

# 04 THE REMIT OF CONSULTATION

This section sets out the remit of the consultation process, which was defined by strategic constraints affecting the future of the creek as a whole, and site-specific constraints particular to potential development parcels where landowners agreed to participate in the consultation process

## 4.1 Strategic constraints

### 4.1.1 Flooding

Flood risk is a particularly important issue in this low-lying, estuarine location, and is also associated with the local hydrological and surface-water drainage systems. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) carried out in 2009 by consultants on behalf of Swale Borough Council shows that extensive areas immediately adjacent to the creek are assessed as having a high probability of flooding (Flood Zone 3a, i.e. a 1 in 200 or greater annual probability of flooding from the sea in any year). The flood risk map below also indicates further areas with a medium probability of flooding (Flood Zone 2 – i.e. between 1 in 200 and 1 in 1000 annual probability of sea flooding in any year). The full SFRA report and maps are available on the Swale website and/or at SBC offices or from the Environment Agency.



The bridge and sluice at the entrance to the creek basin

### 4.1.2 Navigation

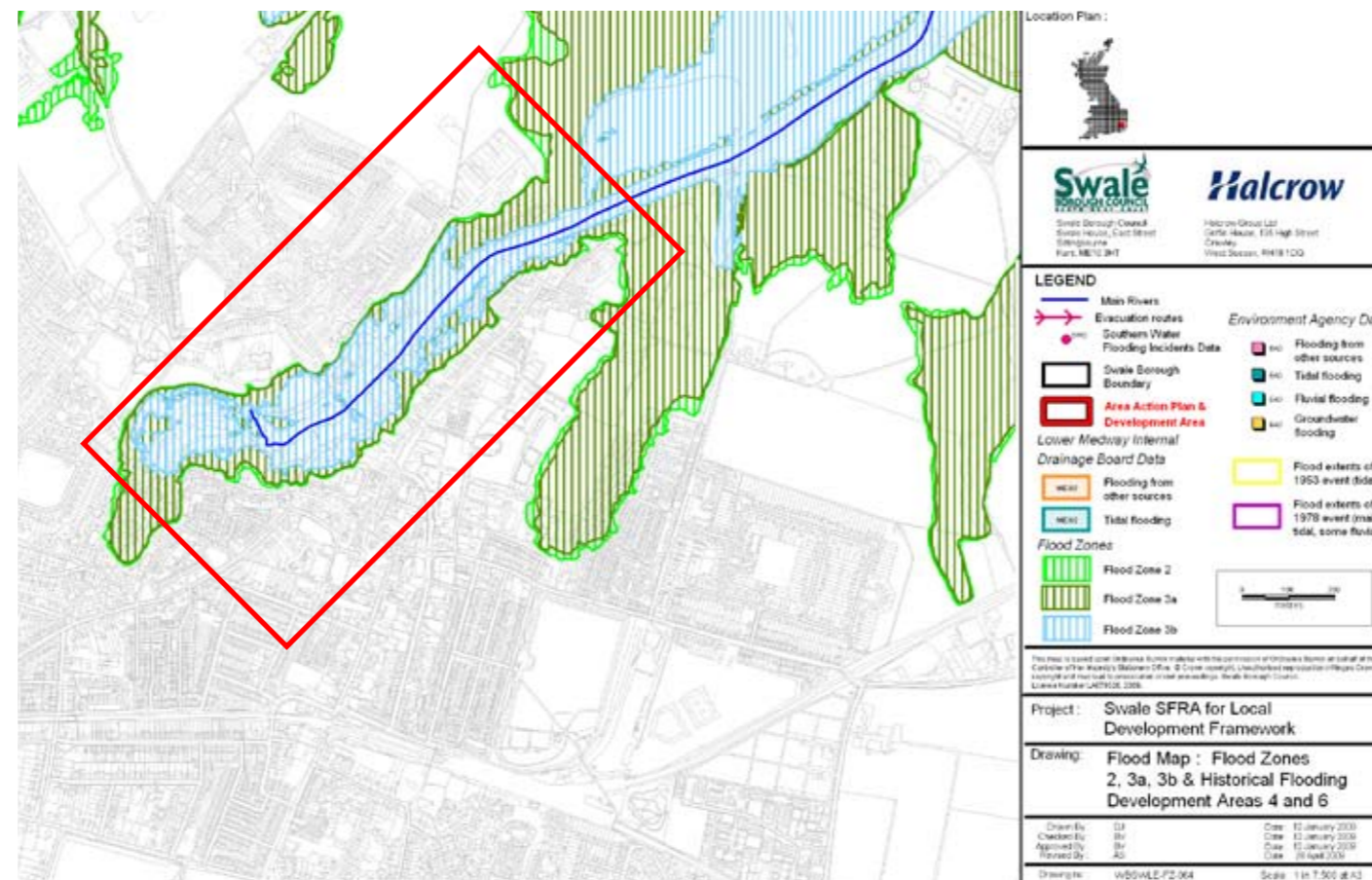
The creek has been navigated and maintained for several centuries. During its history, the most effective method of keeping the bed free of silt has been maintaining the commercial traffic along the Creek (Roger Tym and Partners, 1993). Since 1973, maintenance of the creek has been limited, and it is currently silting up at a rate of 0.3m per year in terms of width and 2-3cm per year in terms of depth (HR Wallingford, 2006). The recent Faversham Creek Navigation Study (HR Wallingford, 2006) shows the best way to regenerate the Creek and the basin is to restore it as a working facility for boats, such as those that already use the Creek further downstream at Standard Quay. In order to do this, the study recommends a number of options, all of which would require dredging and restoring full movement of the sluice gates. Improvement to navigation and the swing bridge is supported in Policy AAP2 of the Local Plan (2008), however this represents a significant financial cost. The Navigation study estimates the cost of refurbishing the sluice gates is about £40,000. Dredging is a very expensive option. For just the Basin, the estimated cost is £27,950 - £94,995 (2006 price), while for the Basin and 1km of the creek channel this rises to £152,150 - £297,925. In addition it will require further maintenance every three years, which is likely to cost £42,800 to £122,360 and disposing of the dredged material will cost an additional £6500 for 10 to 50,000 tonnes (wet weight).

Critically, the ownership of the Creek, its bed, the frontages, and the associated responsibilities for maintenance, development, and navigation, are all highly fragmented and without co-ordinated governance.

### 4.1.3 Transport

Highway capacity is a possible constraint in the AAP area, particularly for the residential area north of the Creek. Currently there are only two points of vehicular access to this area in its entirety – the bridge crossing the Creek at Bridge Road, and Brent Hill – both of which are so severely constrained in width to prevent passing two-way traffic. There is a number of additional highway capacity “pinch points” at North Lane, Barnfield Road, Quay Lane, Abbey Street, and Front Brents. These constraints could be mitigated in two main ways:

- Widening of the Creek bridge at Bridge Road; and
- Establishing new vehicular access between Priory Row and Reedland Crescent, for which there appears to be an existing wayleave.



Flood risk mapping of the Swale, showing the Faversham Creek area outlined in red (Source: SBC Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009)

#### 4.1.4 Utilities

The capacity of sewerage systems in the area, both of individual pipes and stations, are understood to represent a potential constraint to future development, particularly residential development. This issue will have to be resolved prior to any development.

#### 4.1.5 Landownership

There are over 20 land interests within the AAP area. This presents a significant challenge in terms of bringing them altogether to develop a single coherent vision for the area. Furthermore, ownership of the Creek bed itself is divided between two landowners. Faversham Town Council owns the bed in the central area of the AAP, and the Sondes Estate owns the remainder. This presents a particular challenge in co-ordinating responsibility for maintenance and dredging.

#### 4.1.6 Market and other delivery constraints

In order to deliver the mix and diversity of land use that the AAP will envisage, it is vital that the planning, funding and delivery mechanisms are available and that the project objectives are not watered down. In the current economic climate, speculative development of any nature is likely to be limited. Therefore public sector partners need to establish the extent to which they have an appetite for funding a project of this scale and length.

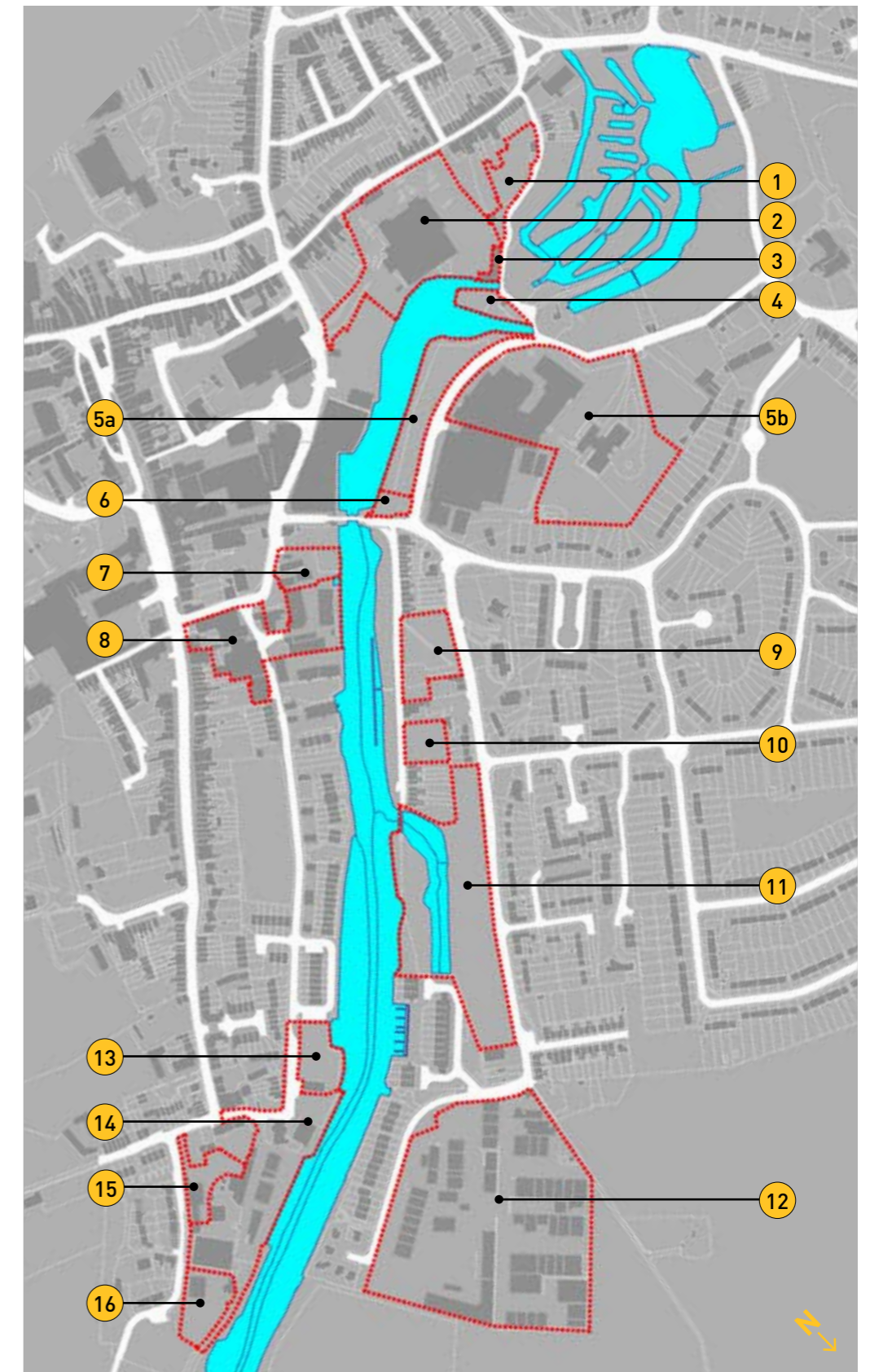
To support this further work ought to be undertaken to identify funding gaps or opportunities for land acquisition based on firmed-up options. The area around the Creek is situated within a Flood Risk Area and therefore planning permission for development of residential accommodation will depend upon the support of the Environment Agency and satisfying central government requirements.

The bridge represents one of the biggest challenges and opportunities for the future regeneration of the Creek and surrounding area. Resolving this issue could unlock the potential of surrounding assets and create an improved and valuable physical link to the residential area to the west of the Creek.

## 4.2 Site-specific constraints

As part of the AAP process, fourteen potential development sites have been identified for consideration. In addition to the general constraints affecting the whole AAP area set out above, there are also a number of constraints associated with these individual sites. These sites were considered by the Creek Team in proposing suitable future land uses to achieve the overall vision for the area. Further detail on each potential development site is summarised overleaf. This information was provided by Swale Borough Council on a site by site basis prior to Workshop 3.

Site No.	Site Name	Current Land Use
1	Land at Flood Lane	Surface carpark, open space, workshop
2	Co-Op Supermarket	Supermarket, surface carparking
3	Purifier Building	Derelict building, surface carparking
4	Ordnance Wharf	Vacant site
5a	BMM Weston (Creekside)	Surface carpark
5b	BMM Weston (Brent Road)	Factory & offices
6	Front Brents / Bridge	Open space
7	Town Green	Open space
8	Swan Quay (formerly Frank & Whittome)	Workshops, warehousing, and commercial buildings
9	Front Brents / South of Albion PH	Open space
10	Front Brents / North of Albion PH	Open space
11	Front Brents / Crab Island	Open space
12	Upper Brents Industrial Estate	Employment
13	Former Secos Depot	Disused
14	Standard Quay	Maritime-related employment
15	Fentiman's Yard	Vacant
16	Standard House	Disused



Sites identified for change and improvement



Flood Lane open space viewed from the Purifier Building

#### 4.2.1 Land at Flood Lane

This land parcel between the public open space at Stonebridge Ponds and the rear of properties along West Street is currently in use as a surface carpark accessed from Flood Lane. More information is required on this site, however it can be said that its principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Possible highway constraint; and
- Community Safety issues on public open space and Flood Lane.



Blank supermarket frontage to Creek path

#### 4.2.2 Supermarket & Car Park

This is a large site consisting of a supermarket (formerly Co-Op, now Morrisons), surrounded by a large car park. The development has a poor visual presence to the Creek, and provides a blank wall facing on to the Creek path which creates issues in terms of safety and security. The car park is underused. The Local Plan designates the Creek frontage of the site (including the Purifier Building) as suitable for boat, commercial, leisure or tourism uses as part of opening up of the basin to boats. In addition, this site offers a major opportunity to link the creekside with West Street and open up visual and pedestrian access to one of the town's principal streets.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Possible highway constraint at Bridge Road;
- Recent change in ownership;
- Possible site contamination; and
- Potential requirement to retain large-scale retail uses on the site, in addition to the associated carparking requirements.

The continued availability of this site for development should be ascertained in the light of the new owners.



Attractive quayside gable end of Purifier Building

#### 4.2.3 Purifier Building

This attractive creek-side building is a distinctive landmark at the head of the basin, however is in poor condition. Its strategic location make it imperative that any plans for this building are considered in the context of the neighbouring sites, open spaces, pedestrian routes, and the Basin as a whole. The Local Plan designates the Creek frontage of the Purifier Building as suitable for boat, commercial, leisure or tourism uses as part of opening up of the basin to boats.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Building of architectural/historic importance but not listed, and derelict for past twenty years;
- Poor visual presence to creek;
- Community Safety issues on creek edge and path;
- Possible highway constraint at Bridge Road;
- Possible site contamination;
- Cost of restoration likely to be significant, therefore likely to be more viable developed in conjunction with the supermarket site;and
- Potential for protected species.

The continued availability of this site for development should be ascertained in the light of the new owners.



The strategic location of Ordnance Wharf at the head of the Creek

#### 4.2.4 Ordnance Wharf

This site is occupied by derelict, former storage tanks, and is surrounded on three sides by the creek edge. The Local Plan identifies this site as suitable for boat/commercial/leisure/tourism uses as part of opening up of the basin to boats. This dramatic 'peninsula' site located at the head of the creek offers a major opportunity to improve the landscape setting of the Creek.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Proximity of the Purifier Building;
- Highway access issues associated with adjacent blast walls, which could be resolvable;
- Probable contamination, but not insurmountable;
- Costs of development likely to be high, given site size and configuration; and
- Head of creek location and its vistas would present major design challenges for building.



Listed blast walls to Brent Hill, with factory and office buildings behind

#### 4.2.5a/b BMM Weston, Brent Road

This large site consists of an underused car park, a factory building, an office building and areas of undeveloped land on higher ground. The creekside and west of the site may be available for development in the medium term, whereas the east of the site and the higher ground accessed from Brent Hill will be retained in the longer-term. It is a family-owned site with an existing valid planning application for housing development. The owner wishes to negotiate revisions to this and is willing to consider a mixed-use scheme. The factory is to be maintained in the current use, but the floorspace will be rationalised. This south-facing creekside site offers a major opportunity to improve the landscape setting of the Creek.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk on the lower parts of the site;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Upper part of the site has some mature trees and good views of the town;
- White office building of some architectural merit, but not listed;
- Potential incompatibility of existing factory with new uses;
- Constrained vehicular access via Brent Hill, which is very narrow and listed wall prevents adequate vehicle access into main site; and
- Proximity of large brewery building directly to the south of the creek, impacting on visual amenity and the general setting of the creek.



Ducks on the green

#### 4.2.6 Open space at bridgehead

This prominent bridgehead site is in the ownership of Southern Water. By virtue of its strategic location, visible up and down the Creek at the only bridge crossing, this site presents a unique opportunity to change perceptions of the whole area. More information is required on this site, however it can be said that its principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk on the lower parts of the site;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Prominent and strategic location; and
- May have technical function associated with water and/or drainage services.



From left: Slipway, Boxing Club, Pumphouse, Sea Scouts, & Town Green

#### 4.2.7 The Town Green Area

This site is in public ownership. There is an unusual ensemble of three buildings of similar size and form (including the listed former Town Warehouse, now in use as T.S. Hazard), but dramatically different age, design, construction. The buildings are currently used by the Sea Scouts, and some moorings are available along its creek frontage. This creekside site offers a major opportunity to link the town visually and physically with the creek, and could be enhanced to promote more community and tourism uses.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- No development permitted on the Town Green by law;
- Includes a Listed Building and its curtilage;
- Transformer and/or electronics substation located on road frontage;
- Fine view of the site and town from opposite bank; and
- Limited or no development opportunities other than within existing buildings.



Quay Lane frontage leading to Church Street

#### 4.2.8 Swan Quay (former Frank & Whittome Complex), Belvedere Road

This site is split into two parts by Belvedere Road, and includes frontages on to the creek, Quay Lane, and Abbey Street. The development includes a number of buildings of character value, some of which are listed. This site offers a major opportunity to establish a direct visual connection between Abbey Street and the creekside, as well as improving the setting of the adjacent public house and access to Belvedere Road.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk on the lower parts of the site;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Belvedere Road limits the ability of the site to function as one whole use;
- Some buildings listed, or of such character to warrant retention;
- Views of the site and wider townscape from opposite bank;
- Poor highway and pedestrian conditions in Quay Lane/Bridge Road; and
- Sewerage pumping station capacity.



Open space with mooring jetty



Open space with the gable of Albion Public House



Walkway with view to housing at Upper Brents



Warehouses and workshops in the busy estate

#### 4.2.9 Area of open space south of the Albion Public House, Front Brents

A small area of publicly owned open space adjacent to housing and south of the Albion public house, which includes a number of trees. While it has no development potential, it could be improved to promote better use.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area; and
- Open space protected from development by law.

#### 4.2.10 Area of open space north of the Albion Public House, Front Brents

A small area of publicly owned open space adjacent to housing and north of the Albion public house, which includes a number of trees. While it has no development potential, it could be improved to promote better use.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area; and
- Open space protected from development by law.

#### 4.2.11 Crab Island

This is a publicly owned semi-natural open space which has a small footbridge crossing over a creek inlet. Again this site does not have development potential, but it could be enhanced to increase use of it, while having appropriate measures in place to protect the biodiversity.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area; and
- Open space protected from development; and
- Biodiversity interests.

#### 4.2.12 Upper Brents Industrial Estate

This is a trading estate providing mostly small, but some medium sized business space, under multiple ownership. It is surrounded by residential areas, and the Council's Employment Land Review suggests that site could be released for alternative uses. This site offers a major opportunity to improve pedestrian connections to the creekside walk, and improve the physical and visual relationship between the town edge and the open landscape of the Swale.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk on part of the site;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Adjacent to designated wildlife sites;
- Housing close by;
- Multiple land ownerships;
- Possible highway constraints at Bridge Road;
- Restricted access to site; and
- Possible sewer capacity issues.



Storage buildings and retaining wall



Listed warehouse buildings



Rear boundary wall to the New Creek Road



A building with presence at the end of the quay

#### 4.2.13 Former Secos Depot, Belvedere Road

This site is currently occupied by an oil depot and associated office space, and is almost entirely surrounded by new housing development. The development is on the creekside but is currently obscured from the creek by a high wall.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Housing directly adjacent to site, with close proximity of rear of buildings;
- Restricted access to site; and
- Some adverse development costs via removal of tanks.

#### 4.2.14 Standard Quay, Abbey Street

This site is a cluster of commercial uses, including a coach works, Standard Quay Limited, a garden centre, antiques store, craft outlet, art gallery, and a wine merchant. The buildings are of historic importance and many are listed. While the Employment Land Review suggests that the site is suited to the existing uses, there is limited capacity for the current occupiers to expand.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Listed buildings; and
- Restricted access to site.

#### 4.2.15 Fentiman's Yard, Abbey Street

This is a vacant car repair yard, which is adjacent to Standard Quay. There has recently been residential development to the east.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Housing may not be compatible with some commercial activities;
- Close to Listed Buildings;
- Restricted access to site.

#### 4.2.16 Standard House

Standard House is a listed building at risk, located within a vacant yard. It sits close to the urban edge and the open countryside and is accessible only via Standard Quay. The former use of the building is unclear, but the listing assumes it was previously the home of a local barge builder and the former mayor. The Local Plan designates the site for employment uses and sees it as an important site within Standard Quay and the wider creek strategy.

This site's principal constraints and opportunities include:

- Flood risk;
- Location within a Conservation Area;
- Listed building;
- Nature of existing business nearby, which may not be compatible with some uses; and
- Restricted access to site.