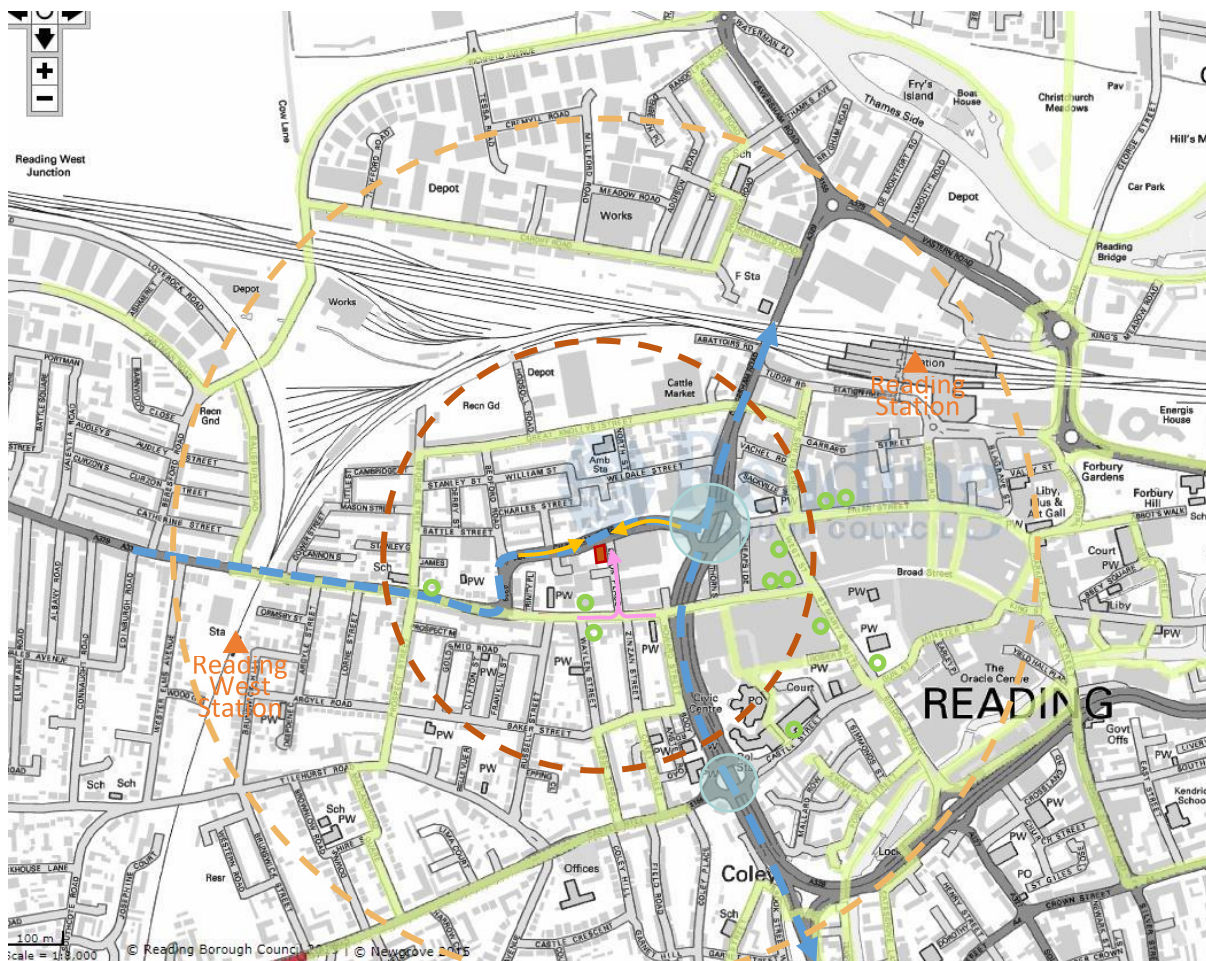


Loss of former garage use (B1c)

The proposed site is not located within the Core Employment Areas, however, the overall level of employment land is aimed to be maintained or increased.

(i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?



- Proposed Site
- 5 minute walking distance (400m)
- 10 minute walking distance (800m)
- Cycling route
- ▲ Rail stations
- Bus stops
- ↔ IDR/main roads
- Primary access to site
- Secondary access to site
- Poor quality junction

As illustrated in the map above, the site is fairly accessible via different means of transport – by public transport (bus and train), by cycling or by car. There are 2 no. of train stations (Reading West and Reading station) and 11 bus stops within the 10-minute walk distance radius from the site. The cycling routes coverage around the site are also well-linked. The site is at a close proximity to the strategic road network. It is at a junction of a primary road - A329 Chatham Street and a secondary road – Eaton Place. The A329 – Chatham Street is connected to an Inner Distribution Road (IDR) via a junction which is considered to be a poor quality junction.

Figure 6: Site Opportunities and Constraints

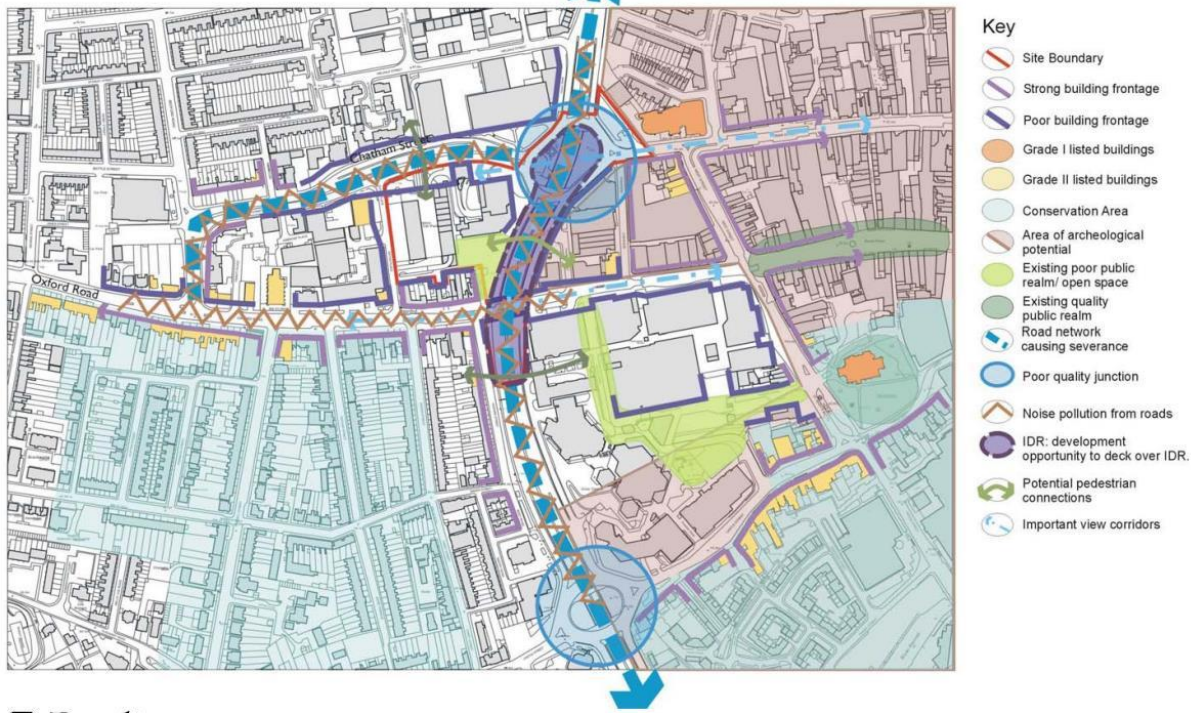
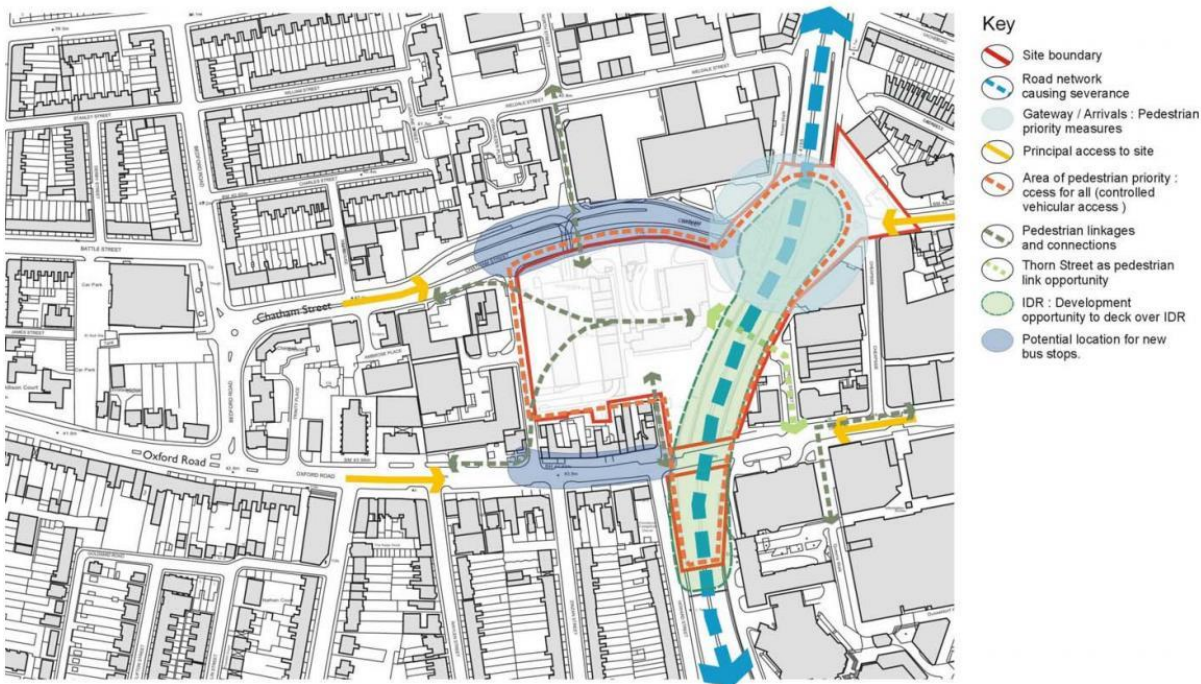


Figure 7: Permeability and Accessibility



The above two images are taken from the '**Chatham Street Development Brief**' by the Reading Borough Council, they indicate the opportunity and constraints, permeability and accessibility of the area between the Chatham Street and Oxford Road.

They also revealed a future transport infrastructure provision which could be beneficial to our proposed scheme. As indicated, the council has a development scheme in place to develop the adjacent site, including the improvement of the junction connecting the Chatham Street and IDR, and introducing potential bus stops along Oxford Road and Chatham Street. This could be beneficial to our proposed scheme, therefore, the access to strategic road network is highly likely to be improved in the future.

(ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?

As the proposed scheme is a C1 use hotel, the site will continue to be used for employment. Changing from a light-industrial use to a hotel use, it is highly likely that a group of potential hotel supporting staff will be hired, such as a concierge, chef, hotel general manager, housekeeper, porter and waiter/waitress.

In terms of ownership constraints, like many cities in the UK, Reading is in a housing crisis, there is a shortage for affordable homes and council housing. The demands for new homes are a lot higher than the supply. However, the location of the site is not ideal for residential purpose and the reasons are as follows:

- The site is located off a junction of a primary road.
- It is in a leisure and cultural commercial area which is in employment use. It seems that putting in a residential use scheme will not be in-keeping with the existing character of the area.
- It is also next to a multi-storey car park.
- The primary use of the building is a Public House.
- The majority of the existing building is one storey with a linear form which is not ideal or sufficient for residential purpose.

We believe that the most suitable use for the proposed site location is a form of employment use which is supplementary to the existing Public House.

(iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?

This boutique hotel is supported by an adjoining existing public house. It facilitate 19 bedrooms, parking, free WiFi, private bathrooms and wheelchair accessible facilities. As the screenshot (taken from booking.com) below shown, there are only 8 comparable hotels which could provide similar facilities within the area of Reading. Moreover, the hotels marked on the map below are in a relatively large-scale franchised hotel, such as Holiday Inn, Ibis, Hilton, Mercure and Pentahotel etc. It is clear that the proposed boutique hotel is very different to the other hotels in Reading, in terms of size and type. Therefore, we believe that this small-scale local boutique hotel is unique in its entity, and there is certainly no surplus of similar hotels.

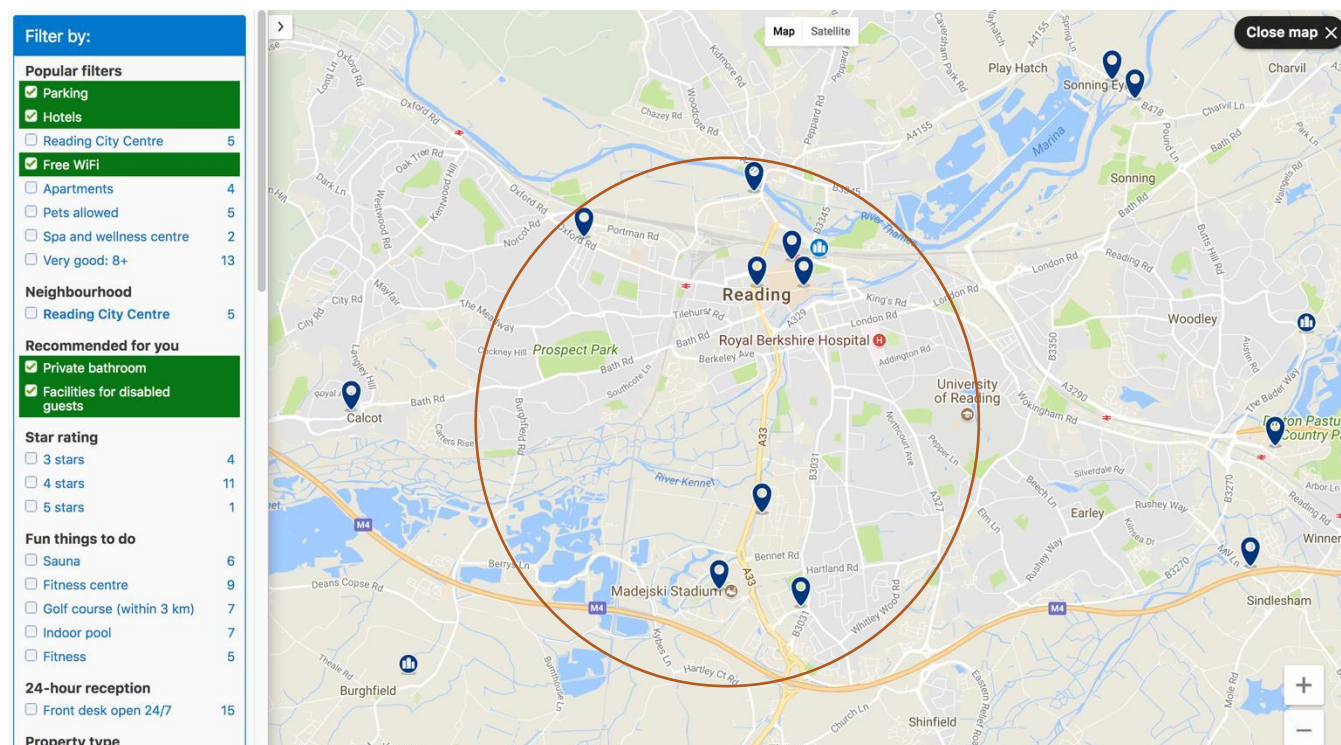


Fig 2: Map showing the comparable hotels in the Reading area (courtesy of Booking.com)

In addition, Reading is evidently a tourist city for both inbound and international visitors. It has been ranked as one of the top 20 towns in the UK for ‘staying visits’ by inbound visitors¹, and also for international visitors². Therefore, we believe that the demand for hotels in Reading is high. The proposed scheme could be beneficial to the balance of the supply and long-term demand.

Top towns for 'staying visits' by inbound visitors

2016			2015		2014	
	Town/city	Visits (000s)	Town/city	Visits (000s)	Town/city	Visits (000s)
1	London	19,060	London	18,851	London	17,404
2	Edinburgh	1,689	Edinburgh	1,543	Edinburgh	1,585
3	Manchester	1,191	Manchester	1,152	Manchester	994
4	Birmingham	1,115	Birmingham	1,107	Birmingham	944
5	Liverpool	671	Glasgow	662	Glasgow	624
6	Glasgow	659	Liverpool	601	Liverpool	605
7	Oxford	586	Oxford	535	Oxford	489
8	Bristol	570	Bristol	526	Bristol	446
9	Cambridge	498	Brighton/Hove	457	Brighton/Hove	423
10	Brighton/Hove	465	Cambridge	430	Cambridge	418
11	Cardiff	357	Cardiff	358	Leeds	370
12	Inverness	340	Bath	323	York	311
13	Leeds	331	Inverness	316	Cardiff	300
14	Bath	331	Leeds	300	Inverness	261
15	Nottingham	304	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	263	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	243
16	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	296	Southampton	257	Aberdeen	241
17	York	265	York	240	Bath	236
18	Reading	245	Reading	236	Nottingham	218
19	Aberdeen	237	Aberdeen	217	Reading	189
20	Leicester	229	Nottingham	204	Windsor	187

Source: International Passenger Survey, Office for National Statistics. Please note that figures are based on small sample sizes for all cities with the exception of London and should therefore be treated with caution.

Fig 3: Courtesy of Visit Britain

Moreover, the location of the proposed site is 10 minutes walk from the Reading town centre, Reading or Reading West Train stations (as shown in the map below). Hence, we believe that our proposed location is ideal for hotel use, visitors would be able to get easier access to the local amenities, landmarks and public transport.

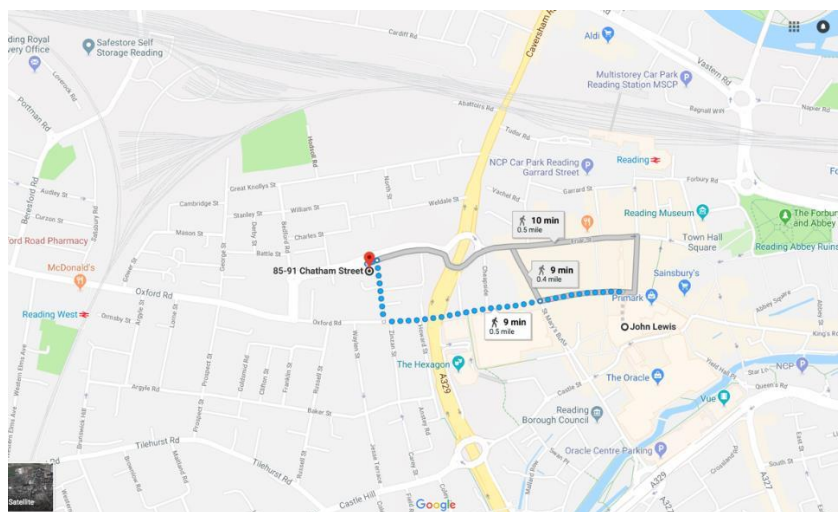


Fig 4: Courtesy of google map

¹ 'Top towns for 'staying visits' by inbound visitors' (2017) <<https://www.visitbritain.org/town-data>> [accessed 27 06.2018]

² ARFIN, FERNE 'Top 20 Most Popular UK Cities for International Visitors' (24.01.2018) <<https://www.tripsavvy.com/popular-uk-cities-for-international-visitors-1661845>> [accessed 27 06.2018]

(iv) Would continue employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?

Figure 5: Local Site Context

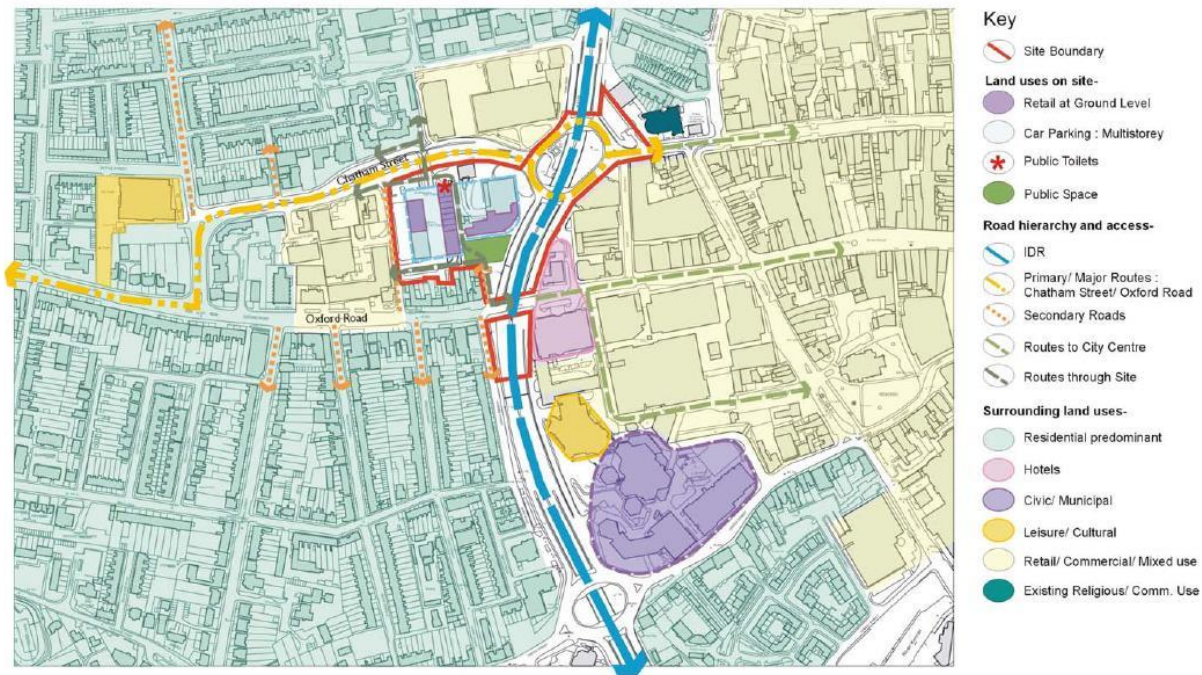


Fig 5: Taken from 'Chatham St Regeneration Area' (courtesy of Reading Borough Council)

Figure 6: Site Opportunities and Constraints

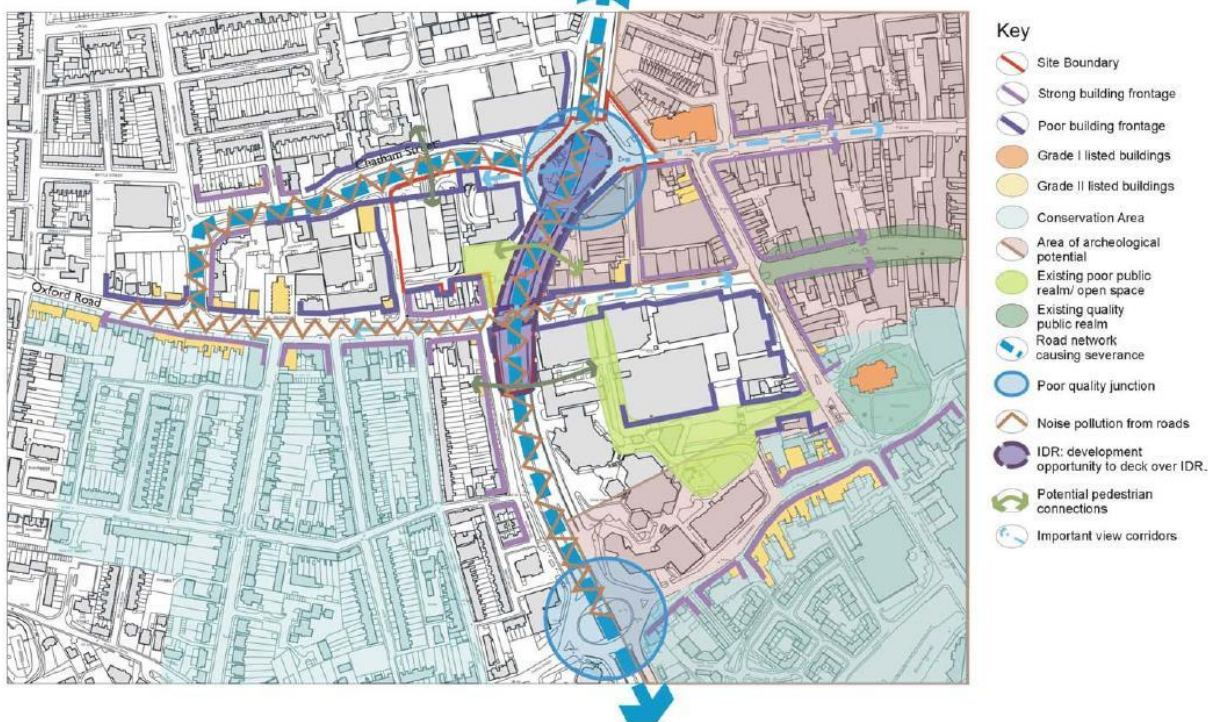


Fig 6: Taken from 'Chatham St Regeneration Area' (courtesy of Reading Borough Council)

As shown in the image above, the surrounding environs comprise:

- To the south and southwest of our proposed site, is used for Leisure/Cultural.
- To the southeast is a multi-storey car parking building.
- To the north is a wide A329 road.
- To the north and northwest, beyond the A329 road, is a residential predominant.
- To the northeast is a leisure/Cultural area.

The continue employment use of the site – hotel, will not detrimentally affect the amenity and character of the nearby residential area. The reasons are as follows:

- The proposed site is not immediately next to any residential buildings.
- Similar to the character of the residential buildings, hotel is a form of accommodation that provide a home away-from-home for visitors to the city – both professionals and tourists.
- The boutique hotel operation C1 will support the existing primary site use – Public House A4.
- The proposed development will also improve the frontage of the existing building and the streetscape along Eaton Place. (The current building frontage is described as poor, shown on figure 6)
- The hotel will be on-site managed by employees who will make sure the hotel, the communal spaces and the site-wide public realm are well looked after. They are also responsible for dealing with any noise or anti-social behaviour should there be any.
- The hotel and staff will provide a natural surveillance to the surrounding area, which will benefit the residential area in terms of the sense of safety and reduction of crime rate.
- The proposed scheme will include removal of the unsightly and dirty remnants of the previous tyre bay operation, regenerate the existing tired and dilapidated building stock.
- The change from a light industrial use to a hotel use will reduce industrial pollution and subsequently improve air quality.
- As the proposed scheme is a hotel, visitors will be out at majority of the time for work or traveling, and occupy the hotel rooms for rest at night time. It would not be used for any intensive activities such as stag or hen do.

We believe that these abovementioned reasons justify that the hotel will not affect the amenity and character of the residential area. On the contrary, the character of the existing area would be greatly enhanced with the introduction of a boutique hotel.

(v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?

As discussed in (iii), there is a lack of a similar size and type of hotel in Reading, therefore the need of the proposed boutique hotel is strong. As we also discussed in (ii), despite a need of new homes, the context where the site sits in, the form and history of the building, and the character of the site location would not be suitable and appropriate for residential use. Furthermore, given all the reasons mentioned above, the proposed hotel is the most ideal use for this particular site as the site would not only complement the existing pub context but also benefit from the pub's services and management. This would be a win-win situation.

(vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?

The outbuildings space was leased out to a small scale tyre fitting operation where the majority of the space is used solely for tyre storage. The business was managed and run by only one person – the tenant himself. In September 2017, the applicant has cancelled the lease for the tyre fitting tenant who has left the building dilapidated. However, the business rate for the light-industrial use workshop is still currently paid by the applicant. The applicant could have re-let the building out, but he decided not to, with the aim of renovating and making a significantly better use of the building – a hotel. On the other hand, the tyre fitting tenant is still currently in the tyre trading business, but at another location in Reading.

The current un-occupied space is proposed to be replaced by a boutique hotel operation (C1) which is complimentary to the current primary site use (A4) – Public House facility. This will require staff to facilitate its success and will result in an increased number of employees generated on the site. Therefore, we believe that the proposed scheme would actually increase the level of employment.

The employment spaces generated by this scheme could be offered to the local community. The short commute distance could encourage staff to cycle or walk to work, avoiding the increase in car use.