

## Results

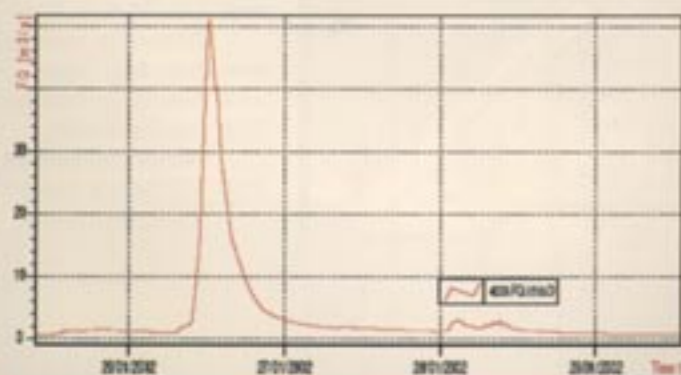
The report contains:

- Details of existing river viewing and access locations
- A range of small scale improvement options to increase opportunities to view and gain access to the River Rea.
- A range of longer term, large-scale regeneration options for each study reach.
- A potential vision for each reach for further exploration and evaluation.
- A number of key practical and high level recommendations for regeneration of the River Rea.

## Conclusions

- There are very limited public viewing and access opportunities of the River Rea in Eastside.
- There are a number of simple low cost options that could be implemented to increase the viewing potential of the river.
- Opening up views of the river must be undertaken in conjunction with improving the aesthetic and amenity value of the river and ideally linked to regeneration of Eastside.
- The Sustainable Eastside initiative provides an ideal opportunity to make significant improvements to the River Rea in terms of opening up views and access, raising awareness of the river and regenerating the entire river corridor.
- The River Rea provides a challenge to urban river regeneration given the flashy nature of the river (see hydrograph below).
- Any proposals affecting the river must consider the impact on the ability of the river to effectively drain the surrounding urban area and prevent flooding.

R. Rea at Calthorpe Park



Hydrograph of the River Rea at Calthorpe Gauging Station showing flow increase from approximately 2 to 50 m<sup>3</sup>/sec within 1 hour on 26th January 2002. Courtesy of the Environment Agency.



Photo: courtesy of Environment Agency

The information in this leaflet has been reproduced from a Preliminary Feasibility Report titled 'Opportunities of Opening Up Views of the River Rea'. The report was prepared for Sustainable Eastside by Hyder Consulting in Dec 2003.

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# Sustainable Eastside

## Advice Note No.4

*Opportunities for Opening Up Views of the River Rea  
Preliminary Feasibility Study*



Photo: courtesy of Hyder Consulting 'River Rea at Fazeley Street'



## Background

The River Rea passes through the Eastside area of Birmingham City Centre in a brick-lined channel, some of it in a culvert. The River Rea is a significant part of Birmingham's heritage, yet it is mostly hidden from public view and its aesthetic features are lost through neglect and unsympathetic industrial development. This study explores the existing nature of the River Rea in Eastside and considers opportunities to regenerate the River Rea as part of 'Sustainable Eastside'.

## Project Aims

**Aim 1:** Assess opportunities for opening up views (increasing viewing opportunities) of the River Rea in Eastside.

**Aim 2:** Generate and develop ideas to regenerate the River Rea in Eastside.

## What did the project involve?

### 1) Photographic and Walk-through Survey

- River walk-through survey at road and river level.
- There was a systematic photographic survey to identify existing public views and access, and to identify any structural obstructions that will limit or obstruct views of and access to the River Rea within Eastside.
- Measurement of existing bridge and wall heights blocking public views of the river within Eastside.

### 2) Identifying measures to improve public views and access of the river

- Practical measures identified that could be implemented to improve public views and access. Evaluation of the restrictions and restrictions of making these improvements.
- 'Blue- Sky' ideas developed that could be incorporated into the proposed development of Eastside for further evaluation.

The River Rea within the study area was split into three distinctive reaches for the purpose of this study. The following pages show selected results from the surveys and the types of proposals recommended.

## Reach 1 - Floodgate Street

### Location:

Between the Deritend High St (A41) and the culvert under Floodgate St.

### Existing Views:

Custard Factory private car parks (x2), Deritend workshops.

### Blocked Views:

High Street views blocked by billboards and former public toilet. Views from Floodgate Street blocked by high walls, industrial units, railings, and vegetation. No public views from the Custard Factory.

### Examples of Improvement Options:

**Small Scale:** Remove middle sections of brick wall and replace with railings or glass. Replace high wall with railings. Channel and bank clean-up and renovation.

**Large Scale:** Re-grade river bank and integrate into Custard Factory development, restore existing access bridge across Floodgate Street into the Custard Factory. Remove billboards and toilet block and replace with viewing bridge.

**Vision:** Enhance the existing features and promote the industrial history and engineering features e.g. Viaduct, brick-lined channel. Build Visitor Centre on the access bridge.



Photo: courtesy of Hyder Consulting



## Reach 3 - Canal Junction

### Location:

Between Fazeley St and Montague St.

### Existing Views:

Canal tow path and riverside grassed open area with trees.

### Blocked Views:

Fazeley Street views blocked by high wall. Riparian development prevents access and views to the river between Fazeley Street and canal junction. Birmingham City Council vehicle depot prevents public access and views of the river on north of canal junction. Only access to the open space via tow path.

### Examples of Improvement Options:

**Small Scale:** Remove debris, prune and encourage the existing vegetation under the canal bridge and promote biodiversity. Remove channel graffiti and erect information board next to the river and on the canal (link with British Waterways information boards).

**Large Scale:** Re-grade river bank and integrate into potential new housing development replacing the vehicle depot. Construct access bridge connecting grassed to new development, together with lighting to increase amenity value.

**Vision:** Minor cosmetic improvements to enhance green space. Integrate with existing modern redeveloped canal.



Photo: courtesy of Hyder Consulting

