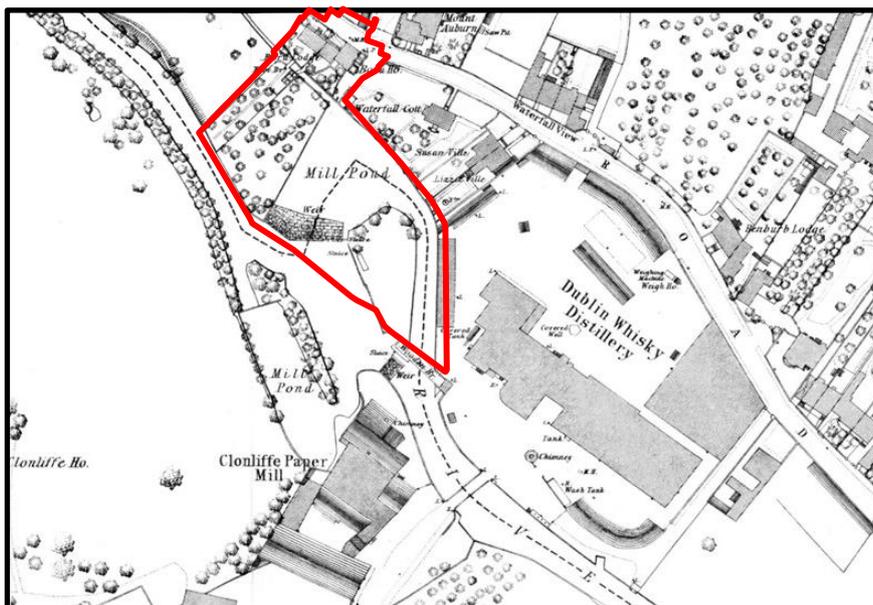


Figure 4: Detail of Ordnance Survey map of 1889

The bend in the river remained in place until the latter half of the twentieth century. At some time, possibly in the 1960s or 1970s, the area was infilled, and the water ran down the straighter channel. The weirs at each end of the angled channel would have been buried. The weir in the straight channel remained in place for the time being and is seen in the photograph below, taken looking upstream during a flood in October 2002.



Figure 5: View of weir with application site beyond in distance, 2002



Figure 6: Aerial view showing weir in 2003

The aerial photograph above was taken in April 2003 and shows the weir spanning the river, seen as the white line crossing the Tolka.



Figure 7: Aerial view, 2008

In about 2004, as a result of flooding episodes along the Tolka in Drumcondra and Fairview, a flood relief scheme was implemented. The weir was removed from the river, the bridge from Distillery Road to the former distillery was replaced and flood walls were built along the margins of the river. With that, the final trace of the former bend in the river and its association with the mill and the distillery was ended. The flood wall constructed at that time extended into the south-eastern end of the present site.

Conservation context

Record of Protected Structures

There are no protected structures on the application site. There are a number of protected structures in the vicinity of the site, as denoted by red asterisks on the extract from map E of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 shows. The application site is outlined in yellow:

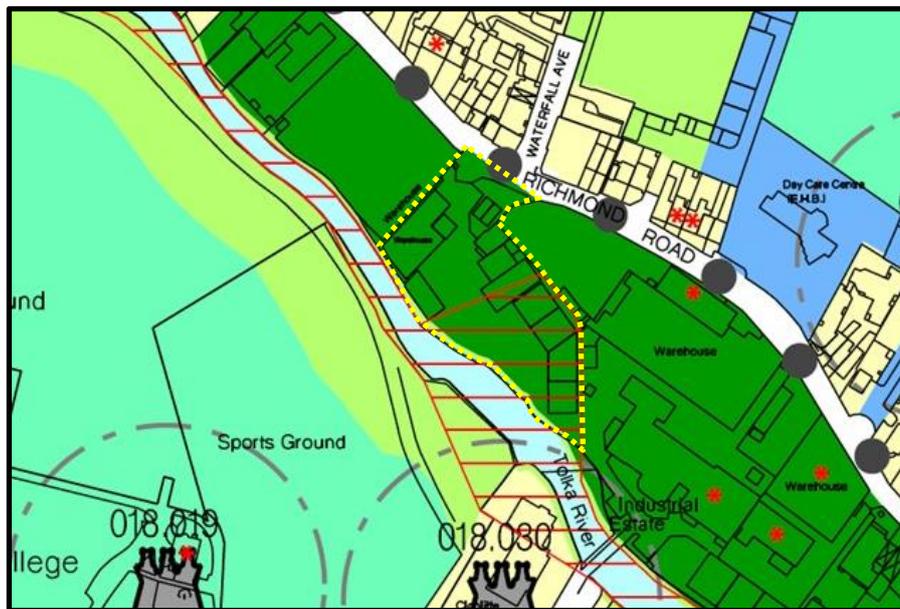


Figure 8: Detail of development plan map E

From north-west to south-east along the road the buildings marked with asterisks are as follows, with the reference from the record of protected structures:

- 137 Richmond Road Ref: 7356
- 163 Richmond Road Ref: 7357
- 165 Richmond Road Ref: 7358
- Leyden's, Richmond Road Not protected
- 156-163 Richmond Road Ref. 7359

To the south of Richmond Road and to the south-east of the application site two structures are marked with asterisks both of these asterisks refer to:

- Tivoli Centre, Distillery Road Ref. 2292

The potential impact of the proposal on the protected structures is discussed below.

Conservation areas

The map extract from the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 reproduced in figure 8 above shows an area hatched in red along the River Tolka and extending northward into the application site. This red hatching denotes a conservation area, though not an architectural conservation area.

The potential impact of the proposed development on this conservation area is discussed below.

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) includes some buildings in the vicinity of the application site, all of which are protected structures and are listed above. These are, with their NIAH references:

- Elm Lodge, 137 Richmond Road Ref: 50120038
- Warehouse, Richmond Road Ref: 50120053
- Tivoli Centre, Distillery Road Ref: 50120052

The potential impact of the proposed development on these buildings is discussed below.

The warehouse that is included in this list is the former warehouse associated with the distillery and which is number 162 Richmond Road. It is included in the record of protected structures as 158-163 Richmond Road, which is not the correct number.

Building survey

Application site



Plate 1: Yard within application site

The present application site is occupied by buildings that all date from the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. This includes a pair of red-brick houses on the street frontage that date from the late twentieth century; they are numbers 146 and 148a Richmond Road.



Plate 2: Houses on frontage of application site



Plate 3: Southern end of application site alongside Tolka

The application site has a significant frontage along the River Tolka. At the south-eastern end of this frontage there is a stretch of flood wall constructed by the Office of Public Works and in the applicant's ownership, indicated by the yellow arrow in the photograph above. This ends at a section of stone wall that runs for a short distance along the river frontage of the application site, beyond which the river margin is a steep bank, and which is indicated by the red arrow in the photograph. At the north-western end of the river frontage of the site is another stretch of stone wall, seen in the photograph below.



Plate 4: Existing stone wall along river frontage of site

137 Richmond Road



Plate 5: Protected structure at 137 Richmond Road

Number 137 Richmond Road is a centre-terrace single-storey over basement red-brick house on the northern side of Richmond Road. The houses on either side are later additions. The house is five-bay with its entrance in the centre at the top of a flight of eleven granite steps flanked by iron railings. The door has a block-and-start surround and is topped by a semicircular spoked fanlight. This central bay is set in a breakfront. The windows are replacement aluminium casements and have stucco architraves. The roof is slated and parapetted. The house is set back from the road behind a stone wall with high trees at either side of the front garden. Protected structure reference: 7356.

Steel shed at Leyden's



Plate 6: Steel shed alongside Richmond Road at Leyden's

Leyden's is a cash and carry business on the site adjoining the application site to the north-east. There are several steel sheds on the site, including the one in the photograph above, which is shown with a red asterisk on the development plan map E. This is discussed further below.

163 Richmond Road

Plate 7: Protected structure at 163 Richmond Road

Number 163 Richmond Road is a centre-terrace, two-storey, three-bay house on the northern side of Richmond Road. The façade is rendered and painted. The front door is flanked by pilasters supporting a semicircular spoked fanlight. The windows were formerly six-over-six sashes without horns but have now been replaced with uPVC casements. The house is set back from the road behind a wall and a hedge. Protected structure reference: 7357.

165 Richmond Road

Plate 8: Protected structure at 165 Richmond Road

Number 165 Richmond Road is a centre-terrace, two-storey, three-bay house on the northern side of Richmond Road. The façade is faced with red brick laid in stretcher bond and is a replacement from the late twentieth century. The front doorway has a brick surround and a plain glass fanlight. The windows are replacement uPVC casements. Protected structure reference: 7358.

Former distillery warehouse



Plate 9: Former distillery warehouse

Fronting onto the southern side of Richmond Road is a substantial roofless building that was originally a warehouse connected with the distillery. This is number 162 Richmond Road and is referred to as numbers 156-163 in the record of protected structures. The building is of rubble calp limestone with brick dressings around the window and door openings. The building was triple-pile, with slated roofs, but was burned out in 2018. Protected structure reference: 7359.

Distillery Lofts



Plate 10: Distillery Lofts, seen from Richmond Road

Distillery Lofts is a development that is based in the former distillery between Richmond Road and Distillery Road. It is comprised of a number of buildings ranging from four-storey to six-storey. The distillery buildings are mostly faced with brown brick, with cut-stone dressings. It is noted that this complex is included in the record of protected structures under the title "Tivoli Centre". This is a name that has not applied to the former distillery for some years, and it has been known as Distillery Lofts for some time past. Protected structure reference: 2292.

Discussion

Before addressing the nature and potential impact of the proposed development it is necessary to address two significant anomalies in the development plan. The first relates to the placing of a red asterisk on the development plan map on one of the steel sheds at Leyden's Cash and Carry, the other to the inclusion of part of the application site within a conservation area.

Shed at Leyden's

As noted above, development plan map E has a red asterisk on one of the buildings associated with Leyden's on the southern side of Richmond Road. This building has no qualities that would suggest that it was worthy of inclusion in the record of protected structures. There is no entry in the record of protected structures that could relate to this building.

It is noted that the building was not marked with an asterisk on map E of the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011, or the 2011-2017 development plan and it appeared for the first time on the map that accompanied the Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022.

The 2005-2011 plan included "former distillery buildings between Distillery Road and Richmond Road" in the record of protected structures (RPS), with the reference number 7527. Under Distillery Road the RPS cross referenced the distillery thus: "*Tivoli Centre – see Richmond Road*" though it was given a reference number 2338. The name Tivoli Centre had been applied to the former distillery when it was opened as a retail and leisure centre in the autumn of 1975. The centre closed three months later, but the name was retained when it reopened as a business centre a year later, housing industries and warehousing. The premises were damaged by fire in 1993, 1995 and 1999 and following extensive refurbishment it was converted to residential and commercial uses early in the twentieth century.

The three principal buildings in the former distillery were marked with asterisks on development plan map E to denote that they were included as parts of this protected structure.

The record of protected structures in the Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017 included the same listing under Richmond Road – "former distillery buildings between Distillery Road and Richmond Road", reference 7363. This time, however, instead of a cross reference under Distillery Road the RPS listed "Tivoli Centre" as a protected structure, reference 2292.

The same three buildings were marked with asterisks on map E as had been marked in the previous development plan.

The record of protected structures that was included in the Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 when it was published in October 2015 repeated the inclusion of the Tivoli Centre under Distillery Road, reference RPS_2292. The “former distillery buildings” listing was removed from the RPS under Richmond Road and in its place was a new entry with the reference number RPS_7359, “Brick & stone building to east of Tivoli centre & stone warehouse fronting onto Richmond Road”.

This brick and stone building had been included as a protected structure in the previous development plans and had been marked with an asterisk. In fact, the listing represented a reduction in the number of structures included under Richmond Road, as only one of the former distillery buildings was now included at that address. Whereas in the previous development plan the entire former distillery had been included twice in the RPS, now one building appeared twice, while the rest was only included under Distillery Road.

The change in the wording seems to have caused confusion when the protected structures were being mapped. The entry under Richmond Road seems to have given the impression that a building had been added to the RPS and in an attempt to map it the asterisk was placed on the wrong building, given that the correct building already had an asterisk.

These changes that had been introduced into the draft development plan were carried through into the adopted plan.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above is that the asterisk that appears on one of the buildings within the Leyden’s site on development plan map E is an error and the building is not a protected structure. It is noted that where there is a conflict between the written statement and the development plan maps the written statement takes precedence. There is no entry for that building in the record of protected structures that forms part of the written statement and hence there is no ambiguity, and the building is not a protected structure. This has been clarified by Dublin City Council by email on 24th September 2020 that the warehouse is not a protected structure and was marked on the zoning map in error.

Conservation area notation

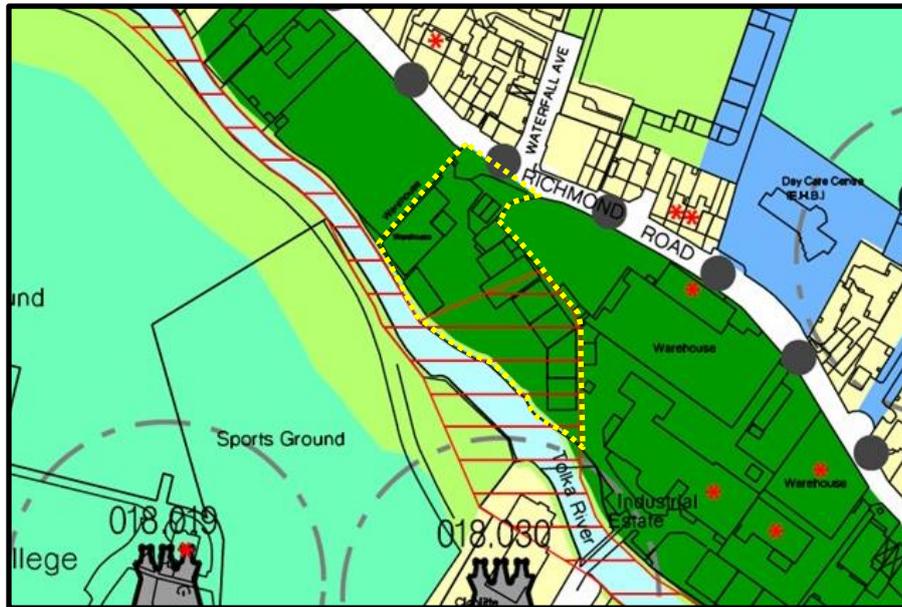


Figure 9: Detail of development plan map E

It was noted above that there was formerly a bend in the River Tolka that was adapted by means of weirs to provide the water to power a mill on the southern bank of the river. This was later modified to provide power to the distillery, which mainly used steam power, but also used some water power. It was also shown above that this bend in the river was back-filled later in the twentieth century. Subsequently, in the early twenty-first century, a flood relief scheme was carried out along this stretch of the Tolka, resulting in the removal of the remaining weir in the river. The construction of a flood barrier wall along the north-western bank of the river as part of that scheme removed the remains of one of the weirs that was still partly visible at that time.

It would appear that when the red hatching was added to the development plan maps back in the 1980s the maps still showed the bend in the river and the hatching was drawn over all of the river as it was then. The back-filling of the bend in the river and the construction of a commercial facility with industrial sheds has rendered the red hatching obsolete where it encroaches into the application site and over the area coloured green on the development plan map.

Assessment

It is proposed to develop the site to provide a mixed-use development to include 183 residential units on buildings from six to ten storeys in height. Some café/retail would also be included on the Richmond Road frontage. The design provides for a riverside cycle and pedestrian route along the margin of the river along with a new section of flood wall, c.135 metres long, connecting with the existing flood wall.

This report assesses the potential impact on architectural heritage, and this may be divided into two elements – the potential impact on protected structures and the potential impact on the conservation area along the river.

Protected structures

The survey above has identified a number of protected structures in the vicinity of the site and each of these is considered here, with an assessment of any potential impact on their character or setting arising from the proposed development.

137 Richmond Road

This house is shown in plate 5 above. It is located at a distance of approximately forty-five metres from the nearest point of the application site and to the west of it. The house faces south-south-west across the street to a four-storey apartment building. As noted, there are high trees at each corner of the front garden. As a result of the distance, the trees and the orientation of the house there will be no impact of the protected structure arising from the proposal.

163 and 165 Richmond Road

The two adjacent houses at 163 and 165 are about sixty metres to the north-east of the application site. They are orientated towards the south-south-west and directly to the front, on the opposite side of Richmond Road, are the large sheds associated with Leyden's Cash and Carry. It is considered that given the distance of the houses from the application site and the cash and carry business in the intervening space that there will be no appreciable impact on these protected structures arising from the proposed development.

162 Richmond Road

This is the building that is identified as 158 to 163 Richmond Road in the record of protected structures, and it is noted that that address cannot be correct, as the

numbering system in Richmond Road has the odd numbers on the northern side and the even numbers on the southern side.

This building lies to the south-east of the application site at a distance of approximately ninety metres. The intervening space is partly occupied by the substantial buildings at Distillery Lofts and partly by the large steel sheds associated with Leyden’s Cash and Carry. Due to the distance and the buildings between the protected structure and the application site there is no potential for any adverse impact on the protected structure from the proposed development.

Distillery Lofts

The buildings at Distillery Lofts occupy a large site to the east of the application site. The closest of the former distillery buildings to the application site is approximately fifteen metres, while the nearest of the proposed buildings would be more than thirty metres away. The nearest part of the proposed development is to be at an angle of about forty-five degrees to the Distillery Lofts buildings, so that in effect the new building would be at a greater distance from the protected structure.



Plate 11: Distillery Lofts, seen from Distillery Road

The view in which the proposed development would be seen with the buildings in Distillery Lofts is the view across the Tolka from Distillery Road, as seen in the photograph above. The view from Richmond Road would be less significant as Distillery Lofts is set well back from Richmond Road to the rear of Leyden’s Cash and Carry.

As is seen in the photograph above, the former distillery buildings are substantial and the building on the left, which is the one closest to the application site, is six-storey, with an additional penthouse level.

Given the scale of the buildings at Distillery Lofts the proposed development would have minimal impact on their setting. The principal views of the former distillery are

from Distillery Road and on the approach via a private roadway from Richmond Road, and in neither of these views would the proposed development intrude.

Conservation area

The red hatching that denotes a conservation area runs along the River Tolka past the application site. As has been noted, the hatching also encroaches into the site, but it has been suggested above that this part of the conservation area is now obsolete and should be removed from the development plan maps, as the area is the part of the site seen in plate 1 above and is no longer part of the river system.

Notwithstanding this assertion, the proposed development would result in a more ordered site that would be more compatible with the conservation area objective than the present commercial buildings and yard.

The proposal includes provision for a walkway and cycleway along the river bank and as such it will address the river and help to develop it into an amenity that will be of benefit to the river and to the community.

As the flood wall constructed by the Office of Public works only runs along a short stretch of the river frontage of the site it is proposed to erect a new flood wall along the remaining length of the river frontage. As noted above, there are two lengths of stone wall along the river margin and these will be retained and repaired, with the new flood wall erected alongside. A short length of the stone wall is to be removed where it runs into the site away from the river and this is necessary in order to run the new length of flood wall. The retention and repair of the existing stone wall, together with the provision of tree planting along the pedestrian and cycle route will ensure that the character of the conservation area is safeguarded.

Conclusion

As has been seen above, the proposed development would have little or no adverse impact on the character of any of the protected structures in the vicinity. It would also result in an improvement in the character of the site itself adjacent to the conservation area, in that it would replace a series of commercial buildings and an open yard that could be seen as conflicting with the conservation area objective.