



Bird Place Henley

shack.

Design and Access Statement

Bird Place, Henley Bridge,
Henley-on-Thames

Design and Access Statement

Project: Householder and Listed Building Planning Application
Replacement Boat House
Bird Place, Henley Bridge, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2LN
Listed Building Reference: 1319073 (Grade II, listed 23-Dec-1983)

Prepared by: The Shack Group (Architecture) with Smith Jenkins (Planning & Heritage), Sylva Consultancy (Arboriculture), Create Consulting Engineers (Flood Risk & Drainage),

On behalf of: Mr and Mrs Fawsitt



Bird Place rear garden view with River Thames frontage to the left hand side

Application Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for the erection of a single-storey boathouse and associated river works at Bird Place, Henley-on-Thames.

The proposal comprises:

- A boathouse positioned at the river edge
- Formation of a wet dock
- Associated bank protection and reinstatement works

The proposal is for a purpose-built riverside structure, designed to accommodate boat storage and river access in a manner consistent with the established use of the site. The siting and form respond to the established pattern of development along this stretch of the River Thames and the setting of the listed building.

The proposed river works and wet dock benefit from an Environment Agency licence, confirming its technical acceptability. The application is supported by the relevant technical reports, including flood risk and arboricultural information.

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1.0 Introduction

Bird Place is a Grade II listed Georgian riverside villa and gardens located immediately adjacent to Henley Bridge within the Remenham (Henley Bridge) Conservation Area. It forms a landmark element of the historic approach to Henley-on-Thames, its riverside setting being central to both its architectural and historic significance.

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the erection of a boathouse a modest, purpose-built riverside structure and associated works, designed to support private boating use of the River Thames.

2.0 Planning Context and Pre-Application Engagement

The proposal has been informed by pre-application engagement with the Local Planning Authority, where the principle of a well-designed riverside structure was accepted, subject to appropriate consideration of heritage context and design quality.

The application proposal has been developed to respond to this guidance, with particular emphasis on:

- Appropriate siting and scale
- A lightweight and recessive architectural approach
- Alignment with the established character of the river frontage

The proposal represents a focused and proportionate response to its planning context.



View north-east across the River Thames from Thameside (Henley) towards Henley Bridge and Bird Place

3.0 Site and Heritage Context

Bird Place is located within the Remenham Bridge Conservation Area and within the wider setting of a number of designated heritage assets, including Henley Bridge (Grade I) and the Church of St Mary (Grade II*).

The site occupies a prominent position along the River Thames and forms part of a historically active river frontage. Historic mapping confirms that a boathouse and wet dock once occupied this frontage until the mid-20th century, remnants of which survive in the form of low brick retaining structures and infilled wet dock.

This stretch of the river is characterised by a varied pattern of development, including boathouses, landing structures and managed river edges. These elements form part of the established character of the Thames corridor and contribute to the setting of heritage assets.



View east across the River Thames from Thameside (Henley) towards Bird Place and neighbouring properties



Bird Place River Frontage - Photos of existing conservatory and infilled wet dock

3.1 Riverside built-form and immediate context

The riverside context of Bird Place is defined by several adjacent influential structures and uses which inform the setting and character of the site:

- **Henley Bridge:** Around 80m north of Bird Place, Henley Bridge is a Grade I listed structure (List Entry Number 1117419), constructed in 1786 and designed by architect William Hayward. The bridge forms a key physical and visual focus for the site, establishing the approach to Henley-on-Thames and framing views up and downstream. Given its significance, any development on this river frontage must respect the setting of the bridge and ensure that new works remain subordinate in scale, mass and visual impact.



Henley Bridge, south side

- **Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters:** Adjacent to the Henley Bridge and upstream from Bird Place is the headquarters of the Henley Royal Regatta, designed by the Terry Farrell Partnership (1984-86) and Grade II listed. This post-modern riverside building adopts many boathouse references (projecting façade, glazing, river-facing balcony) and demonstrates high-quality contemporary riverside architecture within the setting.

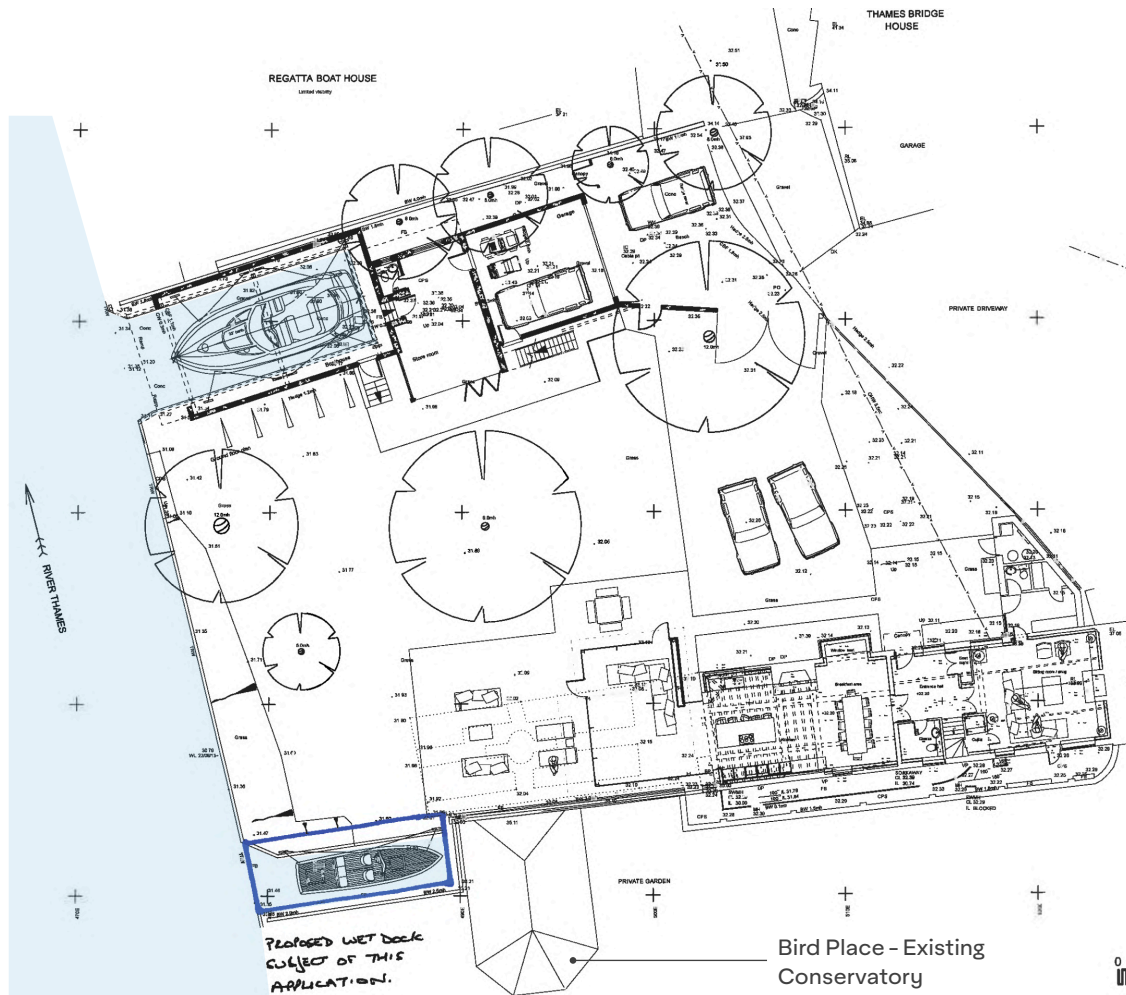


Henley Royal Regatta HQ viewed from Henley Bridge



The Boathouse Henley, Stonebridge (Image obtained from www.theboathousehenley.co.uk)

- Stonebridge (Grade II listed, known as Bird Place Cottage) & The Boathouse Henley: Immediately adjoining Bird Place's river frontage to the north, Stonebridge is a significant neighbouring residence which includes a wet-dock on its boundary with Bird Place as well as replacement boat house with wet dock and accommodation over. There are relatively recent planning consents for these developments from 2015-17 ref: 150795 and 172306. The presence of the wet-dock and boathouse reinforces the evidence of historic riverside boathouse uses in this area and strengthens the rationale for reinstating a similar feature at Bird Place.



Stonebridge - Approved Site Plan Drawing Application 172306 (Obtained from Wokingham Borough Council Planning Portal) - Prepared by Purple Architects

- Thameside (west bank of the river): Across the river, the Thameside frontage on the Henley bank forms the immediate visual backdrop to Bird Place and contributes significantly to its setting. This stretch of the Thames is characterised by a dense pattern of traditional boathouses, rowing club facilities, and period townhouses, many with private moorings and slipways, reflecting Henley's long association with boating and the Royal Regatta.



View of Thameside, opposite Bird Place river frontage



View of Waters Edge, - Wharf Lane boat houses, north of Henley Bridge

Prominent among these is the Henley Rowing Club, with its characteristic white timber and glass clubhouse and boat bays opening directly onto the river. Further downstream, private boathouses of late-Victorian and early-20th-century character form a continuous built edge along the water, interspersed with mature trees and moorings. These structures, together with the active river uses of the Regatta reach, establish a dynamic and picturesque riverside character which directly informs views from and towards Bird Place.

The proposed boathouse and wet dock will be experienced within a richly layered historic and functional riverscape, balanced between the heritage architecture of Remenham's north bank and the active rowing and boating culture of the Henley south bank.



View south along River Thames from Thameside with 'The Boathouse Henley' in view



View north along River Thames with Bird Place existing conservatory and Henley Bridge in view



View north along River Thames with Henley Bridge and St.Mary's Church tower in view

3.2 Boathouse Character and Historic Typologies

The stretch of the River Thames encompassing Bird Place forms one of the most architecturally distinctive reaches of the river, long associated with private villas, rowing clubs and boathouses serving leisure, sport and regatta use. The local character of riverside structures display a clear lineage from 19th-century domestic boathouse design through to modern reinterpretations, and provides the architectural framework for the proposed new structure at Bird Place.

Historic development

Archival mapping and photographic records from the late-19th and early-20th centuries show numerous boathouses lining both banks of the Thames in and around Henley Bridge. These were typically ancillary to substantial riverside villas, designed for the storage and launching of private craft. Many displayed picturesque, domestic architectural forms which complemented the parent house in materials and detailing, often incorporating small upper rooms or balconies for river viewing.

Form and roof typology

The prevailing form is that of a gable-fronted, pitched-roof structure oriented at right angles to the river. Roofs are generally steeply pitched with decorative bargeboards or half-timbered gable fronts, frequently echoing the vernacular revival or Arts-and-Crafts styles popular from the 1880s onwards. The use of gabled fronts serves both a functional and visual role, allowing clear span openings over the wet dock and contributing to the rhythmic roofline that defines the Henley riverfront.

Wet-dock configurations

Historic examples include both single-width and double-width wet docks, responding to the needs of individual owners or club uses. The single-width dock remains characteristic of smaller domestic boathouses, while the double-width format, often divided by a central pier or timber beam, was common to larger private estates or rowing clubs where multiple craft were stored. In several cases, such as the neighbouring property Stonebridge and others along Thameside, wet docks are integrated beneath upper accommodation, with arched or wide boarded doors opening directly to the water.

Architectural detailing and materials

Typical construction employed brick or stone lower plinths with timber superstructures, sometimes incorporating painted weatherboarding or half-timber framing. Roof coverings are commonly natural slate or clay tile, with exposed rafters and occasional dormers. Many boathouses include balconied upper decks, allowing for visual connection with the river, an element retained and reinterpreted in more recent examples such as the Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters and The Boathouse Henley.

Contemporary interpretation

The Grade II listed Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters by the Terry Farrell Partnership exemplifies how a modern design can reinterpret the traditional boathouse form while remaining true to its riverside setting. In this spirit, the applicants aim to create a contemporary boathouse that is “of its time”, namely, a lightweight, transparent structure that complements rather than imitates its historic neighbours, enriching the layered architectural character of the Henley riverfront.

4.0 Development Proposal

The scope of the development proposal comprises of:

- Removal of the late-20th-century conservatory.
- Construction of a lightweight boathouse reinstating the historic riverside structure.
- Attached boat store in complementary form and materials.
- Reinstatement of the original wet dock and associated riverbank works.
- Selective tree removals (G8) as identified by Sylva Consultancy.

The main focus for the proposal is the replacement boathouse and store due its prominence on the river edge. These works restore lost historic features, enhance the site's setting, and ensure the property's continued conservation through sensitive adaptation.



Proposed Site Layout

4.1 Design Concept and Evolution

The design process for the proposed boathouse began with a detailed review of historic mapping, site constraints, and operational requirements for mooring and storing two small craft. Through pre-app consultation, Planning Officers were supportive in principle of reinstating this element as a means of enhancing the property's historic relationship with the river. The Conservation Officer advised that new riverside structures should appear lightweight, transparent, and recessive, avoiding solid massing on the river edge. The starting point was meeting the applicant's brief to create a double-width wet dock measuring 5m by 10m, allowing for side-by-side berthing within the reinstated historic dock footprint.

Early concept studies explored two principal roof configurations:

- single-gable pitched roof with high ridge line and visually dominant.
- twin-gable pitched roof form stepping down the built form and echoing the rhythm of traditional riverside boathouses.



Single Gable Concept Design



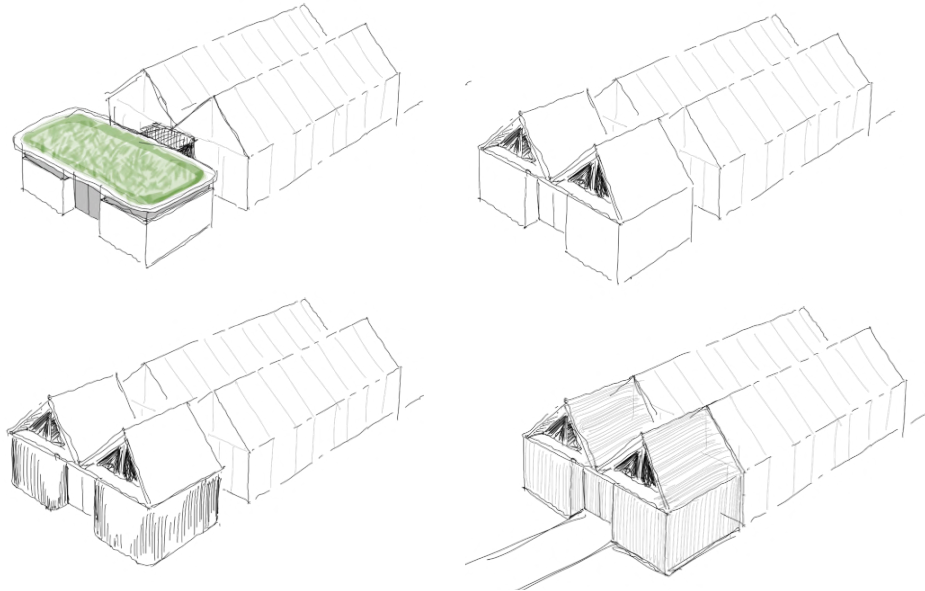
Double Gable Concept Design

Through iterative design development and three-dimensional model testing, the double gable solution was selected as the preferred approach. This arrangement accommodates the required 5 metre-wide wet dock beneath a single retractable glazed door, while visually breaking down the mass of the building and providing a more articulated roofline in keeping with the varied forms of neighbouring riverside structures.

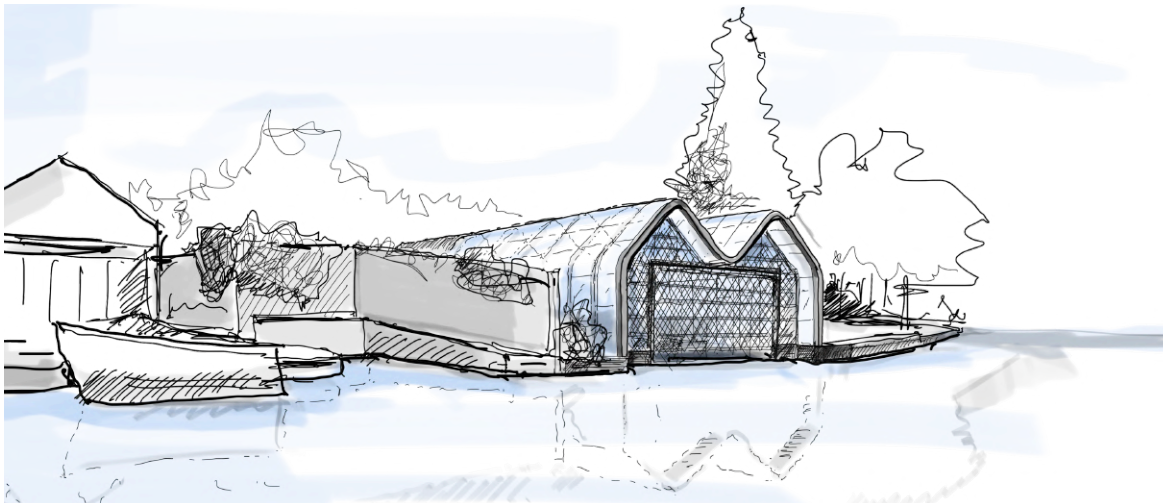
The resulting concept achieves a balance between functional efficiency and contextual sensitivity, its lightweight, contemporary construction referencing the open, timber-framed character of historic boathouses while remaining distinctly modern. The glazing strategy and slender framing ensure transparency and a sense of visual continuity with the surrounding river landscape.

4.2 Concept Design Development

The next stage of the concept phase focused on the relationship between the main boathouse and secondary storage element. Options were tested for how each part of the proposed design could share a coherent design language while responding differently to their settings.



Design exploration of different form and massing of store element (viewed from rear, non-river frontage)



Initial concept sketch for double gable front glazed boathouse with recessed doors

Initial concepts explored a flat roof form for the boat store, to create a visual separation between the store and the covered wet dock boathouse.

Following further refinement and site testing, it was concluded that a unified, double-gable roof form offered a more elegant and contextually appropriate solution. The boathouse and store were combined into a single, continuous extrusion, directly connected under a simple pitched roof profile. This approach simplifies the overall massing, reinforces the legibility of the structure as a single riverside element, and provides a coherent dialogue with the traditional boathouse typology.

5.0 Design Principles

The boathouse occupies the footprint of the historic structure recorded on late 19th-century mapping. It adopts a slim steel frame with fully glazed elevations and roof, creating a transparent “riverside pavilion” that maintains visual permeability across the site. The attached store is designed as a smaller, metal-clad element, providing visual grounding, practical storage for boat paraphernalia and workshop space. The combination of solid and transparent components reflects the established design relationship between the proposed rear extension and the historic main house. The result is a refined, pavilion-like composition that reads as part of the ongoing architectural narrative at Bird Place.

The design of the proposed boathouse is guided by the following principles:

Subservience

The structure is modest in scale and clearly secondary to the main dwelling and its immediate setting.

Functional Clarity

The building is designed as a working boathouse, with its form, layout and detailing driven by the operational requirements of boat storage, maintenance and river use.

Simple Form

The simple massing and roof form limit visual prominence within the wider riverside context when viewed from both the river and the site.

Contextual Response

The proposal draws from the established language of riverside structures along this stretch of the Thames.



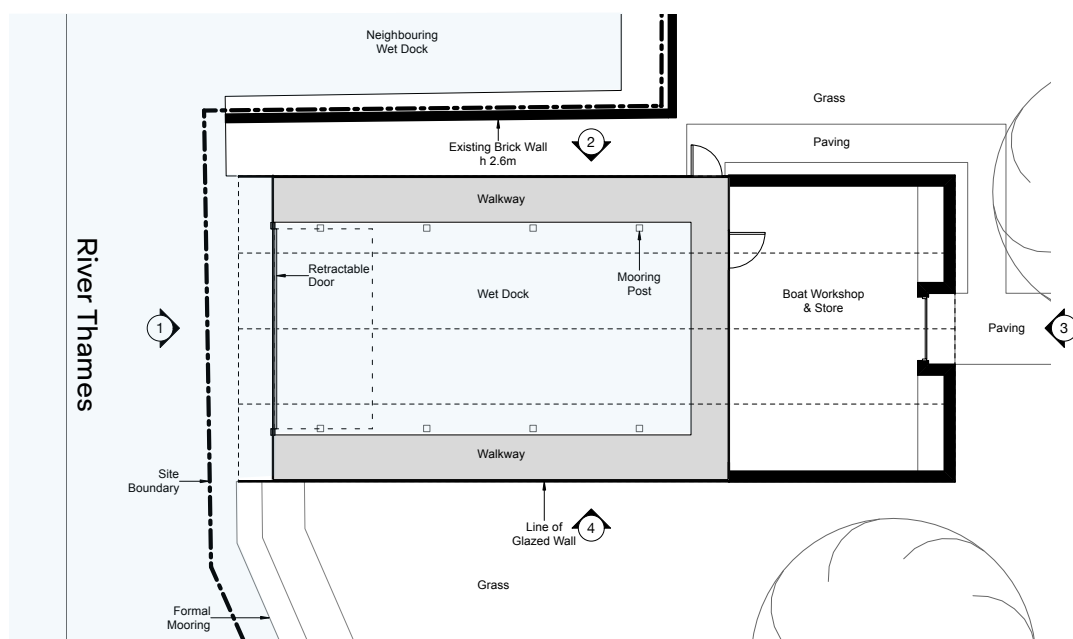
Visualisation of proposed boathouse in context illustrating the stepping down in built form

5.1 Design, Siting and Layout

The proposed boathouse is positioned at the river edge in a location that reflects the practical requirements of river access and mooring. The layout is straightforward and efficient, with the form and orientation driven by:

- The alignment of the riverbank
- Practical access to the water
- Minimising visual impact on the wider site

The scale of the building is deliberately limited, ensuring that it remains a secondary element within the site. The architectural approach is intentionally simple and utilitarian, reflecting the working character of traditional riverside structures rather than seeking to introduce a dominant or expressive form. The siting aligns with the previously established river frontage interventions and avoids additional encroachment beyond that already assessed.



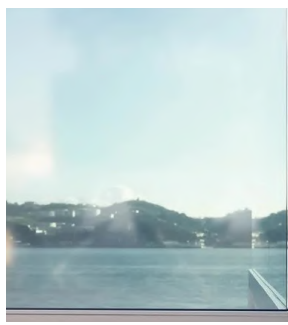
Proposed Boat House and Store Floor Plan

5.2 Materials

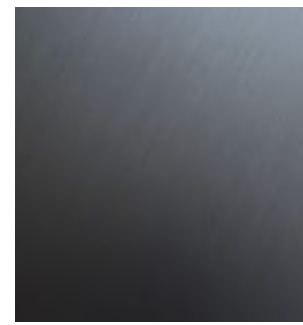
All materials for the boat house/ store are proposed as durable, sustainable, and compatible with the historic and flood plain setting, ensuring longevity and minimal maintenance.



Lightweight Steel Frame



High performances glass



Dark grey metal cladding

5.3 Riverbank and Wet Dock Reinstatement

The proposals reinstate the historic wet dock and river frontage. Review of previous aerial maps show the frontage was used for boat mooring which is to be reinstated. Engineering design by Create Consulting Engineers incorporates modern flood-resilient techniques, ensuring no net loss of floodplain storage and improving riverbank stability. Soft engineering and ecological planting will enhance biodiversity and replace degraded river-edge vegetation.



Aerial Photo 2003 - Boats moored to Bird Place river frontage



Aerial Photo 2018 - Boats moored to Bird Place river frontage

The proposal therefore represents the reinstatement and continuation of an established riverside typology, rather than the introduction of a new or incongruous form, and is entirely consistent with the character of this stretch of the Thames.

6.0 Heritage Impact

The site forms part of the setting of a Grade II listed building and lies within a sensitive riverside context. The proposal has been developed with a clear and proportionate understanding of the significance of Bird Place and its setting.

The proposal replaces/regularises a working river edge condition rather than introducing a new typology. The proposal does not affect the principal elevations or fabric of the listed building and is physically and visually separate from it.

The boathouse is located within the riverside zone of the site, an area historically associated with ancillary structures and river-based activity. The character of the Thames frontage in this location is defined by a varied and evolving pattern of boathouses and river structures. The proposal aligns with this established typology in both form and function.

The scale, form and siting are consistent with established patterns of boathouse development along this stretch of the Thames..

7.0 Flood Risk, Drainage and River Works

The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy which demonstrate that the proposal is appropriate in its riverside location.

The proposals have been developed in accordance with site-specific flood risk assessment and Environment Agency guidance. The scale and nature of the development fall within accepted thresholds for minor development within the floodplain, and the design ensures that there is no unacceptable loss of flood storage or increase in flood risk elsewhere.

The Environment Agency licence further confirms the acceptability of the proposed river works in hydraulic and operational terms..

8.0 Environment Agency Licence

The proposed river works are supported by a formal licence issued by the Environment Agency under the Thames Conservancy Act 1932 (Licence No. 256034, Frontage No. 3200013). Refer to Appendix 1.

The licence confirms the acceptability in principle of:

- **Bank protection works along the site frontage**
- **The formation of a wet dock**
- **Controlled intervention within the river channel**

The proposals have been designed in full accordance with the parameters of this licence, including limitations on encroachment and requirements for ongoing maintenance and management.

9.0 Arboriculture

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken to inform the design.

The proposal has been developed to minimise impact on existing trees and the wider landscape. Tree removal is limited to those directly affected by the siting of the boathouse, with the majority of trees and vegetation retained. The proposal maintains

the contribution of the landscape to the character of the site and the wider conservation area.

10.0 Access and Use

Existing vehicular and pedestrian access from White Hill remains unchanged. The boathouse is accessed via existing garden paths and provides private, non-commercial river access for small craft. All proposed paths and thresholds are designed for safe and convenient use without alteration to existing site levels.

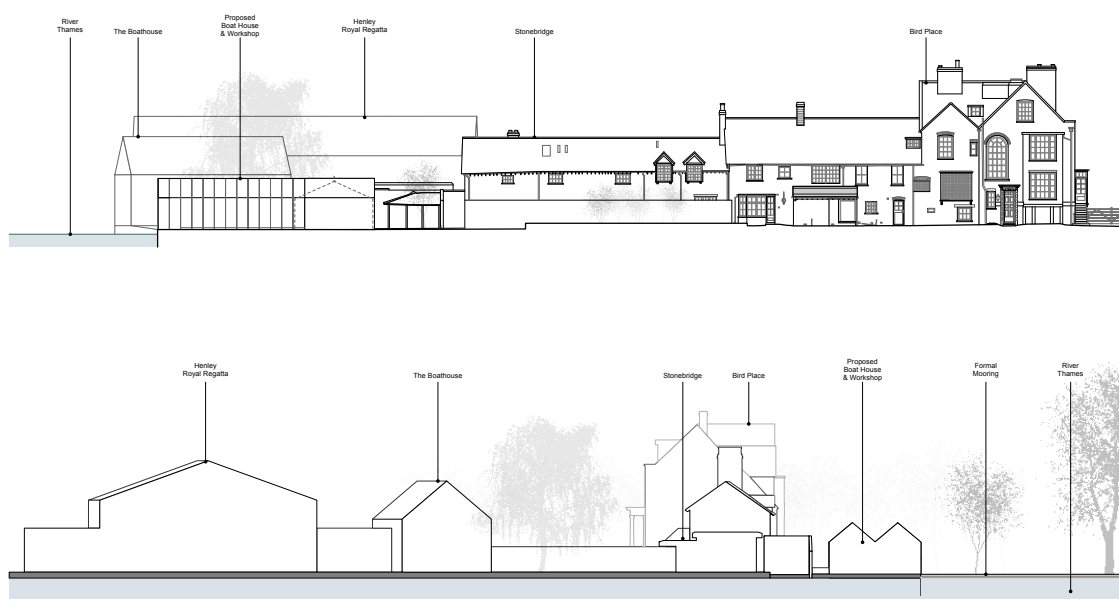
11.0 Conclusion

The proposal represents a carefully considered and proportionate form of development. The proposal has been developed having regard to the Council's recent determination of the main house application and the associated heritage commentary. In particular, the scale, articulation and material approach have been carefully moderated to ensure the boathouse remains clearly subservient and does not compete with the significance of the listed building.

It provides a functional riverside structure that:

- Responds appropriately to its context
- Removes intrusive modern structures
- Reinstates lost historic river features
- Respects the significance of the heritage asset
- Aligns with the established character of the River Thames frontage
- Delivers biodiversity and flood resilience enhancements.

The scale, siting and design of the boathouse ensure that any impact is limited and acceptable. It is demonstrated that the proposed design and proposals have consideration to the listed building, its setting, and delivers clear heritage, environmental, and public benefits, fully consistent with national and local planning policy.



Proposed site sections/ elevations illustrating the boathouse proposal in context

Appendix 1

Thames Conservancy Act 1932

Licence No: 256034

Frontage No: 3200013

Environment Agency

Thames Conservancy Act 1932, Part III (b) Licence to place and/or retain works affecting the River Thames

To: Mr Adam Fawsitt (hereinafter called 'the licensee') of
Bird Place
Henley on Thames
Wargrave
RG9 2LN

The **Environment Agency** ('the Agency') pursuant to the above-mentioned statutes **hereby grants a licence** for the placing and/or retention of the works described in the First Schedule hereto and affecting the bed and/or bank of the River Thames in front of the licensee's property **subject** to the terms conditions and restrictions set out in the Second Schedule hereto.

ISwadling

Dawn Swadling
Waterways Business Team Leader
Environment Agency

Dated this 16th day of January 2025

Kings Meadow House
Kings Meadow Road
Reading
RG1 8DQ

Important Notice

Your attention is drawn to the following endorsement:-

NOTICE:- Under Section 60 of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932 (provided that power to do so was expressly reserved by or that notice of the following provisions of this section was endorsed on the licence authorising the erection driving or formation of any pier landing place piles dwarf wharfing way or other convenience) the Environment Agency as successor to the Conservators of the River Thames may from time to time require the form and construction of such pier or landing place and the position of such piles and the mode of forming such dwarf wharfing way or other convenience to be altered by and at the expense of the owner of or person licensed to erect drive or form the same and also require such pier landing place piles dwarf wharfing way or other convenience to be removed and taken away by and at the expense of the owner of or person licensed to erect drive or form the same and in the case any such pier landing place dwarf wharfing way or other convenience shall not be altered or removed within seven days after notice in writing from the Environment Agency to alter or remove the same shall have been given to the owner of or person licensed to erect drive or form the same of if such owner or person or his address is unknown to the Environment Agency shall have been left upon or affixed to such pier or landing place or any part thereof the Environment Agency may alter or remove such pier landing place piles dwarf wharfing way or other convenience in the same manner as under the authority of the Thames Conservancy Act 1932 the Environment Agency as successor to the Conservators of the River Thames may abate or remove any other nuisance.

First Schedule

No.	Description	Location	Grid reference	Plan number	Current annual charge
1	Bank protection works Length 38.4 metres (without resulting encroachment into river exceeding 250mm at any point)	Bird Place Henley on Thames RG9 2LN	SU 76412 82556	3200013 (in two parts A and B)	NIL
2	Wet Dock				NIL
				Total	NIL

Second Schedule

Part 1 – General conditions relating to this licence

1. The licensee shall give to the Agency not less than seven days' previous notice in writing before commencing the execution repair or renewal of the works or any of them.
2. The licensee shall to the satisfaction of the Agency execute maintain and repair the works in conformity with the plan referred to in the First Schedule hereto and deposited with the Agency.
3. The licensee shall alter or remove the works (or any of them) in compliance with any notice for that purpose given by the Agency to the licensee as provided under Section 60 Thames Conservancy Act 1932.
4. In default of the licensee altering or removing the said works or any of them as the case may be as hereinbefore provided the Agency shall be at liberty by their officers servants workmen contractors or others to do the work without being answerable to the licensee for any damage caused thereby to any property belonging to the licensee (other than in case of negligence by the Agency) and to recover the cost and expenses thereof from the licensee.
5. The licensee shall accept responsibility with regard to the works as well during the execution thereof as afterwards and for all accidents (whether fatal or otherwise) which may at any time be sustained by any person or persons whomsoever using the same and for all damage to property whatsoever and to indemnify the Agency against all actions proceedings claims and demands in respect thereof. And also not at any time to make or prefer any claim against the Agency (other than in the case of negligence by the Agency) in respect of any damage which may happen or be occasioned to the works by any operation of the Agency for the improvement or

maintenance of the navigation of the said River Thames or otherwise in exercise of the statutory or other powers for the time being exercisable by them.

6. The licensee shall give notice in writing to the Agency in the event of the licensee ceasing to own or occupy the said land bordering the River Thames at the site of the works.
7. The licensee shall comply with any notice issued by the Agency under the provisions of Section 60 Thames Conservancy Act 1932 failing which the Agency may exercise its powers to do the work in default of the licence and recover the costs and expenses thereof from the licensee for the alteration or removal of the works.
8. The Agency may at any time revoke this licence by giving not less than seven days' notice to the licensee in writing expiring on any date given to the licensee.
9. The provisions of Section 220 of the Water Resources Act 1991 shall be deemed to apply to service of any notice given by the Agency to the licensee.
10. The licensee may apply to the Agency for a certificate of revocation of this licence such certificate to be issued by the Agency after verification by its officers that the licensed works are fully removed and on and from the date of issue of such certificate certifying that the works have been entirely removed and the site thereof restored to its former condition the liability of the licensee to pay ongoing dues in respect of the works listed in the certificate shall cease.
11. The conditions herein contained and on the part of the licensee to be observed shall (where the licensee is more than one) be binding on the licensee both jointly and severally.
12. The licence is personal to the licensee and incapable of assignment.

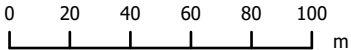
**Part 2 – Conditions particular to this licence in relation to the type of works
being licensed and/or to the location of the works**

13. Vessels lying at the works numbered 1 of the first schedule shall be safely secured parallel to the bankline and currently registered with the Agency to be kept or used on the Thames and shall not be used for residential purposes without the consent in writing of the Agency.
14. The licensee shall obtain the consent of the owner of the bed and soil of the river together with any planning or other necessary statutory consent, which may be required in respect of the works.
15. The works shall be removed by the licensee in the event of any objection being raised by the owner of the bed and soil of the river.
16. The licensee will at his own expense remove any accumulation of debris in the river about the works.

17. No charge shall be made by the licensee in respect of permission to moor any vessel to or alongside the works and such permission shall be extended only to bona fide visitors on an occasional basis.
18. The total projection into the river of any moorings at the works numbered 1 in the first schedule shall not exceed 4 metres from the bankline.
19. Accommodations in the river off domestic river frontages and established leisure plots will be maintained free of any garden ornament, furniture, shelter, trellis, fencing, screening or planting in or over any part of the river channel.
20. No advertisement or advertising matter of any kind shall be placed on the works.

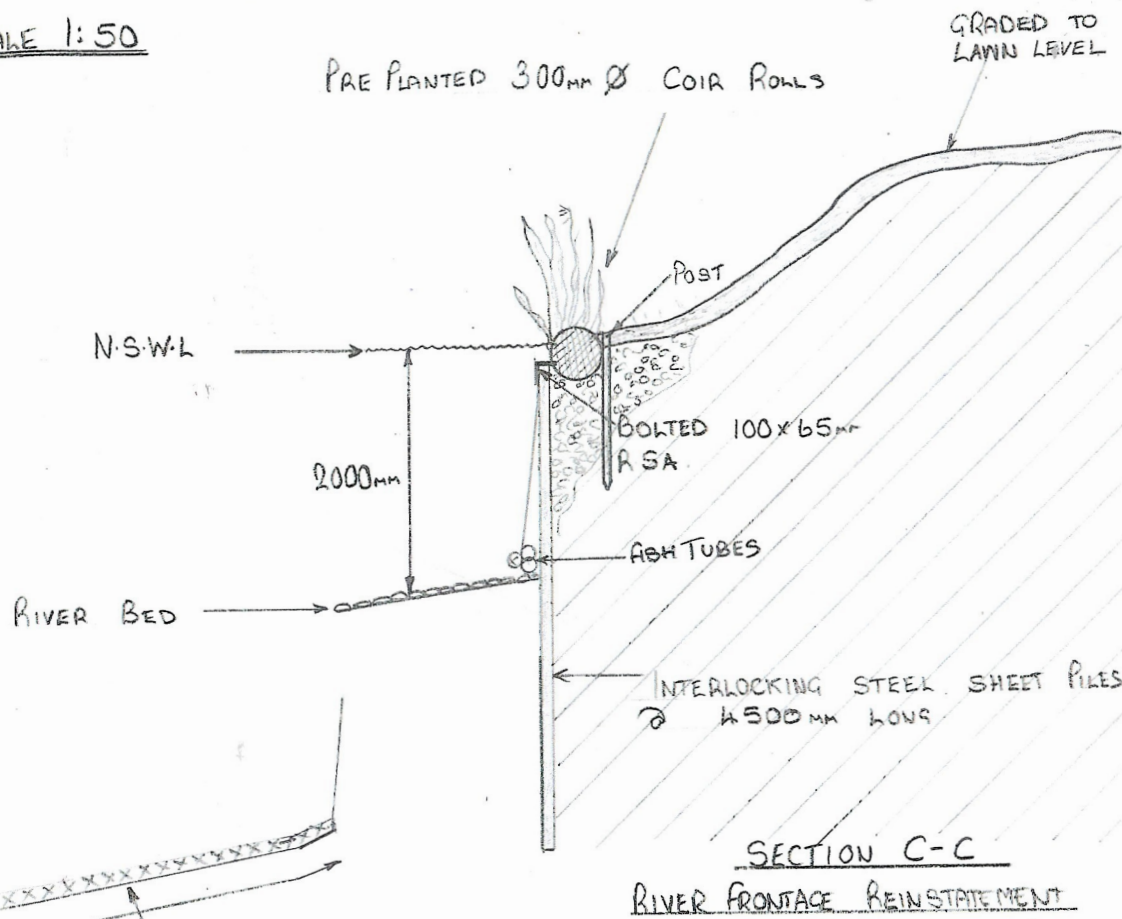
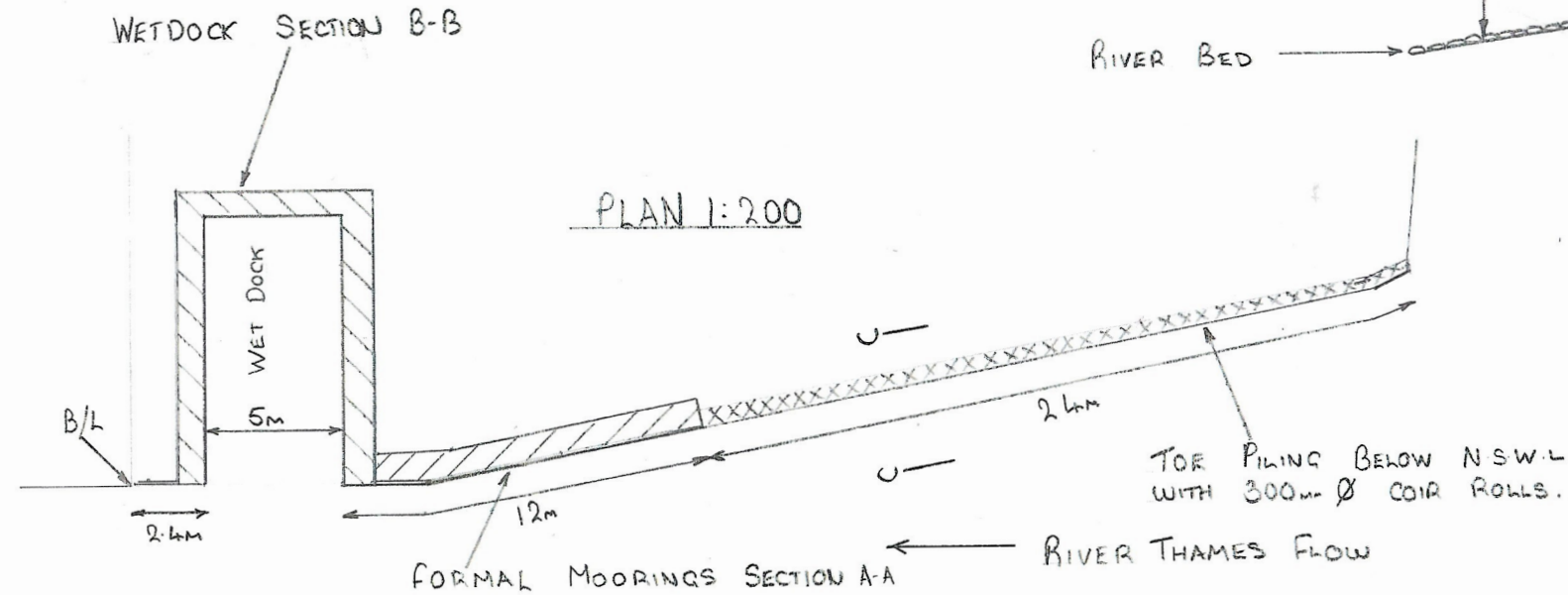


Scale: 1:2,500



REVISED DRAWING 002-DEC 2025
SHOWING UPDATED SITE PLAN
AND UPDATED 24M UPSTREAM
SECTION.

SCALE 1:50



All works to be carried out in accordance with Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPG5).
There will be minimal encroachment (no more than 250mm) beyond the existing bankline.

CLIENT MR A. FAWSITT	WATERCOURSE RIVER THAMES	DATE DEC 2025	THAMES RIVERWORKS PILING LTD SPECIALISTS IN ALL MARINE CONSTRUCTION
PROPOSAL WET DOCK AND REPAIRS TO THE RIVER FRONTAGE.	LOCATION OF WORKS BIRD PLACE WARGRAVE R.D HENLEY ON THAMES OCC. PLAN	SCALE 1:50 1:200 on A3	SHEPPERTON MARINA FELIX LANE, SHEPPERTON, MIDDX TW17 8NS TEL: 01932 226869 EMAIL: sales@thamesriverworks.com