

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2017 SCREENING MATRIX**

1. CASE DETAILS			
Case Reference	221918	Brief description of the project / development	Mixed-use development, comprising 449 Build to Rent units and Commercial / amenity uses (including leisure, retail and co-working space) Use Class E and / or Class F and / or specified Sui Generis) with up to 5,565m2 of commercial / amenity space. The Proposed Scheme will be delivered across a number of buildings up to a maximum height of 105.600m AOD (19 storeys above podium, 21 including podium level).
Appellant	The Oracle Limited Partnership		
LPA	Reading Borough Council		
2. EIA DETAILS			
Is the project Schedule 1 development according to Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?		No	
If YES, which description of development (THEN GO TO Q4)			
Is the project Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations?		Yes	
If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 and Column 2?		Part 10 (Infrastructure projects) (b) urban development projects (ii) the development includes more than 150 dwellings	
Is the development within, partly within, or near a 'sensitive area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?		No	
If YES, which area?			
Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?		Yes	
If yes, which applicable threshold/criteria?		More than 150 dwellings	
3. LPA/SOS SCREENING			
Has the LPA or SoS issued a Screening Opinion (SO) or Screening Direction (SD)? (In the case of Enforcement appeals, has a Regulation 37 notice been issued)		Not to date.	
If yes, is a copy of the SO/SD on the file?		N/A	
If yes, is the SO/SD positive?		N/A	
4. ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT			
Has the appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?		No	

WHEN COMPLETING THIS DOCUMENT IN RELATION TO AN ENFORCEMENT APPEAL, THE UNDERSIGNED OFFICER HAS HAD REGARD TO THE PROJECT AS ALLEGED IN THE RELEVANT ENFORCEMENT NOTICE WHEN REFERRING TO THE PROJECT / DEVELOPMENT.

A Screening Criteria Question	B Response to the Screening Criteria Question in Column A (Yes/No and explanation of reasons)		C Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No and explanation of reasons (nb if the answer in Column B is 'No', Column C is not applicable))	
	Briefly explain reasons and, if applicable and/or known, include name of feature(s) and proximity to site(s)		Is a significant effect likely, having regard particularly to the magnitude and spatial extent (including population size affected), nature, intensity and complexity, probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact and the possibility to effectively reduce the impact? If the finding of no significant effect is reliant on specific features or measures of the project envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment these should be identified in bold .	
5. NATURAL RESOURCES				
5.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	No			
5.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	No			
5.3 Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals?	Yes	- Proposed development to be located within 8m of either side of the River Kennet	Yes	Scale of buildings adjacent to river channel. Current Environment Agency to planning applications based around concerns about overshadowing and impact on the water body and its biodiversity.
6. WASTE				
6.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	- During demolition, construction and operation	No	Likely to be able to be managed. The applicant has detailed that best practice will be followed via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Demolition and Construction Method Statement (CMS).

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7. POLLUTION AND NUISANCES		
7.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	Yes Possible. - Contaminated land present - Emissions and dust from construction vehicles and activities - Emissions from vehicles visiting/using the development once operational Possible impact on surrounding commercial and residential occupiers and transient visitors to site	No Likely to be able to be managed via contaminated land remediation, CMS and CEMP at Construction Stage. Air Quality Impact Assessment submitted with the planning applications indicates that when operational the developments would be car free and that there will be no material change in quantum of traffic generated by the site. Significant effects to air quality are not anticipated.
7.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes - Noise, vibration light spill/glare from demolition and construction activities - Noise, light spill/glare possible from at operational stage from commercial and residential uses - Operational stage traffic Possible impact on surrounding commercial and residential occupiers and transient visitors to site	No Likely to be able to be managed via CMS and CEMP at Construction Stage and mitigation controls secured via planning permission and conditions at operational stage. Development proposed to be car free and therefore no material change in traffic movement or associated noise anticipated.
7.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Yes Possible - During construction and at operational phase.	Likely to be able to be managed via CMS and CEMP at Construction Stage and mitigation controls secured via planning permission and conditions at operational stage. Development proposed to be car free and therefore no material change in air quality as a result of traffic movements anticipated.
7.4 Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g.	Yes - Site is located within a locally designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) where concentrations of air bourn	No Air Quality Assessment prepared for the Applications found that the modelled concentrations of nitrogen dioxide and

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where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?		pollutant particles (PM10 PM2.5 and Nitrogen Oxide) are high.		particulate matter (10 and 2.5) would be below the relevant annual mean air quality assessment levels across the Site. Furthermore, there would be no predicted exceedances of the 24-hour mean air quality assessment levels at any of the receptors modelled. Therefore, exposure of future residents to existing poor air quality is not considered to be significant.
8. POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH				
8.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Yes	Possibly - The Environment Agency consider that part of the development site is located in an area with a high risk of flooding. - Other risks associated with any large-scale construction project	Yes	The Environment Agency have identified that part of the site of the application to the north of the river (ref. 221916) is located within flood zone 3B (functional flood plan) where the proposed residential and commercial development is, in accordance with Annex 3 of the NPPF, considered incompatible with this flood zone and should not be permitted due to the high probability of flooding. The EA have also identified that the Flood Risk Assessments submitted in support of the applications on both sides of the river are inadequate and fail to demonstrate that the proposals would be safe for their lifetime
8.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	Yes	See above 8.1 above	Yes	See 8.1 above

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9. WATER RESOURCES		
9.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	Yes - River Kennet (tributary of the River Thames) separates the two application sites	Yes The Environment Agency have identified that part of the site of the application to the north of the river (ref. 221916) is located within flood zone 3B (functional flood plan) where the proposed residential and commercial development is, in accordance with Annex 3 of the NPPF, considered incompatible with this flood zone and should not be permitted due to the high probability of flooding. The EA have also identified that the Flood Risk Assessments submitted in support of the applications on both sides of the river are inadequate and fail to demonstrate that the proposals would be safe for their lifetime.
10. BIODIVERSITY (SPECIES AND HABITATS)		
10.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))).	Yes - River Kennet – Priority Habitat as per NPPF - River Kennet – Forms part of local green network and is identified as an area of biodiversity interest under Policy EN12 of the RBC Local Plan - Ecological survey submitted with application identifies some potential for presence bats, grass snakes, otters, water voles, birds (potential for presence of other protected species identified to be more limited and unlikely) - Limited scrub and tree planting present.	Yes Matters external to river channel likely able to be managed and conditions such as CEMP and to secure landscape planting and biodiversity mitigation/enhancements (eg. wildlife friendly planting/lighting, bird/bat boxes). Separate Natural England license required for any works impacting bats. However due to scale of the proposed building and their proximity to the river the Councils Ecology Consultant considers that there is likely to be a significant impact upon biodiversity within the river channel. Furthermore, the Environment Agency object to both applications with similar concerns, noting that there is no assessment of how extra shading over the river from the development will impact the river and river corridor in terms of biodiversity.

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10.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	Yes - Some limited trees and areas of scrub – potential habitats for species identified in 10.1 above.	Yes Likely to be able to be managed via conditions (CEMP, biodiversity mitigation)
11. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL		
11.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project? ¹ Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	- The Site is located within the Thames Valley National Character Area (NCA) which is characterised as a “mainly low-lying wedge area ... with a diverse landscape and urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings. - Riverside setting Local Plan Policy Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) - Applications propose tall buildings outside of locations identifies as being appropriate for tall buildings under Policy CR10 (Tall Buildings) - Would impact on a number of key views identified with the Council’s adopted Tall Buildings Strategy 2008.	Yes Scale of buildings proposed likely to result in significant impact on townscape in proposing tall buildings outside of the tall buildings clusters identified within the town centre under Policy CR10. Scale of the proposed buildings so close to river channel would also result in significant impacts on setting of riverside spaces (Policy EN11).

¹ See question 8.1 for consideration of impacts on heritage designations and receptors, including on views to, within and from designated areas.

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11.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)	Yes - Existing Buildings located within the Site are approximately 4-5 commercial storeys high and are of a flat-roofed composition. - In the surrounding area, buildings vary in height and design, with developments to the east sitting at 2-3 storeys whilst those to the south sit at 5-6 storeys. - The scale of the buildings proposed (a series of tall buildings (12+ storeys) means the development would be highly visible from the main roads running past the Site boundary, vantage points from a number of streets and public realm / open spaces within the local area of the Site, river crossings and also the riverside / canalside walkways, and other longer distance views from the higher ground of The Mount to the south, as well as open spaces to the south.	Yes Scale of buildings proposed likely to result in significant impact on townscape in proposing tall buildings outside of the tall buildings clusters identified within the town centre under Policy CR10. Scale of the proposed buildings so close to river channel would also result in significant impacts on setting of riverside spaces (Policy EN11). Scale of proposal mean they would be high visible generally within the town centre, The Oracle is one of the main retail attractions within the town and attracts a high footfall. Significant heritage impacts also identified – see 12.1 below.
12. CULTURAL HERITAGE/ARCHAEOLOGY		
12.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	Yes - Potential for archaeological remains to be impacted by construction. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared for the Applications suggests that the site has a high potential to contain archaeological remains dating to the early medieval and medieval periods; moderate potential for remains of the post-medieval period and low potential for the prehistoric and Roman periods. - 2 Scheduled Monuments within 2km of the Site. Closest being grade II listed 'High Bridge' approximately 65m north east of the Site	Yes Likely to be able to be managed in terms of archaeology via scheme of archaeological investigation and mitigation works. Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted with the application. Historic England currently objecting to the planning applications on the basis of the proposed tall buildings would harm the nearby Market Place and London Street Conservation Area through dominantly tall and bulky buildings. Possible harmful impacts on the St

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	- Significant number of listed buildings in the surrounding area, with clusters on London Street, Duke Street and Gun Street. Closest being grade II listed 2-4 London Street 10m north east of the site. - Eastern extent of the application site falls within the boundary of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area abuts the site to the west.	Marys Butts/Caste Street Conservation Area also identified. The NPPF sets out (para 195) that harm should be avoided or minimised and there to be a presumption in favour of conservation (para 199), with any harm weighed up against public benefits (para 202). Based on the current plans and missing information Historic England objects to the application.
13. TRANSPORT AND ACCESS		
13.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes - Access to the wider strategic road network in Reading is made via the A329 to the south of the Site, which connects to the A33 approximately 600m west of the Site. - Reading is located immediately north of the M4 and can be accessed from three junctions (10 to 12). - There is currently public access between both application sites along both sides of the river.	Yes Likely to be able to be managed during constriction via CMS/CEMP for construction phase. Transport Statement submitted with the applications indicates that the proposed development would be car free and therefore would result in fewer vehicles trips that the existing uses. On this basis RBC Transport Officers are satisfied that and Environmental Statement would not be required on transport grounds.
13.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes - See 13.1 above	Yes - See 13.1 above
14. LAND USE		
14.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated	Yes - Housing - Densely populated areas - Industry / commerce	No Site is located within central core of the town centre (Policy CR1) and a variety of existing uses and community facilities are situated in close proximity to the site. The site is located within

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areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	- Leisure / Recreation	the Central Core of the town centre where the Local Plan encourages the uses proposed to be located.
14.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes - A number of nearby sites are allocated within the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). Eg. CR14 (The Oracle Extension, Bridge Street and Letcombe Street) and CR14H (Central Club, London Street).	No Not any proposals that would introduce land uses that are not already present in close vicinity to the application site. Likely that such proposals could be managed to ensure co-ordination (thereby ensuring the effects are unlikely to be significant)
15. LAND STABILITY AND CLIMATE		
15.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No	
16. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS		
16.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase?	Yes - The site is located within the town centre where a number of large-scale developments are under construction or approved. (E.g Station Hill, Broad Street Mall)	Yes Likely that such proposals could be positively managed to ensure co-ordination (thereby ensuring effects are unlikely to be significant)
17. TRANSBOUNDARY EFFECTS		
17.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects? ²	No	

² The Regulations require consideration of the transboundary nature of the impact. Due to the England's geographical location the vast majority of TCPA cases are unlikely to result in transboundary impacts.

18. CONCLUSIONS – ACCORDING TO EIA REGULATIONS SCHEDULE 3

It is considered that the proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as the EIA Regulations 2017). The proposal falls within the description at paragraph 10(b) of Schedule 2 and exceeds the threshold of including more than 150 dwellings in column 2. Therefore, the Council considers the proposal to be 'Schedule 2 development' within the meaning of the EIA Regulations 2017.

Accordingly, the Council has considered if the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. In determining such effects, the Council has taken into account the criteria for screening Schedule 2 development set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations. These are the characteristics of the development, its location and the types and characteristics of the potential impact. Based upon the description of the development provided, the information provided in your submission received on 17/12/18 (screening request 221918/SCR) and the information provide under planning applications 221916/FUL and 221917/FUL at the site, the development could be considered to be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size and location. More specifically, the following significant effects are identified:

- Impact on Natural Resources (Water – River Kennet) - Due to scale of proposed buildings located in close proximity to either side of the River. Current Environment Agency Objection to the proposed planning applications (221916FUL and 221917FUL) citing concerns about overshadowing/shading and impact on the waster body and its biodiversity.
- Population and Human Health - The Environment Agency have identified that part of the site of the application to the north of the river (ref. 221916) is located within flood zone 3B (functional flood plan) where the proposed residential and commercial development is, in accordance with Annex 3 of the NPPF, considered incompatible with this flood zone and should not be permitted due to the high probability of flooding. The EA have also identified that the Flood Risk Assessments submitted in support of the applications on both sides of the river are inadequate and fail to demonstrate that the proposals would be safe for their lifetime from flooding.
- Biodiversity (species and habitat) – The River Kennet is a Priority Habitat as per NPPF and forms part of the local green network and area of identified biodiversity interest under Policy EN12 of the RBC Local Plan. Due to scale of the proposed buildings and their proximity to the river the Councils Ecology Consultant considers that there is likely to be a significant impact upon biodiversity within the river. Furthermore, the Environment Agency object to both applications with similar concerns, noting that there is no assessment of how extra shading over the river from the development will impact the river and river corridor in terms of biodiversity.
- Townscape and Visual – The scale of buildings proposed mean they would be highly visible and likely to result in significant visual and townscape impacts. Supporting Heritage and Townscape Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) submitted with the application note the proposals would provide for a landmark feature and therefore a significant impact is implied – it is not considered that the information submitted with the applications demonstrates that this impact would not be adverse. The proposed development would be significantly taller than the majority of buildings within the town centre and would incorporate tall buildings in a location that is outside of the designated tall buildings clusters identified within the town centre under Policy CR10. The scale of the proposed buildings so close to river channel would also result in significant impacts on setting of riverside spaces (Policy EN11).
- Cultural Heritage - Historic England object to the planning applications on the basis of the proposed tall buildings (and submitted HTVIA) and consider that the proposals would harm the setting of the nearby Market Place and London Street Conservation Area through dominantly tall and bulky buildings. Possible harmful impacts on the St Marys Butts/Caste Street Conservation Area also identified. Historic England identify less than substantial harm in context of NPPF but indicate that further information is required to full assess the proposals. It is not considered that the HTVIA fully demonstrates that impacts would not be significant.

Accordingly, in exercise of the powers conferred by Regulation 6 (6) (b) of the EIA Regulations 2017, the Council hereby considers that the proposed development described in your request and the documents submitted with it is 'EIA development', within the meaning of the EIA Regulations 2017, and hence a positive screening opinion is hereby adopted.

Informatives

You are advised, by virtue of Part 2 Regulation 6 (10) (b) of the EIA Regulations 2017 that you have the option to make a request to the Secretary of State to issue a Screening Direction if you disagree with this Opinion.

Please note that this screening opinion is provided without prejudice to the formal decision of the Council on this or any other application which may subsequently be submitted.

19. SCREENING DECISION

If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?	NO
Is it necessary to issue a SD?	YES
Is an ES required?	YES

20. ASSESSMENT (EIA REGS SCHEDULE 2 DEVELOPMENT)

OUTCOME

Is likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES required	YES
<u>Not</u> likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES not required	
More information is required to inform direction	Request further info	

NAME	Matt Burns
DATE	26 th June 2023