

Development Brief

'Weirside' Central Stalybridge



Pennine Care
Trust



 **Tameside**
Metropolitan Borough
"An excellent council"

“WEIRSIDE” – CENTRAL STALYBRIDGE **DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

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Plan A: Study Area

Plan B: Extract from Adopted Unitary Development Plan

1.0 Introduction & Context

1.1 This Brief has been prepared by the Council to assist and guide prospective developers of this important riverside site. The catalyst for this Brief is the recent relocation of Stalybridge Clinic, which occupied the western end of this site. The Clinic was currently housed in an unattractive 1960s built property, which is a particularly incongruous feature in this prominent location within the Stalybridge Town Centre Conservation Area. The Clinic moved to modern new premises on nearby Waterloo Road in 2004, leaving the existing building empty. Therefore, this provides an ideal opportunity for the redevelopment of the site.

1.2 As well as the Clinic building, the site also includes areas of car parking, a riverside walk and an area of public open space, containing a number of significant trees. The integration, enhancement and extension of the riverside walk and area of public open space will need to be an essential part of any development proposals. The Council wishes to stimulate imaginative development solutions, which maximise the potential of this important site, whilst respecting the surrounding urban heritage and riverside setting. This Brief will set out relevant background information, appropriate uses for the site, and design principles.

2.0 Location

2.1 Stalybridge enjoys the benefits of both town and country. It has good road, rail and bus links to Manchester City Centre, which is approximately ten miles away, but it is also bordered by high wild moorlands, and the Peak District National Park is only a fifteen minute drive away. As well as Manchester, the railway station provides direct links to Liverpool, Leeds, York, Huddersfield and Wakefield.

2.2 The town of Stalybridge has numerous advantages. It has a rich industrial heritage, which is reflected in many of the town's buildings, offering character and personality to the town. It offers a variety of retailing, including individual specialist stores, and in the evening the town comes alive with its vibrant evening economy. The Astley/Cheetham Art Gallery is another asset to the town and there is also an independent commercial cinema. Stalybridge Country Park, the Eastwood Nature Reserve, and three extensive public parks – Stamford, Cheetham and Gorse Hall, are all within walking distance of the centre.

2.3 The redevelopment of the Stalybridge Clinic Site is another important component of the wider objective of a wholesale reinvention of the role and purpose of Stalybridge Town Centre. There have been significant recent developments in Stalybridge from a concerted regeneration agenda, they include:

- Successful restoration of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, which runs through the heart of the town
- New build and refurbished private and rented residential developments including “Millers Wharf”, Hob Hill, Grosvenor Square, Melbourne Court and Stokes Mill
- The Tesco Superstore
- Leisure & Entertainment developments including Cosmo Bingo, Riverace Nightclub and a number of other bars and restaurants
- Town centre public realm improvements including new paving and flagstone surfacing, lighting and street furniture coordination, CCTV, public art and canal corridor landscaping

2.4 The area covered by this Brief has a number of key positive features including:

- Prominent town centre location with a main trunk road frontage
- An attractive setting in a conservation area, surrounded by a large number of attractive historic buildings, some of which are listed
- Riverside frontage, including a riverside walkway and weir
- Area of enhanced open space, carried out by Groundwork, alongside the river
- Attractive mature trees, many of which are covered by a Tree Preservation Order
- Established space for parking and existing vehicular access to Stamford Street/Mottram Road
- Clear Ownership – the site is owned by the Pennine Care NHS Trust and Tameside MBC

3.0 Description

3.1 The area covered by the Brief covers approximately 0.36 hectares. The study area is indicated on Plan A. It is bounded by the River Tame to the south and east, Old Street to the east, Stamford Street to the north and Market Street to the west. The western end of the site slopes down steeply from Stamford Street to the riverside walkway. The existing clinic building is located here, utilising the changing levels. The central part of the site is largely level and is occupied by two car parks, which are accessed off Old Street. One car park serves the Clinic and staff, residents and visitors to surrounding properties, as well as the general public use the other.

3.2 The eastern end of the site is an area of public open space, which includes seating providing riverside views. A number of trees grow here, including willows, limes, grey poplars and alders. A Tree Preservation Order has been made to protect the best of these trees. The riverside walkway runs from the Grade 2* listed War Memorial and steeply banked lawned area in Trinity Street to the eastern end of Old Street. It runs past the Clinic building and picks up again after the car parks through the area of public open space to Old Street, just before its junction with Stamford Street. A steep riverbank runs around the southern edge of the site, which slopes down to the River Tame.

3.3 This part of Stalybridge is dominated by stone built buildings. Old Street and Stamford Street are home to a number of attractive commercial and residential stone properties. Old Street itself survives with original setts and yorkstone paving in parts. To the west of the site beyond a small banked lawned area is the Grade 2* listed War Memorial, the Grade 2 listed former Stalybridge Town Hall entrance facade and the Grade 2 listed Victoria Bridge, which crosses the river. The Grade 2 listed Post Office and Astley Cheetham Public Library & Art Gallery block is also located on the south bank of the river to the south west of the site. Along the south river bank there is a high stone retaining wall and behind the Post Office/Library are some more recent buildings, including the Riverace Nightclub and Gym, and Stalybridge Police Station.

4.0 Development Policy

4.1 Development proposals will be measured against relevant national planning policy guidance and the Development Plan. Relevant national Planning Policy Guidance Notes include PPG1, 3, 4, 6, 13, 15 & 25. The Tameside Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in 2004. This Plan forms the basis for decisions on land use planning matters within the Borough.

- 4.2 In the UDP the site is located within Stalybridge Town Centre and it is also within the Stalybridge Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 4.3 The Plan also indicates that part of the site is in an Area Liable to Flooding, based upon information from the Environment Agency Indicative Floodplain Maps. Plan B indicates the floodplain.
- 4.4 The Old Street Stalybridge (S22) Tree Preservation Order 2003 was made on the 04/04/03. A copy of the TPO was provided with the sales particulars.

5.0 Development Issues

- 5.1 The fundamental elements that the Council requires from development proposals for this site are:
- The demolition of the existing clinic building
 - Redevelopment that maximises the potential of this prominent riverside/main road site, whilst respecting the surrounding urban fabric and riverside setting
 - A quality architectural design that positively and imaginatively utilises the split level nature of this site with a “wow” factor
 - A use or uses that are appropriate in scale and form to this town centre location
 - The integration, enhancement and extension of the riverside walkway
 - The retention and enhancement of the area of public open space inclusive of the retention of protected trees
 - The incorporation of public parking provision that would also serve surrounding properties

- 5.2 The primary objective is the demolition of the existing clinic building, and its replacement with development that is more sensitive to this particular location. The clinic building is in a very prominent location and it occupies the key area for development on the site. If the scheme has high quality design features and follows aspirations with respect to parking provision, riverside walkway and public open space enhancement, then this would be seen as adequate “planning gain”.

6.0 Uses for the Site

- 6.1 It is recognised that any proposals for the site regarding uses will be market driven and it is not the intention of this Brief to be too prescriptive. As stated in Section 4.2 much of the area covered by the Brief is designated as a commercial area. The area where the Clinic building is sited could be appropriate for single use or mixed-use development, utilising the split levels. Preferred uses for the site, which are acceptable in principle, are:

- Offices or research and development (Use Class B1a & B1b)
- Hotel (Use Class C1)
- Residential (Use Class C3)
- Non-residential institutions (Use Class D1)
- Assembly and leisure (Use Class D2)

Financial and professional services (Use Class A2) and residential institutions (Use Class C2) could also be acceptable in principle.

- 6.2 Policy S4 in the UDP states that outside the primary shopping areas, the Council will permit a diversity of uses that contribute to the overall appeal of the town centre. Residential uses can bring new life to a town centre and contribute to its overall appeal. National planning policy guidance in the form of PPG3

“Housing” and PPG6 “Town Centres and Retail Developments” also encourages residential development in town centres, especially as part of mixed use schemes. Therefore, residential development could be particularly appropriate as part of a mixed-use scheme.

6.3 Within the town centre, retailing (Use Class A1) is an acceptable use in principle. However, there are a number of vacant retail properties within Salybridge town centre, so the Council is of the opinion that further significant retail provision on this site is undesirable. Retailing would only be supported as an ancillary minor element of a scheme.

6.4 The Council is also strongly of the opinion that public house/bar/nightclub (A3) type development at this site would add to an undue concentration of such uses within Salybridge town centre north of the river, and would also be likely to lead to an unacceptable loss of amenity to nearby properties. Therefore, proposals for this type of development will be resisted. However, sensitive development of the site to include a restaurant, as an ancillary element of a scheme, incorporated in a hotel for instance, could be acceptable.

7.0 Design Principles

7.1 It is not intended to be overly prescriptive about the design of new buildings on the site, because much will depend upon their intended uses, and a variety of different design solutions may be appropriate. However, all proposals should contribute positively to the character of the conservation area and maximise the potential of the riverside frontage. Proposals should not adversely affect the setting of the nearby listed buildings. Some of the key design principles that the Council wishes to apply to development of this site are indicated below.

7.2 New buildings should be restricted to the western end of the site, where the existing clinic building is located. The existing clinic building is set back from Stamford Street, which contrasts starkly with the neighbouring Stamford Street properties, which retain a strong frontage with the street. New built development should continue the line of these properties and ensure a strong frontage with Stamford Street, to provide a visual link between old and new.

7.3 The existing clinic building is in a very prominent location at the junction of Stamford Street and Market Street. Stamford Street sweeps down to the clinic site from the northwest, and the clinic is highly prominent from Market Street, which slopes down from the site to the west. This is a gateway site for the town and proposed buildings should create a strong visual presence, particularly at the corner of Stamford Street and Market Street, whilst framing views over the town to the Pennines in the distance. At street level on Stamford Street, two storey development is likely to be most appropriate, reflecting the scale of the neighbouring buildings along the street, but possibly augmented by a more vertical feature at the Stamford Street/Market Street Corner. Development of a greater height is likely to obstruct views and dominate the surrounding buildings on the southern part of the street.

7.4 New buildings should also reflect the change in levels on the site. Whilst the surrounding properties fronting Stamford Street tend to be two storey at street level, Old Street is dominated by three storey properties, which utilise the change in levels. Therefore, a massed three storey development is appropriate at the level of the riverside walkway, to utilise the steeply sloping site. Development must be set well back from the River Tame, to provide adequate secure space for the riverside walkway.

7.5 This part of Salybridge town centre is dominated by local sandstone built properties. Roofing materials are typically

blue/grey Welsh slate or stone flags. Materials for new built development should be of high quality and take reference from the vernacular of this part of the town centre. However, proposals, which utilise materials which are more contemporary in character, but which show regard for their context, might also be acceptable.

- 7.6 Where new built development faces roads, or the riverside walkway, blank walls should be avoided. A blank gable to Market Street might be unavoidable, so materials detailing and/or effective landscaping might be appropriate, to add interest to this elevation. Windows in the new development should preferably have greater height than width, to reflect the dominant form of fenestration in neighbouring properties. Another feature of neighbouring properties are prominent chimneys and these are features that could be incorporated in new buildings, if appropriate.

8.0 Access and Parking

- 8.1 Vehicular access to the site should be from Old Street. The central area of the development site, to the south east of the clinic building is currently home to two car parks, which are accessed off Old Street. This area of the site should be utilised to provide continued parking, vehicle turning and servicing provision for the new development and surrounding properties. Public parking provision is required because surrounding commercial properties have become accustomed to this provision, which also provides a facility for the town centre in general. Access will be from Old Street. The car park can be extended beyond its present boundaries by careful incursion into the tree'd area, where protected trees are not threatened, but a significant area of enhanced public open space must remain. The car park boundary should be clearly delineated and the car park surfaced to a high standard.

- 8.2 The setts and Yorkstone paving of Old Street are important heritage features, which must be retained. Repair and replacement will be necessary, where appropriate.

- 8.3 The public steps on the west side of the clinic should be retained and enhanced, but noting that they will need temporary closure during construction. However, those to the east are not adopted and could be seen as superfluous, dependent upon the attitude of local businesses in Old Street and Stamford Street. If they are retained this corridor needs to be made more "user friendly" and safe.

9.0 The Riverside Walkway and Public Open Space

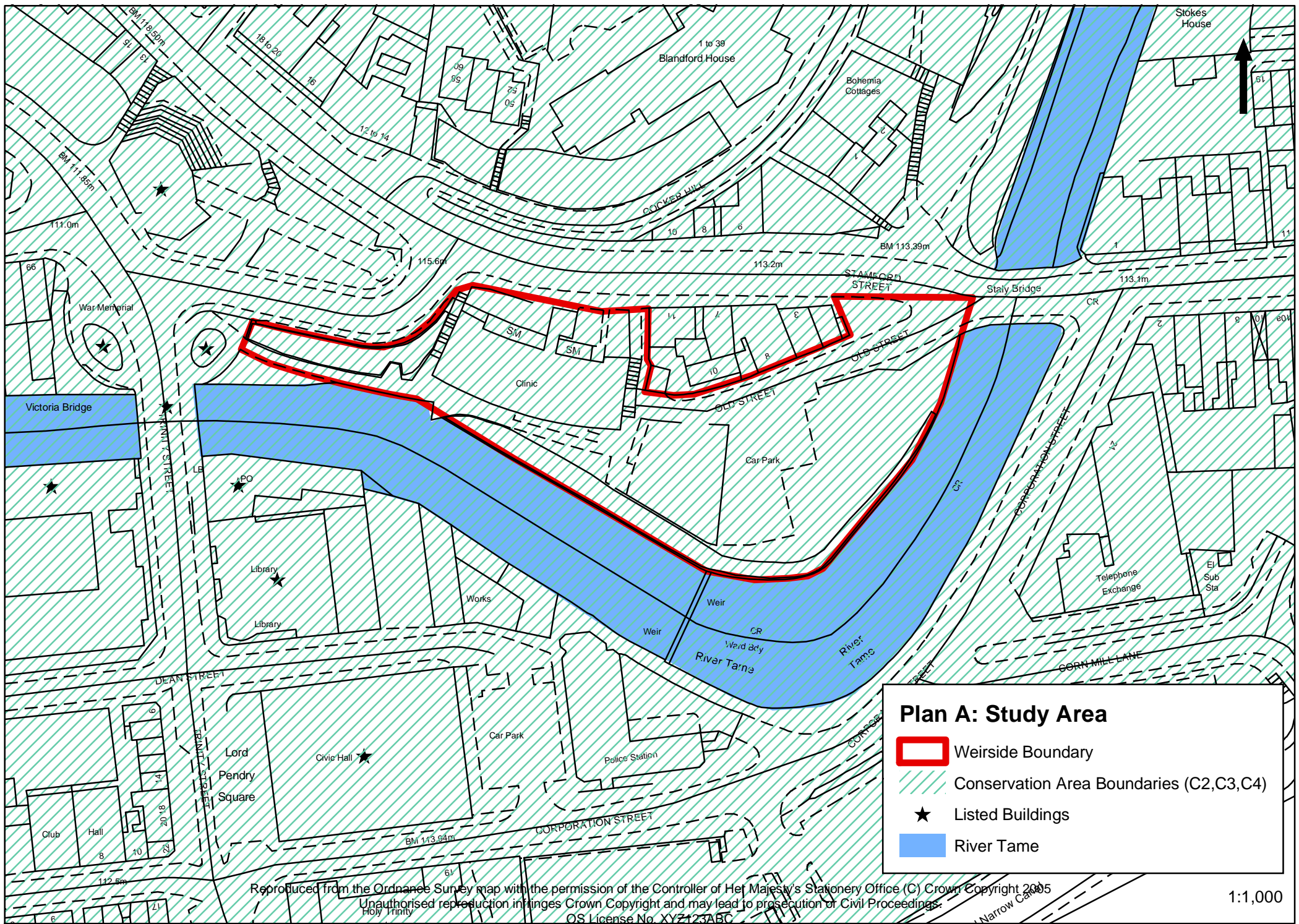
- 9.1 This site provides one of the very few green spaces within the town centre and is also home to a riverside walkway that is well used by the public. Developers of the site will be expected to enhance the riverside walkway as part of any development scheme. The walkway should link the War Memorial on Trinity Street with the original "Staly Bridge". It should follow the line of the river through the public open space, before joining up with the footpath on the south side of the Bridge and a crossing point to the north side, from where the walkway continues on up to the footbridge to Knowl Street. The walk should form a coherent path, using paving materials that are appropriate to the new development and riverside setting, for its full length. This may also include appropriate safety balustrades on elevated sections. As a key pedestrian route to and from the town centre, attractive and effective lighting is considered appropriate.

- 9.2 The riverside public open space is a vital oasis of greenery within the town centre and should be enhanced for more proactive public use. The protected trees should be incorporated as part of the enhancement scheme.

10.0 The Flood Plain

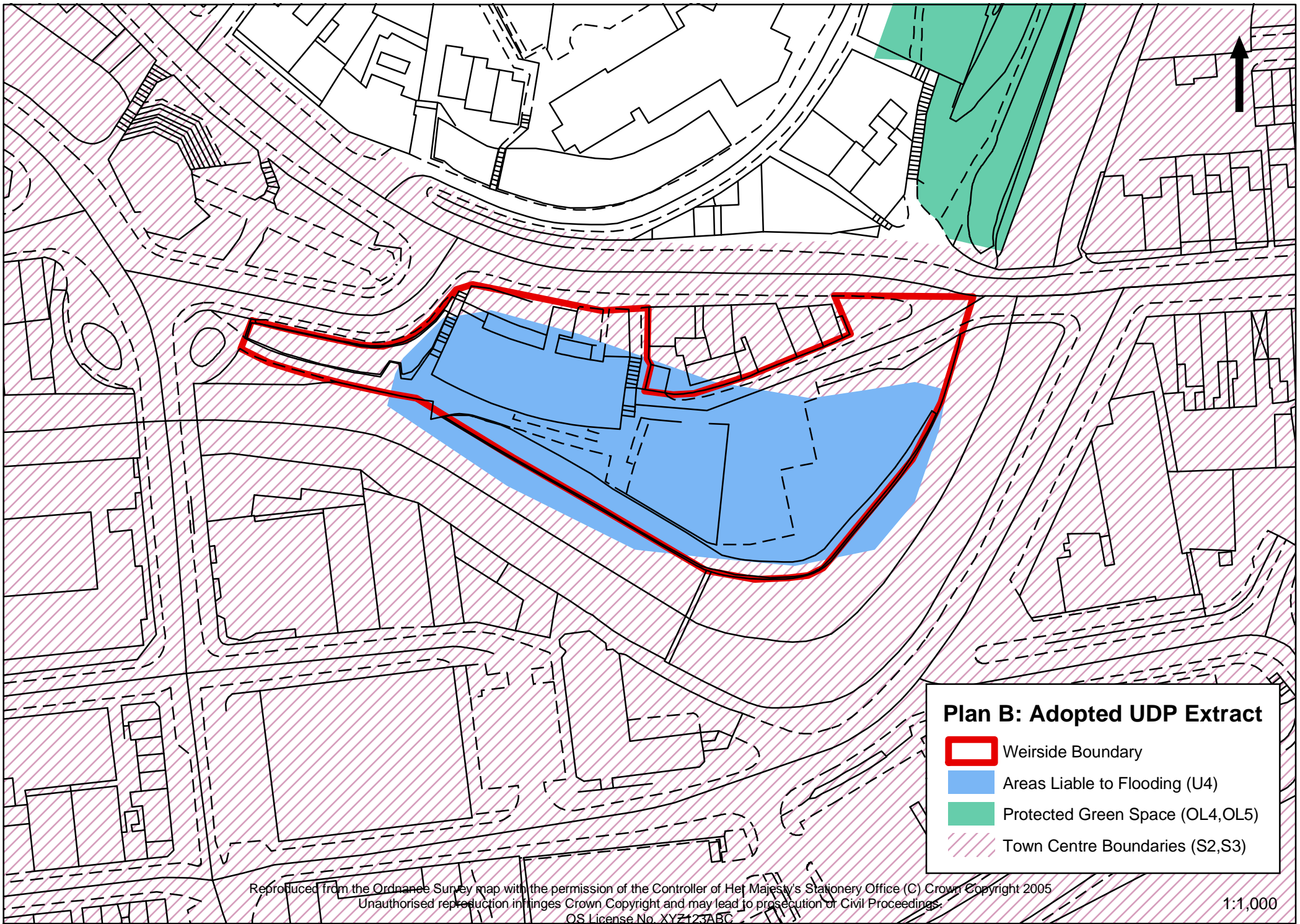
- 10.1 Environment Agency Indicative Floodplain Maps indicate that part of the site is within a floodplain (Plan B). Potential developers of the site should seek advice and assistance from the Environment Agency before working up detailed proposals for development. In particular, no trees or shrubs may be planted, nor fences, buildings, pipelines or any other structure erected within 8 metres of the top of any bank/retaining wall of the River Tame, without the prior consent of the Agency. Developers should be aware of riparian responsibilities and should show how they will be met in the future, but the walkway and public open space will be adopted if up to standard.

- 10.2 United Utilities records indicate the existence of public sewers within the development site. Developers of the site should seek advice and assistance from United Utilities before working up detailed proposals.







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Plan B: Adopted UDP Extract

-  Weirside Boundary
-  Areas Liable to Flooding (U4)
-  Protected Green Space (OL4, OL5)
-  Town Centre Boundaries (S2, S3)

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