4.0 Proposals

4.1 Introduction

The Oracle has a unique role within Reading as a shopping and leisure destination and as a centre integrated within the town centre environment and its infrastructure. The proposed developments will continue to evolve and support The Oracle's role as a multi-use, inclusive asset at the heart of the town. The residential component of the development will be arranged around podium level landscaped courtyards. The podia sit above ground floor commercial, leisure and residential front-of-house uses. Within the retained areas of the existing Debenhams, reconfigured retail space will be provided at lower and upper mall levels as well as a new length of mall with escalator and lift connections down to the Riverside. At the Riverside level, a new entrance to the escalators and a new leisure space will be provided.

The ground floor uses are located to curate the public realm and reinforce Hammerson's long term strategy for creating a successful retail, leisure and work environment overlooking the Kennet. The residential entrances are seen as part of that strategy of diversifying and enriching the riverside and have been located to ensure residents experience a high quality journey to and from their homes. The residential entrances area provides direct access to the concierge, ground floor amenity and management hub. Additional amenity space including a landscaped roof gardens are provided at upper levels.

All homes are designed to good space standards and the scheme will deliver 449 Build to Rent homes consisting of a mix of:

Studios: 23 - 5%

I bedroom homes: 246 - 55%

2 bedroom homes:168 - 37%

3 bedroom homes:12 - 3%

New Restaurant/F&B space 841m2

New Co-working/maker spaces 777m2

Replacement Cinema 2,652m2

Retail and leisure space within retained Debenhams 5,866m2

4.2 Active Riverside

Successful new communities are more than just places to live and work; they are destinations and interlinked communities. For a development such as The Oracle to be successful, it needs to embrace a vibrant and diverse mix of uses, including retail. Hammerson is working with specialist agents and considering how a mix of uses and the experience they can offer could contribute to the ecosystem of this new quarter within The Oracle estate. The objective is to create a genuine mixed used community at the east end of The Oracle site that remain relevant to the wider offer.

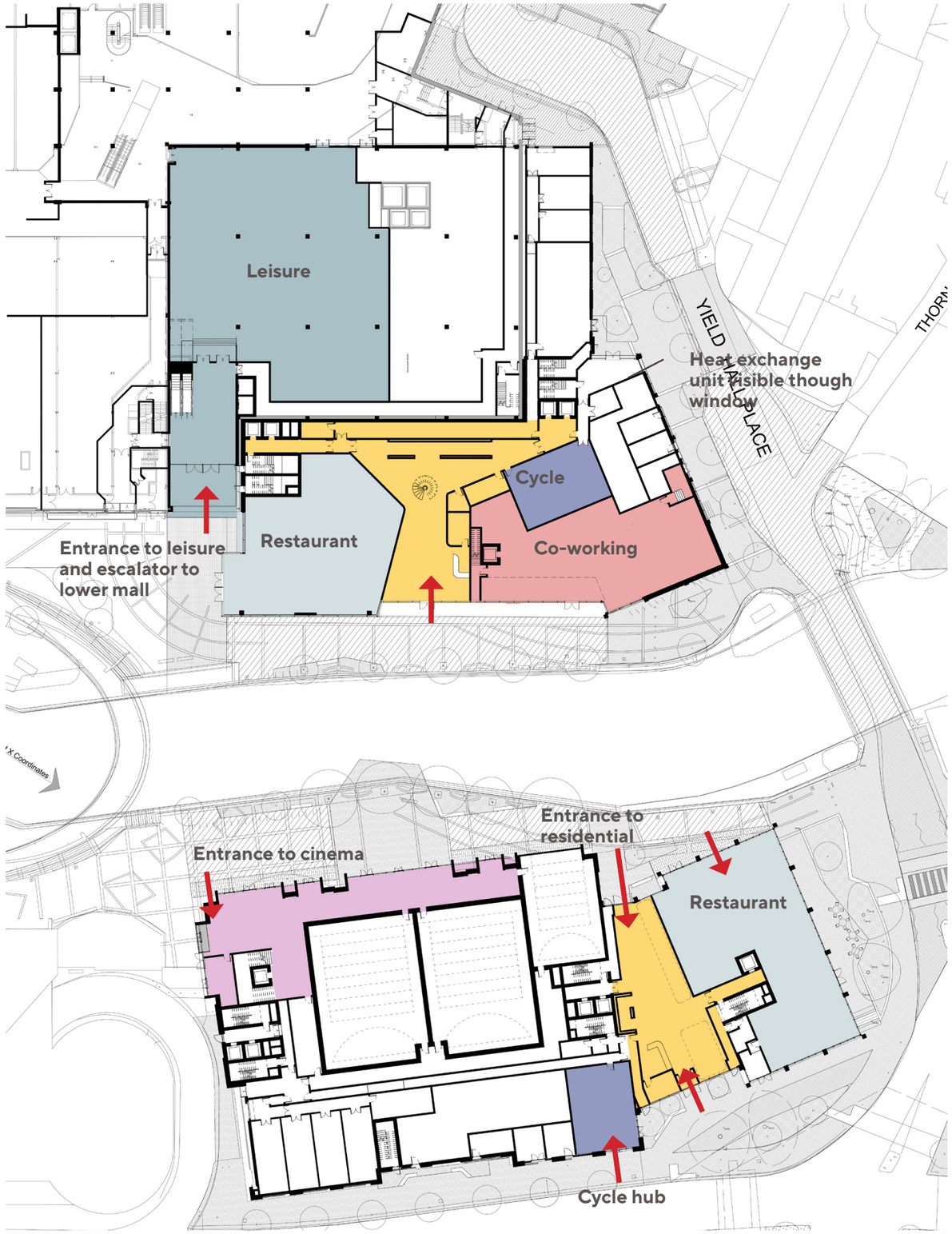
The associated servicing and refuse strategy is designed to minimise impact on the residents and to maximise the use of the existing refuse strategy.

The ground floor uses include on Yield Hall Place 1

- Restaurant space
- Co-working space
- Maker spaces

And on Yield Hall Place 2

- Cinema
- Restaurant space



Ground floor plan

4.3 Yield Hall Place 1 Ground Floor

A new entrance is formed to an escalator and to lifts that directly accesses the lower mall. It will be highly visible and lead to a leisure space at Riverside level. The sun trap immediately in front of the entrance will be overlooked by a new restaurant space. Further east at the corner of Yield Hall Place and the Riverside is a large space that can be divided into a mezzanine co-working and maker spaces of diverse sizes depending on market demand. Back of house plant and refuse is set against a landscaped Yield Hall Place. The main entrance to the residential block faces the river at a midway point on the façade. Its prominent location gives easy access to the lift cores and stair leading to the mezzanine and podium garden. A secondary access is provided on Yield Hall Place.

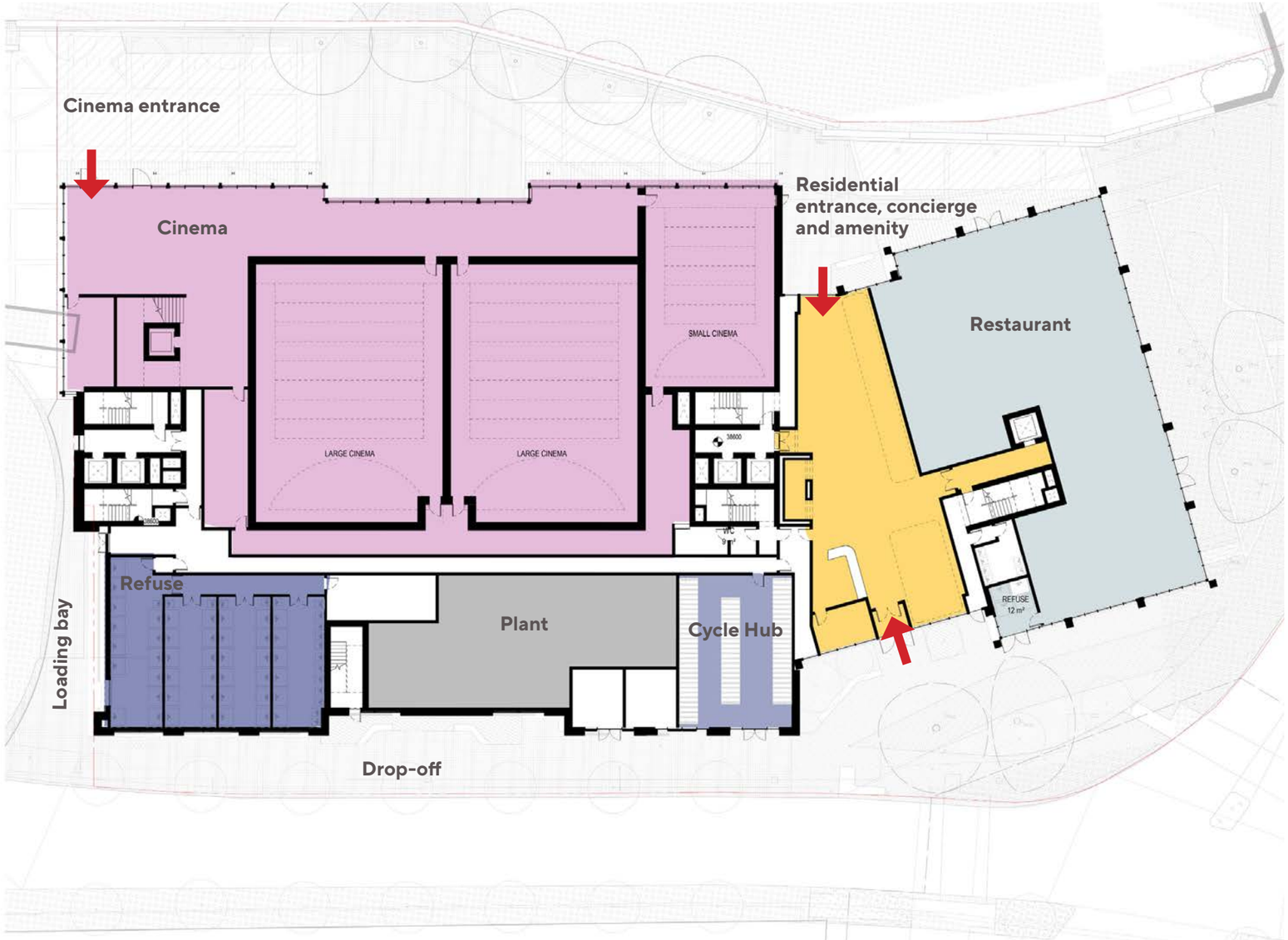
Yield Hall Place 1 - Ground floor plan

4.4 Yield Hall Place 2 Ground Floor

The organisation of the cinema is indicative at this stage and will be detailed by the tenant closer to the time of opening. It is likely that the main entrance will be located close to the adjacent car park and the footbridge that leads to new mall entrance on the other side of the river.

A 464m2 restaurant and / or bar is proposed at the east end of the site overlooking the river and the new public realm to its east and south. This will provide active frontage along the approach to the town centre from the south.

The residential entrance and concierge sits between the restaurant and the cinema with cycle space, plant and refuse placed along the southern edge of the scheme residential back of house. A loading bay is located at the west end of the building and a drop off for small deliveries.

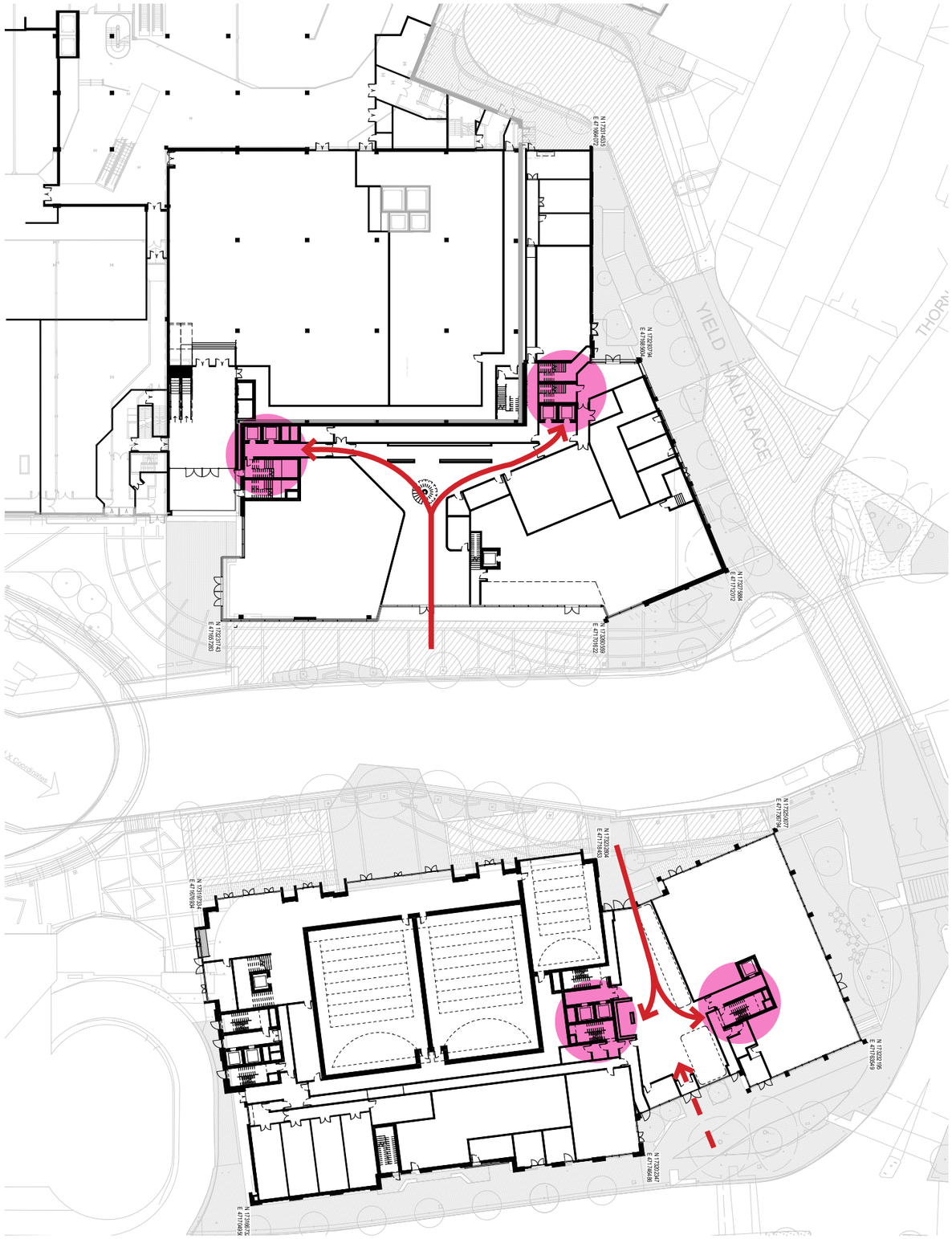


4.5 Residents' Entrance, Concierge & Lounges

The main entrance area to each building will be a double height space that will include a greeting space, concierge and lounge which will provide a sense of welcome, community and security to residents. Small break-out areas with tables and chairs are also provided. The layout of the tables and chairs allow privacy for individuals or groups. Parcel, post rooms and a management office are at ground floor level. Access to the circulation cores are through the main entrances with all tenants funnelled though these common spaces to help create the sense of community that underlines successful build-to-rent developments.

There will be a secondary entrances from Yield Hall Place to Yield Hall Place 1 and from London Street to Yield Hall Place 2. Access will be through secure lobbies to both buildings.

The applicant's focus is on creating great places for people to live with amenity spaces located to encourage interaction between residents. In addition, it is anticipated that many residents will use the many facilities that are already on offer at The Oracle and in central Reading. The residential scheme will be fully integrated into the life of The Oracle and overlook a curated riverside environment.



Ground floor plan

4.6 Ground Floor Activation

A key project objective is to activate the public realm and to support connectivity and integration with neighbouring areas. Major moves include:

- Providing new access to the mall and the leisure space at the west end of the Yield Hall 1 site.
- Planning new and more active uses along the Riverside to Yield Hall Place 1 with restaurant/bar, co-working and marker spaces as well as a major entrance, concierge and amenity to the river facing elevation.
- Extending active frontage along Yield Hall Place and providing points of interest with picture windows to plant areas and enhanced landscape.
- On Yield Hall Place 2, providing greater active frontage from the new cinema to the Riverside.
- Setting a new restaurant with breakout space at the east end of Yield Hall Place 2, with a presence to the Riverside, London Street and the IDR and which overlooks the landing space at the crossing of the IDR from London Street.
- A prominent entrance to the concierge, amenity space and adjacent bicycle hub to the IDR.
- Podium level gardens and homes that overlook the surrounding public realm enhancing passive surveillance and feeling of community safety.

Proposed entrance to leisure unit and escalators to The Oracle mall overlooked by a restaurant/bar