

**Palmer Park Stadium,
Wokingham Road RG6 1LF
BUILT HERITAGE,
TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL
IMPACT APPRAISAL**

Greenwich Leisure Limited

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**Neaves
Urbanism**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (HTVIA) has been prepared to support the application for full planning permission for the refurbishment and extension of Palmer Park grandstand building and public realm improvements at Palmer Park (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.2. It assesses the effect of the Proposed Development (described below), on the heritage assets ('HAs'), townscape features, character and visual receptors at Palmer Park Stadium (hereafter referred to as the 'Site') and in its surroundings. The HTVIA has been prepared on behalf of Greenwich Leisure Limited ('the Applicant'). The Site is located to the east of the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council (RBC) and is shown in **Figure 1** of **Appendix A**.
- 1.3. The Proposed Development comprises of the following:

"Full Planning Application for proposed leisure centre extension and refurbishment of existing grandstand at Palmer Park. The new extension will consist of:

- *25m, 6 lane community pool*
- *fitness suite (110 stations)*
- *wet and dry changing areas*
- *double height activity area*
- *café / seating area*
- *party / meeting room*
- *131 car parking spaces*
- *26 new cycle spaces*
- *parking for 2 coaches*
- *associated soft and hard landscaping*

Refurbishment of the grandstand will involve demolition of existing entrance lobby, internal decorations and minor internal alterations. The existing roof over habitable spaces will be replaced."

- 1.4. The Proposed Development has evolved in discussion with local stakeholders and through responding to comments from public consultation. It includes refurbishment and extension to the existing grandstand building to accommodate a community swimming pool, café, activity zone and fitness gym. The car park would be retained and extended with up to 65 new car parking spaces.

Structure of the HTVIA

- 1.5. The HTVIA has been set out in five sections. Section two provides a summary of the approach and methodology used. This is followed by section three, which considered the baseline situation of the Site and its surroundings (the baseline condition study) in respect of HAs, townscape features,

townscape character and visual amenity. This established the context of the Site against which the Proposed Development has been assessed.

- 1.6. The fourth section provided an appraisal of effects of the Proposed Development on the previously identified baseline condition situation. Non-verified CGIs, illustrations and elevations are included within Saunders Boston Architects Design and Access Statement (DAS) and have been considered as part of this appraisal and should be read in conjunction with it. A concluding summary of the findings have been provided at the end of the HTVIA.
- 1.7. A series of figures and field photos have been prepared and taken to support the HTVIA and can be found in **Appendix A**.

Planning context

- 1.8. Relevant planning policy for the Site is set out in RBC's 2019 Local Plan, which guides development within the borough. The accompanying proposal map shows that the majority of the Site falls within the allocation ER1j: Palmer Park Stadium Area with the remaining element falling within EN7Ed: Local Green Space and Public Open Space. The former provides principles that the Proposed Developments should accord to, which include the following points relevant to this appraisal:
 - *Ensure that there is no adverse impacts on the use of the park and its sport and leisure facilities;*
 - *Ensure that there is no adverse impact on the listed monument and its setting;*
 - *Retain public rights of way across the site.*
- 1.9. These are explored further within the RBC Palmer Park Development Framework document.
- 1.10. The Site contains a grade II listed building so policies Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment and Policy EN6: New Development in an Historic Context apply to the Proposed Development. A cycle route follows the Site's western boundary, Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities.
- 1.11. Further relevant planning policy context within which the Proposed Development is considered is set out in full in **Appendix B**.
- 1.12. The Site is located close to the administrative boundary of Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and the eastern portion of the study area falls within it, as shown in **Figure 1**. The Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment has been considered as part of the townscape character appraisal.

2. Appraisal Methodology

- 2.1. The following section provides a summary of the methodology used for this LVIA to establish both the baseline conditions and the effect of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual matters. It was based upon informed and reasoned professional judgement, considering a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors.

Study area

- 2.2. The Site occupies some 1.3 hectares. The built heritage appraisal considers HAs that lie within a 500 m radius of the Site (as illustrated in **Figure 2 of Appendix A**). The study area (as illustrated in **Figure 1 of Appendix A**) for the townscape character area appraisal included both the Site and its wider context at a 500 metre radius from its centre. The visual appraisal considered the zone of theoretical visibility within this study area. Further long distant visual receptors were considered where identified and relevant.

Surveys

- 2.3. A preliminary desk study was undertaken to establish the physical components of the Site and its surroundings. Potential visual receptors to the building from the surrounding landscape were also identified. Ordnance Survey maps were utilised to identify these features together with aerial photography.
- 2.4. A field study was undertaken by a heritage planner from GHJP and townscape specialists from Neaves Urbanism on 23rd October 2020. During this field study the visibility was good and HAs and features of the Site and surrounding townscape were identified, and the representative viewpoints established in the desk study, were explored and checked. The field study also involved travelling throughout the study area, producing a working photographic record.

Methodology

- 2.5. The HTVIA was undertaken with a prior understanding of the nature of the Proposed Development and its purpose was to assess how it may affect the significance of HAs, and the townscape character and visual amenity of identified receptors. In line with best practice, whilst interrelated, built heritage, townscape and visual effects have been considered separately.
- 2.6. The appraisal was carried out in accordance with best practice guidance that includes:
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
 - The National Planning Policy Framework (2019), supporting National Planning Policy Guidance and relevant Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Historic England advice;
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014)

- Visual Representation of Development Proposals: Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (2019)

- 2.7. The following provides a summary of the approach taken in this appraisal, with the methodology set out in full in the supporting **Appendix C**.
- 2.8. Through a combination of both a desk based and field study, HAs or receptors, which may be affected by the Proposed Development were established. HAs can include designated or non-designated HAs (there are no known non-designated HAs in the area around the Site). The term 'townscape receptor' was used within the appraisal to mean an assemblage of elements (e.g. townscape character areas) that may be affected by the Proposed Development. Whilst 'visual receptor' included the public or community at large, residents, visitors and other groups of viewers and considered the visual amenity of people affected. This appraisal also considered the nature of the view and provided a series of representative views into the Proposed Development in **Figures 6.1 to 6.6 of Appendix A**.
- 2.9. The first stage of the appraisal was to identify the baseline conditions of the Site and surrounding study area. This includes relevant HAs, such as listed buildings, Registered Parks or Gardens of Special Historic Interest ('RPGSHI') and conservation areas that fall within the identified study area. The existing elements and characteristics that contribute to the townscape were also considered to establish townscape character area receptors. This included reference, where relevant, to published character assessments. Visual receptors were recognised to establish the visibility of the existing Site. Consideration was given to local views that are identified in planning policy or guidance documents.
- 2.10. The next stage considered the value of a receptor and its susceptibility to the proposed change; this was used to establish the receptor's sensitivity. The Proposed Development was then considered and from this the potential degree of 'effect' was predicated and assessed on the previously identified receptors, at the first year of operation.

Consultation

- 2.11. Draft pre-application advice received from RBC 22nd September 2020 advised that the Proposed Development should consider the setting of the George Palmer statue, a grade II listed building. It identified that a Heritage Statement would be required to support the planning application to determine the acceptability of the Proposed Development with respect to the listed building; and referenced the requirements of policies EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, and EN6: Development in an Historic Context. This HTVIA addresses these requirements.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 2.12. In considering the effects of the Proposed Development upon the HAs, townscape character areas and visual receptor the HTVIA was based on the material that accompanies the planning application, including the proposal drawings and supporting DAS, prepared by Saunders Boston Architects.
- 2.13. The field study was undertaken in autumn whilst the majority of trees were in leaf. This is evident in the representative photographs set out in **Appendix A**. In line with best practice, the appraisal of visual effects has been undertaken applying professional judgement relating to the highest degree of visibility, which would normally occur in winter months when intervening deciduous trees are bare of leaves.
- 2.14. The HTVIA was undertaken based on access to publicly accessible areas. Whilst the potential effects from properties were considered, no access was gained and so the appraisal was founded on professional judgement based on the nearest publicly accessible location.

3. Baseline Conditions

- 3.1. This section considers the existing Site in terms of the physical townscape and its components along with the relevant HAs, townscape character receptors and visual amenity from existing visual receptors. The 'value' of each HA, townscape character and visual receptor has been considered as part of the baseline study through the desk-based review and site visit. The identified 'value' contributes to the resultant 'sensitivity' of each asset and receptor established at the appraisal of effects stage.

The Site

- 3.2. The Site is irregular in shape and contains the Palmer Park Stadium building, which facilitates the adjacent athletics track and velodrome, along with its associated surface car parking and immediate public realm. The George Palmer statue, a grade II listed building, sits within this public realm in the north-west corner of the Site, see baseline heritage appraisal in the following section.
- 3.3. Also included within the Site is a small section of the grassed area of the park and a link to the boundary footpath and the carriageway of the main entrance. The main entrance is accessed from Wokingham Road (A329) the southwest corner of the park. There is also a drop off point to the north of the Site at the George Palmer statue. Pedestrian access can be gained throughout the Site and it provides a link between the northern and southern areas of the Palmer Park. Access into the Palmer Park Stadium is restricted.
- 3.4. The Site gradually slopes down from its southern edge at 48.7 metres above ordnance datum (AOD) down to the north, at 47.7 metres AOD. The majority of the Site consists of tarmacked hard standing, with small areas of amenity grass and a shrub bed framing the George Palmer statue.
- 3.5. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) has been produced by Hayden's Arboricultural Consultants and submitted as part of this planning application. The assessment identified that the Site is not covered by a Tree Preservation Orders and contains ten individual trees and three hedgerows. The AIA establishes that the majority of these trees are classified as 'category C', with one memorial tree classified as 'category A' and one individual tree as 'category B' and two trees identified as 'category U'.
- 3.6. The existing Palmer Park Stadium, which is located in the southeast corner of the Site, was constructed in the late 20th century. It has a rectangular footprint and is two storeys in height facing west with a tiered grandstand to the east facing the athletics track and velodrome. Its façade materials are predominantly dark red brick and glazing with red steel columns. Its roof consist of nine, concave, sections.
- 3.7. The Site's boundary is defined to the east by the Palmer Park Stadium, to the west by the boundary to the existing car park. The northern boundary is not demarked and includes the public realm around the George Palmer statue. The southern boundary to the southeast follows the existing Palmer Park Stadium curtilage, whilst the southwest boundary is not demarked but runs

parallel with the existing car park's southern edge. Also incorporated within the Site is a link to the boundary footpath to the south and the main car park entrance, to the southwest.

Historic development of the Site and local area

- 3.8. The supporting Appraisal for the South Park Conservation Area notes,

“between 1850 and 1900 the population of the Borough more than trebled from 21,456 to 72,217 and the housing stock increased accordingly. Development east of the town was part of the post-railway late 19th century during which period large numbers of houses were built and growing civic pride was celebrated in the building of Reading's Town Hall (1875), the Concert Hall (1882), the Museum and Library (1883-4) and Reading Grammar School (1865- 71).”

- 3.9. This part of Reading principally developed in the second part of the 19th century. Reading cemetery, located to the northwest of the Site, was laid out in 1840s and streets of detached, semi-detached and terraced houses followed.
- 3.10. Palmer Park was a gift to Reading by the biscuit manufacturer George Palmer (of Huntley and Palmers) at the end of his term as the Mayor of Reading. He originally gave 21 acres of land, to the east of Cemetery Junction, in 1889. In 1890 he gifted a further 49 acres to provide sporting facilities (his only condition was that no alcohol should be sold in the park). The park and pavilion were designed by the architect William Ravenscroft. The park opened in November 1891.
- 3.11. George Palmer was born in 1818, the eldest son of a West Country Quaker family. At the age of 14 he was apprenticed to his uncle in Taunton to learn the trade of confectioner and miller. The Palmer family already had connections with the Huntley family and in 1838 William Isaac, George's younger brother, was apprenticed to Joseph Huntley jnr. When George was 22 he moved to Reading with his mother and sister. George was ambitious and had received a solid training in the confectionery trade. He also had the £550 required to buy a half-share of the London Street business. On 24 June 1841 Thomas Huntley and George Palmer became partners.
- 3.12. The original design and structure of the park includes the key elements of:
1. The circular tree lined path around the perimeter;
 2. Main entrance gates in the west and north, other entrances are secondary in nature;
 3. A north-south link, which splits the southern half of the park into two; and
 4. A diagonal east-west link.
- 3.13. Palmer Park has a number of varied uses and contains one of the oldest velodromes in the country, having been constructed at the turn of the century. Primarily used by local residents, it hosts many religious festivals, sports competitions and events such as the fun fair.
- 3.14. One of the main interventions into the park since it was originally designed has been the creation of a vehicular access and car park within the triangular space in front of the stadium in the 1980s.

Other changes include the loss of parts of the east-west and north-south paths, particularly along the Palmer Park Avenue side.

- 3.15. The park today includes a 1980 spectator stand, areas for car parking as well as modern play areas.

Baseline Heritage Appraisal

- 3.16. This section sets out the heritage baseline of the appraisal identifying above ground HAs. For this appraisal they comprise of listed buildings, a RPGSHI and a conservation area.
- 3.17. The Site includes one grade II listed building, the statue of George Palmer (it does not fall within any further HAs). This appraisal considers the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the heritage significance of the statue and all designated HAs within 500m of the Site as listed in the **Table 3.1** and shown in **Figure 2** of **Appendix A**.
- 3.18. This appraisal considers the particular significance, and potential impact on that significance arising from the Proposed Development, on the following HAs within the study area. Some of the receptors have been grouped for the appraisal where they are of the same sensitivity and form groups of buildings that lie in a similar location relative to the Site.
- 3.19. The significance of each HA, based on the individual list entry, is considered in the following section or at **Appendix D**.

Table 3.1 Heritage Assets and sensitivity

Heritage asset	Sensitivity
Listed buildings (grade II)	
Statue of George Palmer	Medium
St Bartholomew's group - Church of St Bartholomew - St Bartholomew's Church Hall - No. 60 St Bartholomew's Road	Medium
Reading Cemetery group - Entrance Lodges and Gates to Cemetery - Andrews and Barrett Family Monuments - Sarcophagus Monument - Monument to Bernard Lawrence Hieatt	Medium
Oaklands Group - Nos. 1 to 9 Oaklands - Nos. 10 to 12 and 14 to 24 Oaklands - Nos. 25 to 34 Oaklands - Nos. 35 to 41 Oaklands - Nos. 42 to 51 Oaklands	Medium
RPGSHI	
Reading Cemetery	Medium
Conservation area	
South Park	Medium

Heritage Significance

- 3.20. The appraisal provides statements of significance for the HAs identified in **Table 3.1**, with the statue of George Palmer (on Site) set out below and the other HAs at **Appendix D**. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines heritage significance at 'Annex 2: Glossary' as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

- 3.21. The appraisal of significance below and within **Appendix D** are based on on-site visual inspection, on-line research and the list description of the South Park Conservation Area Appraisal (the 'Appraisal'). They are proportionate both to the importance of the assets and to the nature and extent of the Proposed Development. They are sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on heritage interest.

Statue of George Palmer – listed grade II

- 3.22. The statue of George Palmer, erected by public subscription, originally stood in Broad Street in central Reading and was unveiled on the 4 November 1891. George Palmer, a former mayor of Reading was the founder of Huntley and Palmer's biscuit empire (see Historic development of the Site).
- 3.23. The bronze statue, by sculptor George Blackall Simmond, dates from 1891 and shows George Palmer carrying his silk hat and his umbrella in his right hand and grasping his lapel with his left (see **Photo 1**). The statue stands on a tall pink granite plinth with a moulded base and cornice.



Photo 1 - View of statue of George Palmer looking towards the Site

- 3.24. The statue was moved to its current location in 1930: Palmer Park was a gift from Palmer to the city. Its setting comprises the park, which includes a number of structures related to the recreational use of this amenity area gifted to the city by Samuel Palmer.

Baseline Townscape Character

- 3.25. The following section considers the landscape character in respect of published assessments from national through to the borough level.

National Landscape Character – Natural England Character Area

- 3.26. The Site and study area falls within the National Character Area Profile '115 Thames Valley'. This covers a much wider area and is described in more detail within **Appendix B**. Whilst it serves to provide useful background and context to the wider area, the scale is such that there would be no notable effect resulting from the Proposed Development and accordingly no further reference has been made within this appraisal.

Borough Townscape Character

- 3.27. RBC have not undertaken a townscape character assessment for the borough. The appraisal has therefore considered the townscape features that contribute to the existing character of the established study area along with consideration of aesthetic and perceptual factors.

Local Townscape Character

- 3.28. In total three townscape character areas (TCA) have been identified:
- TCA1: Palmer Park
 - TCA2: Residential (split up into two types TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century and TCA2B: Residential mid 20th century).
 - TCA3: Transport Corridor
- 3.29. The TCAs are illustrated on **Figure 3**. Based on the limited inter-visibility between the Site and TCA2B: Residential mid 20th century, this TCA is not discussed further.

TCA1: Palmer Park

- 3.30. Palmer Park was originally laid out and opened in the late 19th century and its present-day layout remains broadly the same with only increased sport and community facilities provided in the form of tennis courts, bowling green and a library added during the 20th century. The park's topography is subtly undulating with a general fall from the southeast at 50 metres AOD to 46 metres AOD in the north.
- 3.31. RBC's Palmer Park Development Framework identifies that the original design of the park included the following elements
- *1. The circular tree lined path around the perimeter;*

- 2. *Main entrance gates in the west and north, other entrances are secondary in nature;*
- 3. *A strong North-South link, which splits into two in the southern half of the park;*
- 4. *A diagonal East-West link;*
- 5. *A tree lined avenue leading to the pavilion building and terminating at the monument with a focal space in front of the stadium.*

- 3.32. The Palmer Park Development Framework notes that the majority of these are still in existence, but the main intervention into the park is the creation of vehicle access and the car park. It also observes that parts of the East-West and North-South links have been lost.
- 3.33. The park can be split into three areas that are framed together by a double row of mature trees that line the circular path. This includes an open area to the north that provides space for football pitches and a temporary space for events such as the circus. The central area includes playgrounds, artificial turf 5-a-side pitches and a bowling club that are set within areas of mature trees. It also includes the Palmer Park Stadium and surface car parking area. The southern area includes a grassed area for informal play.
- 3.34. Built form is limited to the Site's Palmer Park Stadium building, the public library, café, derelict toilet block, buildings associated with the bowling green and sub-aqua club.
- 3.35. The park is in a good condition with moderate scenic quality and importance and includes a grade II listed building. TCA1: Palmer Park is considered to have a medium townscape value.

TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century

- 3.36. Situated to the north, south and west of the study area TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century predominately consists of medium density residential led land use with associated local shopping parade, educational and community uses. The topography slopes down from the southeast at 56 metres AOD to 45 metres AOD in the north.
- 3.37. Predominately developed during the late 19th century, built form within the area is typically two to three storeys in height and includes terrace, semi-detached and detached properties. Building façades demonstrate the varied brick colours and patterns typically present within the Victorian suburbs of east Reading, this includes grey, cream and red brick, with roofs of slate or clay tiles.
- 3.38. The built form is laid out in narrow long blocks with a broadly consistent building line that frames short local linear views within the area.
- 3.39. The majority of the roads through this area are tertiary residential streets of varying widths with associated pavements and are relatively quiet. These are served by the busy secondary routes of Wokingham Road (A329) and London Road (A4). Both routes serve bus routes between Reading Town Centre and its suburbs.

- 3.40. There are no public, or private, areas of open space within the character area, however, it frames the public open space of TCA1: Palmer Park. Vegetation is typically associated with front and back private gardens and the area has limited street trees.
- 3.41. TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century includes South Park Conservation Area and, within the study area, there are eight grade II listed buildings and structures and the grade II RPGSHI of Reading Old Cemetery. The TCA is considered to have a high to medium townscape value.

TCA3: Transport Corridor

- 3.42. TCA3: Transport Corridor includes the wide primary route of the A3290 and a railway line that links Reading Station with London Waterloo. Both transport routes are set on raised embankments as they pass through the study area and create a high level of noise when in use. The railway line marks the administrative boundary of RBC and WBC, and the transport corridor also provides a physical boundary between the two areas.
- 3.43. Within the study area there are two east and west access points under the road and railway line. One of which is located to the southeast, along Palmer Park Avenue, the second access point is the large A3290 and A4 roundabout that includes signalised pedestrian crossing points. There is no further pedestrian access within the TCA due to the nature of the A3290 and a railway line.
- 3.44. The transport routes are lined with mature vegetation and trees that filtered views to the park and limit views to the Site.
- 3.45. The townscape within the area is considered to have potential for substitution as it is in low condition and has a low scenic quality. Overall TCA3: Transport Corridor is considered to have a low townscape value.

Baseline Visual Appraisal

- 3.46. The first stage of the baseline visual appraisal is to establish the zone of theoretical visibility or visual envelope of the Site, in other words, the extent of the area from which the Site is visible. This is done through a combination of desk-based work, assessing the surrounding topography from maps and surveys and site visits where the visual receptors are confirmed.
- 3.47. The second stage considers the Site's visibility from the surrounding study area through an appraisal of each identified visual receptor to establish the nature of the view and to what extent it contributes to it.

Stage 1 – Site visibility

- 3.48. Through undertaking a desk based review of local OS mapping and field studies the visibility of the Site was established along with a number of visual receptors (refer to stage 2 for the latter).
- 3.49. The extent of existing visibility looking out from the Site is summarised below.
- Glimpsed to open views to the properties present within Palmer Park itself.

- Glimpsed to partial views to properties associated with Haywood Close, Palmer Park Avenue, Wokingham Road, St Bartholomews Road and London Road, along with the routes themselves.
- Glimpsed to partial views to the raised railway line.

Stage 2 – Appraisal of views

3.50. The visual receptors identified at stage 1 can be sub-divided into the following groups with relevant abbreviations referred to in subsequent sections of this appraisal.

- Residents – eg those within residential properties. (RE)
- Other – eg offices, cafes or business parks (OT)
- Public highways (RD)
- Rail users (RA)

3.51. The following section describes typical views from each of the visual receptors identified during the day. Where relevant and to avoid repetition, some receptors have been placed within groups, generally relating to geographical proximity. This includes an appraisal of the scenic quality of the views, the extent and contribution the Site makes within the view and the value attached to the view.

3.52. The visual receptors are illustrated in **Figure 4** and a series of representative views are set out **Figures 6.1 to 6.6** from the points shown in **Figure 5**.

RE01: Properties nos. 1 to 57 along Palmer Park Avenue

3.53. These two storey, semi-detached, residential properties lie to the south of the Site on the south side of Palmer Park Avenue, a short distance away. Residents are likely to have partial views from the northern façade's windows towards the Site, although it is considered that the visibility is restricted to glimpsed views in the summer when the mature trees that frame the park are in leaf. The scenic quality of this view is medium as it takes in Palmer Park and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE02: Even numbered properties nos. 102 to 118 along Wokingham Road

3.54. Situated to the southeast of the Site these two to three storey properties are predominately residential in use, but also include a hotel. They are located on the western side of Wokingham Road, a short distance away from the Site. The residential properties include detached, semi-detached and apartment buildings. Residents are likely to have partial views from the eastern façade's windows towards the Site in the winter and, it is considered, that the visibility is restricted to glimpsed views in the summer. The scenic quality of this view is medium as it takes in Palmer Park, however, the experience of the user is influenced by the number of vehicles using Wokingham Road. Its overall value is assessed as being low.

RE03: Properties nos. 11 to 32 along St Bartholomews Road

- 3.55. These two storey, semi-detached and terraced, residential properties lie to the northeast of the Site on the western side of St Bartholomews Road, a short distance away. Residents are likely to have partial views from the eastern façade's windows towards the Site, although it is considered that the visibility is again restricted to glimpsed views in the summer. The scenic quality of this view is medium as it takes in Palmer Park and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE04: Odd numbered properties nos. 387 to 419 along London Road

- 3.56. Positioned to the north of the Site this terrace of two storey residential properties are positioned to on the northern side of London Road, a short distance away from the Site. Residents are likely to have glimpsed views from the southern façade's windows towards the Site, although the visibility is considered to be prevented in the summer due to the double row of mature trees that line the park's boundary. The scenic quality of this view is medium as it takes in Palmer Park, however, the experience of the user is influenced by the number of vehicles using London Road. Its overall value is assessed as being low.

RE05: Properties within Haywood Close

- 3.57. The residential properties in Haywood Close include the Grade II listed former vicarage of no. 60 St Bartholomews Road, which has been split into residential apartments, and a terrace of late 20th Century residential properties. It is considered that none of the residential properties windows are orientated towards or take in the Site. The scenic quality of this view is medium as it takes in Palmer Park and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE06: New Town

- 3.58. The terrace of two storey residential properties associated with New Town are located to the north of the Site, a medium distance away. It is considered that no views can be gained to the Site from the residents of this area due to the intervening built form and vegetation. The value of the views from these visual receptors is considered to be medium to low due to the varying scenic quality.

RE07: East Reading

- 3.59. The residential properties located within the eastern area of Reading range in age, architectural style and between two and three storeys in height. It also includes the Groves Conservation Area. It is considered that no views can be gained to the Site due to the intervening built form and vegetation. The value of the views from these visual receptors is considered to be medium to low due to the varying scenic quality.

RE08: Woodley

- 3.60. The mid 20th Century residential suburbs of Woodley includes two storey, semi-detached, properties that are set within large front and back gardens. It is considered that no views can be gained to the Site due to the raised carriageway of the A3290. The scenic quality of this view is

medium to low, however, the experience of the user is influenced by the number of vehicles using the adjacent A3290. Its overall value is assessed as being low.

OT01: Palmer Park Stadium track and ancillary buildings outside the site

- 3.61. The majority of the views to the Site from the users of Palmer Park Stadium track are prevented by the wooden fence that defines its boundary. Partial views are, however, considered to be possible from its ancillary buildings outside of the Site. The value of the views from these visual receptors are low due to the townscape it takes in being in generally moderate to low condition and having limited scenic quality.

OT02: Palmer Park

- 3.62. Due to the Site's location within Palmer Park open to glimpsed views can be afforded onto it depending on the users position. This is demonstrated in representative views 1, 4, 5, 7 to 11 of **Appendix A Figures 6.1 to 6.6**. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium, due to the landscape of the park being in overall moderate condition and having local scenic quality.

OT03: Riverside Day Nursery and Tutus Table Cafe

- 3.63. The users of Riverside Day Nursery and Tutus Table Café are likely to have limited glimpsed views to the Site from windows orientated towards it. Views are typically restricted due to intervening vegetation associated with the park. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium, due to the northern landscape of the park it takes in being in generally good condition and having local scenic quality.

OT04: Palmer Park Library

- 3.64. Positioned to the west of the Site, within the park, it is considered that no views can be gained to the Site by the users of Palmer Park Library. This is due to the intervening built form and vegetation associated with the park. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium, due to the landscape of the park it takes in being in generally good condition and having local scenic quality.

OT05: Old Reading Cemetery, St Bart's Church and Pakistan Community Centre

- 3.65. Intervening vegetation and built form prevents a view to the Site from the Registered Park and Garden of Old Reading Cemetery, grade II listed building of St Bart's Church and the Pakistan Community Centre. The cemetery and buildings are positioned to the northwest of the Site, a short distance away. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium, due to the landscape of the park it takes in being in generally good condition and having local scenic quality.

OT06: Huntley and Palmers Allotment

- 3.66. These allotments are located to the east of the Site, a short distance away. It is considered that no views can be gained to the Site from the users of the allotment due to the raised carriageway of

the A3290. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium to low, due to the townscape it takes in being in generally moderate condition and having local scenic quality. The experience of the view is influenced by the number of vehicles using the A3290.

RD01: Palmer Park Avenue

- 3.67. Running between the southeast and southwest of the Site, the views along Palmer Park Avenue vary from partial to glimpsed views depending on the position and season, as illustrated in representative views 2 and 3 of **Appendix A Figures 6.2 and 6.3**. The scenic quality of the views from this visual receptor is considered to be medium to low and the value low.

RD02: Wokingham Road

- 3.68. Located to the southeast of Palmer Park, partial to glimpsed views can be gained to the Site's main entrance and southern area from a limited section of vehicle users of Wokingham Road. The scenic quality afforded from the associated views are medium to low and the value of the views from this visual receptor is overall low.

RD03: St Bartholomews Road

- 3.69. St Bartholomews Road provides a link between Wokingham Road, to the west, and London Road, to the north. The majority of the visibility from this road to the Site is restricted by Palmer Park's associated mature trees that frame its circular walking route. Glimpsed views of the Site's northern boundary can be gained in winter when the mature trees are not in leaf. The scenic quality is low and the value of the views from this visual receptor is considered to be low.

RD04: London Road

- 3.70. Situated to the north of Palmer Park, limited glimpsed views can be gained to the Site's northern boundary from a limited section of vehicle users of the London Road in the winter. The scenic quality afforded from the associated views are medium to low and the value of the views from this visual receptor is overall low.

RD05: A3290 and RA01: South Western Railway

- 3.71. Fleeting views can be gained by users of the South Western Railway Line and, to a limited extent, vehicle users of the A3290 to the Site and the Palmer Park Stadium in the winter. The scenic quality afforded from the associated views are low and the value of the views from this visual receptor is low.

4. Appraisal of Effects

- 4.1. This section considers how the Proposed Development, described below and illustrated in the accompanying planning application documents, would affect the assets and receptors identified in the baseline study.
- 4.2. There is one HAs on Site but there are no direct effects on this HA. Any effects on this or any other HAs in the study area would be on their settings. The methodology for assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on HAs and their heritage significance is set out at **Appendix B**.
- 4.3. To assist in defining the effects, the sensitivity of the townscape character and visual receptors representative views are considered. As outlined in the methodology, sensitivity is determined by combining appraisals of value (set out in **Appendix B**), and an appraisal of the susceptibility of the receptors to the Proposed Development.
- 4.4. For each receptor, the magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development is then described. The magnitude of change, upon completion of the Proposed Development, considers the effects in terms of duration, reversibility, geographical extent and size or scale. The Proposed Development is considered to be long term and permanent and therefore to avoid unnecessary duplication, duration and reversibility are not discussed further.

Description of Proposed Development

- 4.5. The Proposed Development seeks full planning permission for the refurbishment and extension of the existing building of Palmer Park Stadium to the north and west of the existing building.
- 4.6. The extension to Palmer Park Stadium is formed by two elements: the hub and the swimming pool. It is designed in such a way that views in and out of the building are opened up providing an 'active frontage' within the park.
- 4.7. Proposed façade materials to be used on the extension include brick on the ground floor and a copper coloured cladding, which would provide a more prominent presence of the Palmer Park Stadium Building within the park.
- 4.8. Enhanced public realm includes a new proposed plaza space in front of the building that also encompasses the George Palmers statue. Including seating and a specimen trees that provide seasonal interest. The Proposed Development also reinstates missing elements of the East-West and North-South links, with the latter link from Palmer Park Avenue lined with a new avenue of native trees.
- 4.9. Increased car parking area would be framed by a hedgerow and tree planting to reduce the visual effect of vehicles using it within the park.
- 4.10. The AIA submitted as part of this planning application identifies that the two trees identified as 'category 'U' would be removed due to their impaired quality. A further nine individual trees and three hedgerows would be removed to accommodate the Proposed Development. All of these are

classified as 'category C', bar one individual tree which is a 'category B'. The memorial tree classified as 'category A' is proposed to be relocated elsewhere. Over 60 new trees are proposed to be planted as part of the landscape proposal for the Proposed Development.

- 4.11. It is understood that the construction would take place in one phase over a two year period and that planting of trees would occur within the first planting season following completion of the construction works. Working hours and construction traffic would be controlled through a Construction Environmental Management Plan which advocates best practice in the management of the Site and its access during the construction period.

Heritage Appraisal

- 4.12. The following section considers the effects of the proposed development on HAs. Definitions and criteria used are found in **Appendix C**.
- 4.13. The Proposed Development comprises a new swimming pool building. Where visible in views from or of the identified HAs the Proposed Development would be seen in the context of the existing sports stand and car park, within a municipal park that contains various buildings and structures from the late 19th century through to the late 20th century.
- 4.14. There would be no direct impact on any identified built heritage receptor. The landscape around the grade II listed statue of George Palmer (on Site) would be enhanced as part of the proposals and the statue would be protected during these works and the construction of the new building.
- 4.15. There would be temporary localised effects on HAs resulting from the construction phase of the development. Whilst the construction phase would result in additional larger vehicles, deliveries, cranes and plant on site, there are no abnormal construction methods or plant being proposed and whilst the effects are considered to be negative, they are short term and temporary in nature and would not be considered further.
- 4.16. The principal heritage effect would be on setting of the statue of George Palmer, which lies on Site. This statue is not in its original location, although it has been located in the park, which was gifted to Reading by George Palmer in 1889, since 1930. The immediate landscape within which it sits was not part of the original layout of the park, it was sited close to recreation facilities that were an early addition to the park. The existing grandstand and car park area lie close to the statue, which looks away from these and the Site, to the west towards the town centre and its original home.
- 4.17. This is a robust statue that was designed for a city centre location and as such the introduction of a new leisure building nearby, would not harm its setting. George Palmer gifted the park to the people of Reading to provide amenity facilities and the enhancement of the recreational activities on offer in the park are in the spirit of this gift and intentions at the time. The incorporation of the statue within a new more formal landscape around the new swimming pool building is considered appropriate to its setting and befitting of a statue of a successful industrialist and a former mayor of the city. The magnitude of effect is considered to be medium and the effect would be **moderate**

and beneficial in respect of heritage significance, enhancing the stature and presence of the statue in the park.

4.18. There would be an effect of low magnitude on the setting of the St Bartholomew's grade II listed building group. The Proposed Development would be visible in views from this group, which sits adjoining the north-west corner of the park. It would, however, be seen in conjunction with the existing stand and close to the other structures in the park, beyond numerous mature trees. The effect would be **minor to moderate and neutral**. There would be no harm to the significance of these HAs.

4.19. In respect of the Reading Cemetery and Oaklands groups, their distance from the Site, and the scale of the Proposed Developments, together with the nature of the surrounding residential streets, means that the effect would be "**none**". The same applies to the Reading Cemetery RPSGHI and the South Park Conservation Area. There would be no effect on the significance of these HAs.

Effects on Townscape Character

4.20. The following section considers the effects of the Proposed Development on townscape character at the local level. Definitions and criteria used are found in **Appendix B**.

4.21. There would be temporary, localised effects during the demolition and construction phase caused by additional larger vehicles, deliveries, cranes and plant etc. These effects are considered to be negative, however they would be short-lived and temporary in nature and are not considered further within the appraisal.

4.22. Located at the centre of Palmer Park the Proposed Development provides a new focal space. The design of the extended Palmer Park Stadium building, and its copper coloured façade, would help with legibility for the park's users.

4.23. The Site falls within TCA1: Palmer Park, this has been recognised as having a medium value within the baseline section of this appraisal. The Proposed Development would result in a new and improved focal space for the park. The scale and architectural detailing of the Proposed Development's extension would help with legibility for the park's users. The public realm strategy for the plaza in front of the Palmer Park Stadium building improves the scenic quality of this area of the park and the setting of the George Palmer statue.

4.24. It is considered that TCA1: Palmer Park would be tolerant to change of the type proposed as it follows the principles set out with RBC's Palmer Park Development Framework and has a low susceptibility to the change proposed, as defined in the methodology set out in **Appendix B**. Through assessing the 'value' and 'susceptibility to change' it is concluded that TCA1: Palmer Park has a low sensitivity to the Proposed Development. Overall it is considered that the Proposed Development would have a direct, permanent, low magnitude of change to TCA1: Palmer Park resulting in a **minor** and **beneficial** effect.

- 4.25. The Proposed Development indirectly effects areas of TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century and from which partial to no views are possible. It would have an indirect, permanent, low magnitude of change. This results in a **minor** and **neutral** effect.
- 4.26. Fleeting glimpsed views are possible from TCA3: Transport Corridor and the Proposed Development would have an indirect, permanent, very low magnitude of change. This results in a **no** effect on TCA3: Transport Corridor.
- 4.27. There is no inter-visibility between the Proposed Development and TCA2B: Residential mid 20th century resulting in no magnitude of change and no effect. Its value, susceptibility to change and sensitivity are summarised in **Table 4.1**.

Effects on Visual Receptors

- 4.28. The Proposed Development would result in irreversible changes to the Site and views towards it from the identified visual receptors may change with its implementation. This section sets out the appraisal of potential effects of the Proposed Development on the visual receptors identified in section 3. The appraisal considers the potential effects at year 1.
- 4.29. Demolition and construction work relating to visual effects are associated with the removal of existing on-site buildings and structures, along with the enclosure of the Site with hoarding and the use of construction plant. The latter is likely to include scaffolding, piling drives and other construction plant during this stage of works. It is considered that this stage would follow the form of best practice construction methods and housekeeping (tidy site) to reduce visual clutter. These effects are negative; however, they would be short-lived and temporary in nature and are not considered further within the appraisal.
- 4.30. In undertaking this visual appraisal consideration has been given to the field photography of the representative views set out within **Figures 6.1 to 6.5 of Appendix A**.
- 4.31. Overall it is considered that the Proposed Development would not significantly increase the visibility of the Site from the surrounding visual receptors due to the proposed building heights.
- 4.32. Through appraising the Proposed Development, it is considered that the following visual receptor's views magnitude of change is assessed as being none, with the Proposed Development not being visible. The following visual receptors are therefore not discussed further:
- Residential Properties - RE05: Properties within Haywood Close, RE06: New Town, RE07: East Reading and RE08: Woodley
 - Other - OT04: Palmer Park Library, OT5: Old Reading Cemetery, St Bart's Church and Pakistan Community Centre and: and OT06: Huntley and Palmers Allotment
- 4.33. **Table 4.1** provides a summary of the findings relating to the nature of the visual receptors, their sensitivity and the magnitude of change resulting from the Proposed Development. Where effects

are identified, consideration has been given to whether they are adverse, beneficial or neutral. The full definitions for these effects are found in **Appendix B**.

- 4.34. The following provides a summary of the effects for the key receptors / receptor groups in the first year of operation.

RE01: Properties nos. 1 to 57 along Palmer Park Avenue

- 4.35. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is high, as it is associated with residential properties. The value was assessed in the baseline section as medium to low and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.36. Glimpsed views are likely to be gained from the users to the Proposed Development's North – South footpath link from the properties windows that are orientated towards the Site. Glimpsed views would also be possible to the extended Palmer Park Stadium building and car park through the mature trees that line Palmer Park in the winter. These would be read in conjunction with the existing elements of Palmer Park Stadium.
- 4.37. The Proposed Development would lead to a low magnitude of change in the views from this visual receptor as the Proposed Development would result in alterations that are already present and characteristic in this context. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **minor** and **neutral** effect within the views from the properties.

RE02: Even numbered properties nos. 102 to 118 along Wokingham Road

- 4.38. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is high, the value was assessed in the baseline section as low and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.39. It is considered that views are likely to be gained to the Proposed Development's main vehicle entrance and glimpsed views to the extended Palmer Park Stadium building and car park through the mature trees that line Palmer Park from the windows of the upper floors of the properties that face the Site. The Proposed Development would be read in conjunction with the existing Palmer Park Stadium features.
- 4.40. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from this visual receptor is assessed as being low. Its built form and landscape strategy fits well into the scale and pattern of the receiving landscape of Palmer Park. Combining this magnitude of change with this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in a **minor** and **neutral** effect within the views from the properties.

RE03: Properties nos. 11 to 32 along St Bartholomews Road and RE04: Odd numbered properties nos. 387 to 419 along London Road

- 4.41. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is high. The value was assessed in the baseline section as medium to low for RE03: Properties nos. 11 to 32 along St Bartholomews Road and low for RE04: Odd numbered properties nos. 387 to 419 along London Road. The sensitivity for both is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.42. Glimpsed views are likely to be gained from the users properties windows that are orientated towards the Site to the extended Palmer Park Stadium building. The distinct copper colour of its façade material would help with legibility to the Palmer Park Stadium building. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being negligible. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within the views from them.

OT01: Palmer Park Stadium and ancillary buildings outside the site

- 4.43. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is low as it is taken from leisure facility where peoples views are focused on recreation. The value was assessed in the baseline section as low and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be low.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.44. The Proposed Development's extended Palmer Park Stadium building would result in the alteration to the views experienced by users of this leisure facility. The proposals are not uncharacteristic in the particular context and would improve the scenic quality of the views. The magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being medium. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **minor** and **beneficial** effect within the views.

OT02: Palmer Park

- 4.45. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is medium as it is taken from an area of public open space where views are focused on the surrounding park. The value was assessed in the baseline section as medium and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.46. Located at the centre of Palmer Park the Proposed Development provides a new focal space. The design of the extended Palmer Park Stadium building, and its copper coloured façade, would help with legibility for the park's users. The public realm strategy for the plaza in front of the Palmer Park Stadium building improves the scenic quality of this area of the park and the setting of the George Palmer statue.

- 4.47. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from the visual receptors is assessed as being medium. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptor results in **moderate** and **beneficial** effect within the views.

OT03: Riverside Day Nursery and Tutus Table Café

- 4.48. The users of these visual receptors susceptibility to change is medium, the value was assessed in the baseline section as medium for both and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.49. Where windows are orientated towards the Site glimpsed views of the Proposed Development's extended Palmer Park Stadium building would be gained. The distinct copper colour of its façade material would help with legibility within the park to the Palmer Park Stadium building. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being negligible. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within the views from them.

RD01: Palmer Park Avenue

- 4.50. The visual receptor's views are unlikely to be the main focus of attention along these roads and therefore the susceptibility to change is considered to be low. The value was assessed in the baseline section as low and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be low.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.51. The new section of the North – South footpath link would be visible from users of Palmer Park Avenue. Limited glimpsed views would also be possible to the extended Palmer Park Stadium building and car park through the mature trees that line Palmer Park. This would lead to a low magnitude of change in the views from this visual receptor as the Proposed Development would result in alterations that are already present and characteristic in this context. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within the views from it.

RD02: Wokingham Road

- 4.52. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is low, the value was assessed in the baseline section as low and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be low.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.53. The Proposed Development's vehicle entrance would be visible from users of Wokingham Road. Glimpsed views would also be possible to the extended Palmer Park Stadium building and car park through the mature trees. This would lead to a low magnitude of change in the views from this visual receptor as the Proposed Development would result in alterations that are already present and characteristic in this context. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within the views from the road.

RD03: St Bartholomews Road and RD04: London Road

- 4.54. The users of these visual receptors susceptibility to change is low, the value was assessed in the baseline section as low for both and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be low.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.55. From a limited section of London Road its users would gain glimpsed views of the Proposed Development's building in the winter. The distinct copper colour of its façade material would help with legibility within the park to the Palmer Park Stadium building. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being negligible. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within the views from them.

RD05: A3290 and RA01: South Western Railway

- 4.56. The users of these visual receptors susceptibility to change is low, the value was assessed in the baseline section as low for both and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be low.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.57. Limited glimpsed views are likely to be gained to the top of the Proposed Development's building in between existing mature vegetation from the users using these routes. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being negligible. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within the views from these routes.

Table 4.1: Summary of effects

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Effects
Heritage Asset					
Statue of George Palmer (listed building)			Medium	Medium	Moderate and beneficial
St Bartholomew's group (listed buildings)			Medium	Low	Minor to moderate and neutral
Reading Cemetery group (listed buildings)			Medium	None	None
Oaklands Group (listed buildings)			Medium	None	None
South Park Conservation Area			Medium	None	None
Reading Cemetery (RPGSHI)			Medium	None	None
Townscape character areas					
TCA1	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Minor and beneficial
TCA2B	High to Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor and neutral
TCA3	Low	Low	Low	None	None
Visual receptors					
RE01	Medium to low	High	Medium	Low	Minor and neutral
RE02	Low	High	Medium	Low	Minor and neutral
RE03	Medium to low	High	Medium	Negligible	None
RE04	Low	High	Medium	Negligible	None

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Effects
RE05	Medium to low	High	Medium	None	None
RE06	Medium to low	High	Medium	None	None
RE07	Medium to low	High	Medium	None	None
RE08	Low	High	Medium	None	None
OT01	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Minor and beneficial
OT02	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate and beneficial
OT03	Medium	Low	Low	None	None
OT04	Medium	Low	Low	None	None
OT05	Medium	Low	Low	None	None
OT06	Medium to low	Low	Low	None	None
RD01	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
RD02	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
RD03	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
RD04	Low	Low	Low	Negligible	None
RD05	Low	Low	Low	Negligible	None
RA01	Low	Low	Low	Negligible	None

5. Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1. This appraisal is based on a thorough study of the Site and its townscape context. Through understanding these features and resources, a robust appraisal of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on HAs; townscape character; and, visual amenity has been undertaken in line with good practice principles and planning policy.
- 5.2. The Site covers approximately 1.3 hectares and is irregular in shape. It consists of the Palmer Park Stadium building, its associated surface car parking and immediate public realm. The George Palmer statue, a grade II listed building, sits within this public realm in the northwest corner of the Site.
- 5.3. The Site contains a number of trees and shrubs, which the AIA classify as being either 'category B or C', with one tree category 'A' due to it being a memorial tree.

Heritage

- 5.4. There is one HA on Site and a number of HAs in the area around the Site, all of medium sensitivity. That on Site is the grade II listed statue of George Palmer. The other HAs all lie outside Palmer Park. There would be no direct effect on any HA.
- 5.5. The enhanced recreation facilities on the Site and new landscape around the statue of George Palmer would have a moderate and beneficial effect on this HA, enhancing its setting. There would be a minor to moderate and neutral effect on the setting of the St Bartholomew Church group of three grade II listed buildings at the north-west corner of the park. There would be no effect on the setting of any other HAs.
- 5.6. The Proposed Development has had regard to the statutory duties set out at section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended). The Proposed Development is in line with the policy set out in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the guidance in the national PPG (2019). There would be no harmful effect on the setting or significance of any heritage asset in the surrounding area.

Townscape Character

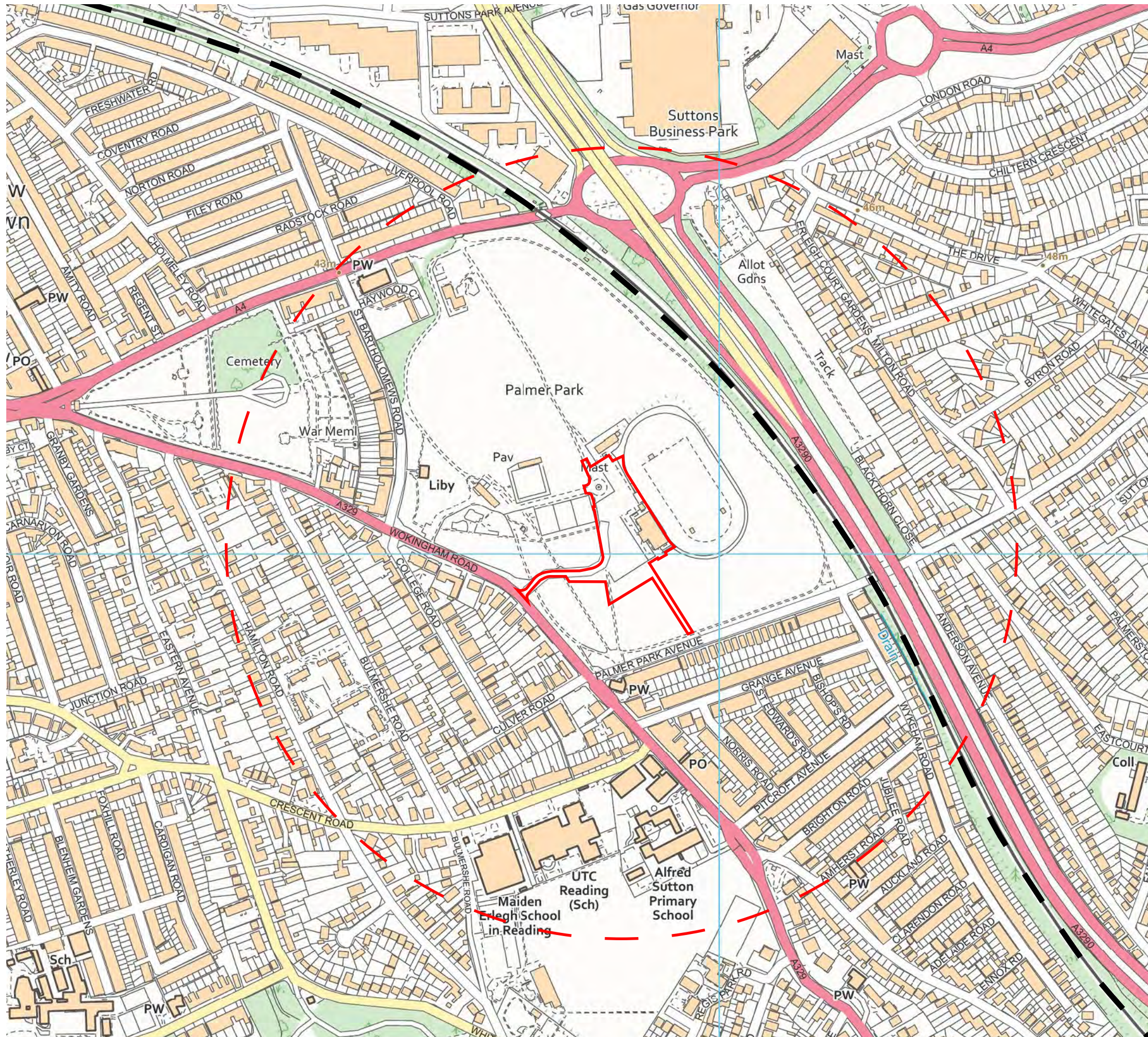
- 5.7. Three TCA receptors have been established as part of this appraisal. These are based on a combination of the dominant land use, built form, layout and vegetation and shown in **Figure 3**. The Site falls within TCA1: Palmer Park and its present-day layout broadly reflects the originally 19th century design.
- 5.8. The Proposed Development would result in a new and improved focal space for the park. The scale and architectural detailing of the Proposed Development's extension would help with legibility for the park's users. The public realm strategy for the plaza in front of the Palmer Park Stadium building improves the scenic quality of this area of the park. The layout incorporates the majority of the trees, which would help to assimilate the Proposed Development into the park.

- 5.9. Through making improvements to this context the Proposed Development would improve the townscape character of the 'TCA1: Palmer Park' in accordance with the principles set out within RBC's Palmer Park Development Framework, leading to an overall minor and beneficial effect. The Proposed Development would also indirectly lead to a minor and neutral effect on the character of the surrounding 'TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century'.

Visual amenity

- 5.10. The extent of the Site's existing visibility is influenced and limited by the mature trees present within Palmer Park and built form that frames the park. The Site is visible from the park itself and buildings and facilities within it. It is considered to be visible from the immediate residential properties associated with Palmer Park Avenue, Wokingham Road, St Bartholomews Road and London Road along with their associated roads. Fleeting, glimpsed views are likely to be possible from a small section of the A3290 and the South Western Railway line.
- 5.11. With the implementation of the Proposed Development it is considered that the visibility would broadly remain the same. The views from some of the visual receptors identified within the baseline section would, however, change. The extension to the Palmer Park Stadium building reflects the existing scale of the building and would not result in an incongruous feature. Its copper coloured façade material would help with orientation and wayfinding for the park's users in accordance with RBC's Palmer Park Development Framework key design drivers.
- 5.12. The appraisal of visual receptors identifies that the Proposed Development would have a minor and neutral effect on the visual receptors of RE01: Properties nos. 1 to 57 along Palmer Park Avenue and RE02: Even numbered properties nos. 102 to 118 along Wokingham Road. It would also have a moderate and beneficial effect on the users of OT01: Palmer Park Stadium and ancillary buildings outside the site and minor and beneficial effect on the users of OT02: Palmer Park. The remaining visual receptors are likely to have no effects due to the existing influences of the existing facilities within Palmer Park.
- 5.13. Considering how developed the Site is currently and how it would change following the implementation of the Proposed Development, it is considered that there would be an overall limited change in the quality of the 'visual openness' associated with the Site. This would be appreciated at a local scale, i.e. within the Site and the immediate setting of the Palmer Park. There would not be any wider or more extensive impact on openness within the surrounding townscape.

Appendix A. Supporting Figures



Key

-  Site
-  Study area (500 metres)
-  Borough boundary

PALMER PARK STADIUM, READING

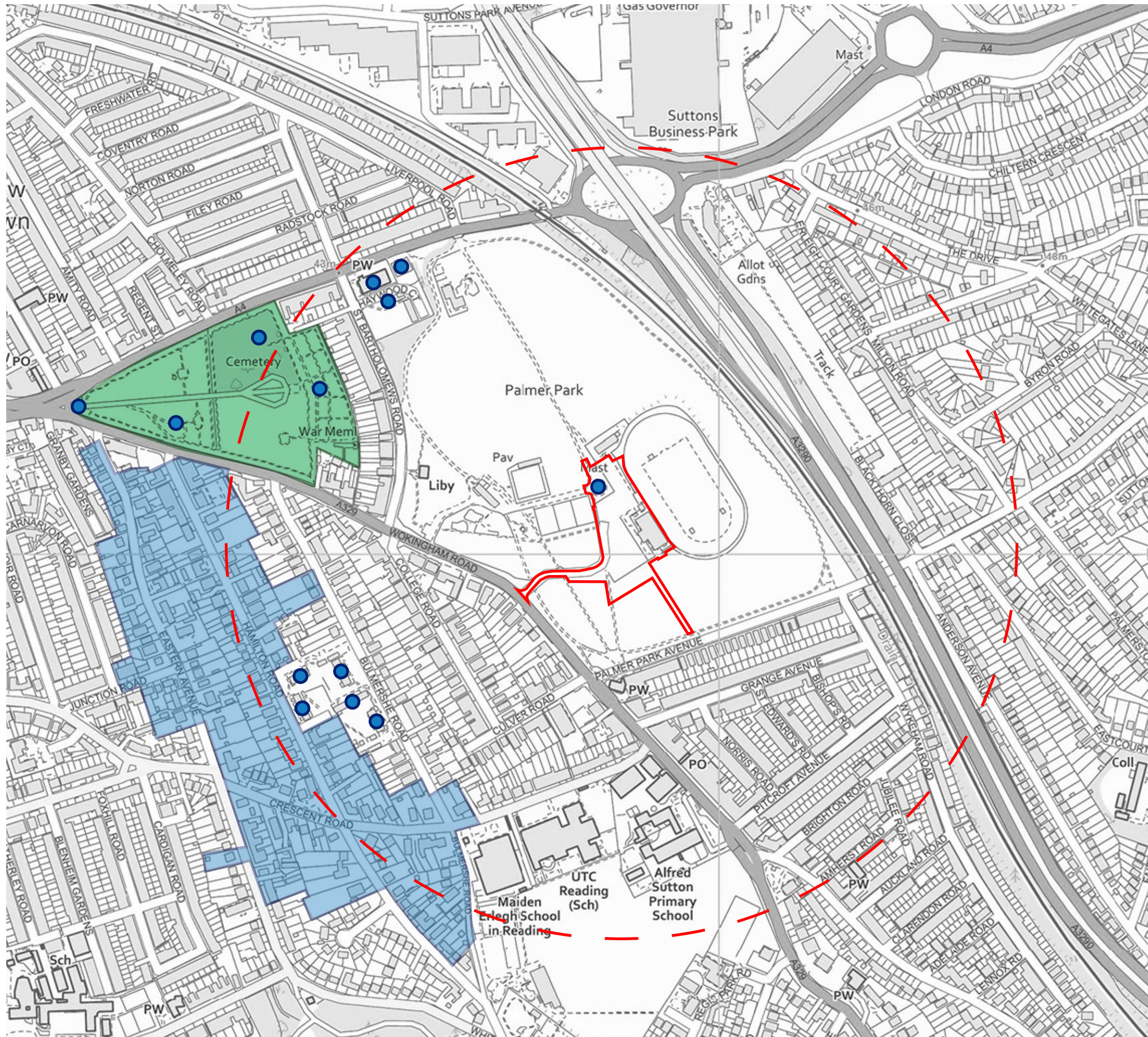
Figure 1: Site context

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2015RE01.Fig1.AppA1

Scale: 1:5,000 @A3

Date: December 2020



Key

-  Site
-  Study area (500 metres)
-  Grade II listed building
-  Conservation Area
-  Registered Park and Garden

PALMER PARK STADIUM, READING

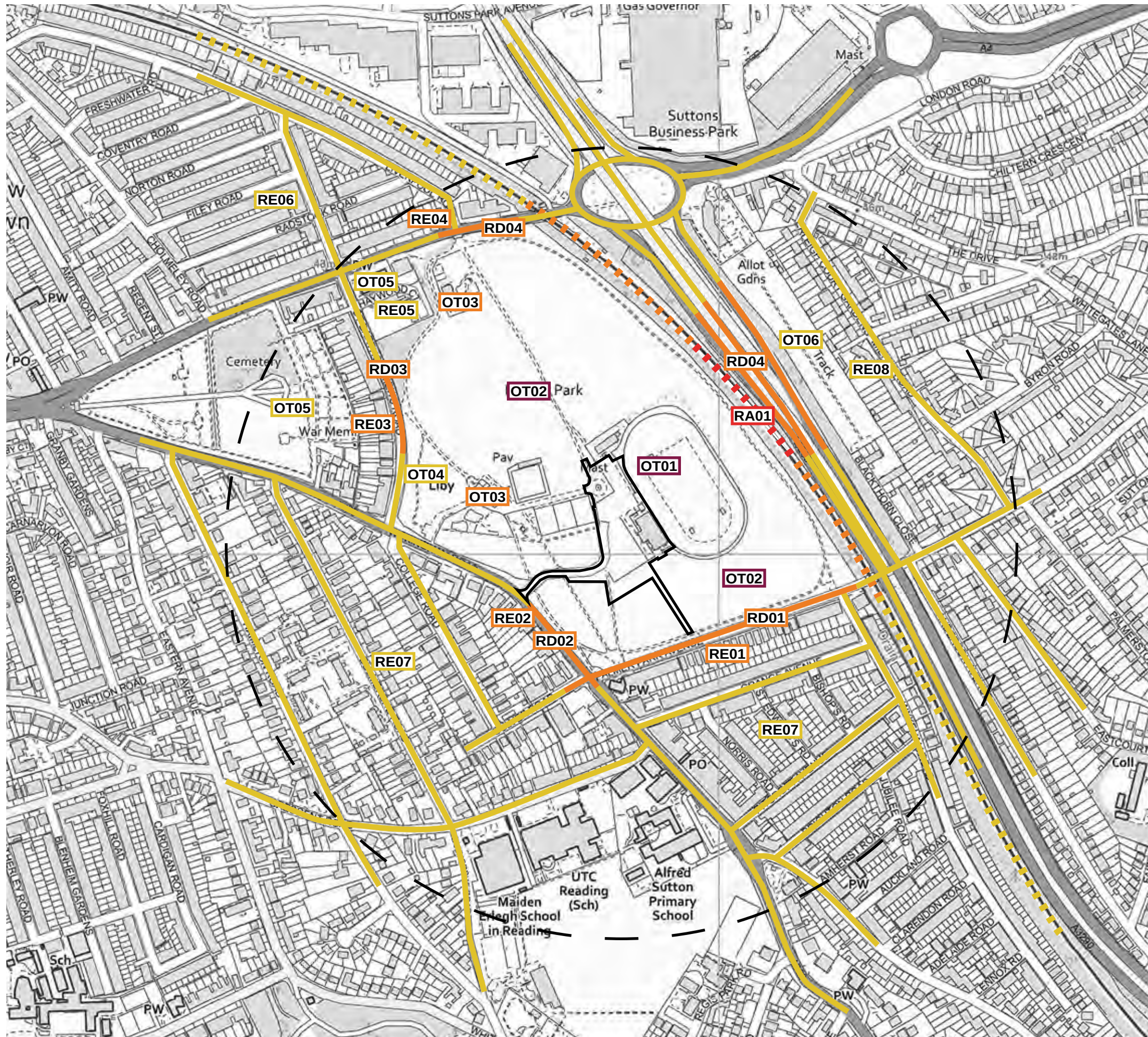
Figure 2: Heritage assets

Client: GLL

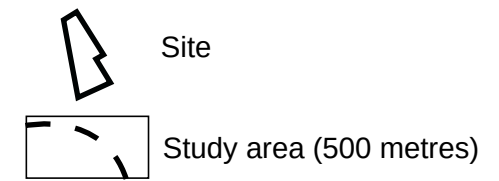
Dwg. No: 2015RE01.Fig2.AppA1

Scale: 1:5,000 @A3

Date: December 2020



Key



RD01 Public Highways

RA01 Rail

RE01 Residential Properties

OT01 Other Properties

Receptors	Visibility			
	Open	Partial	Glimpsed	No view
Properties				
Roads				
PROW				

PALMER PARK STADIUM, READING

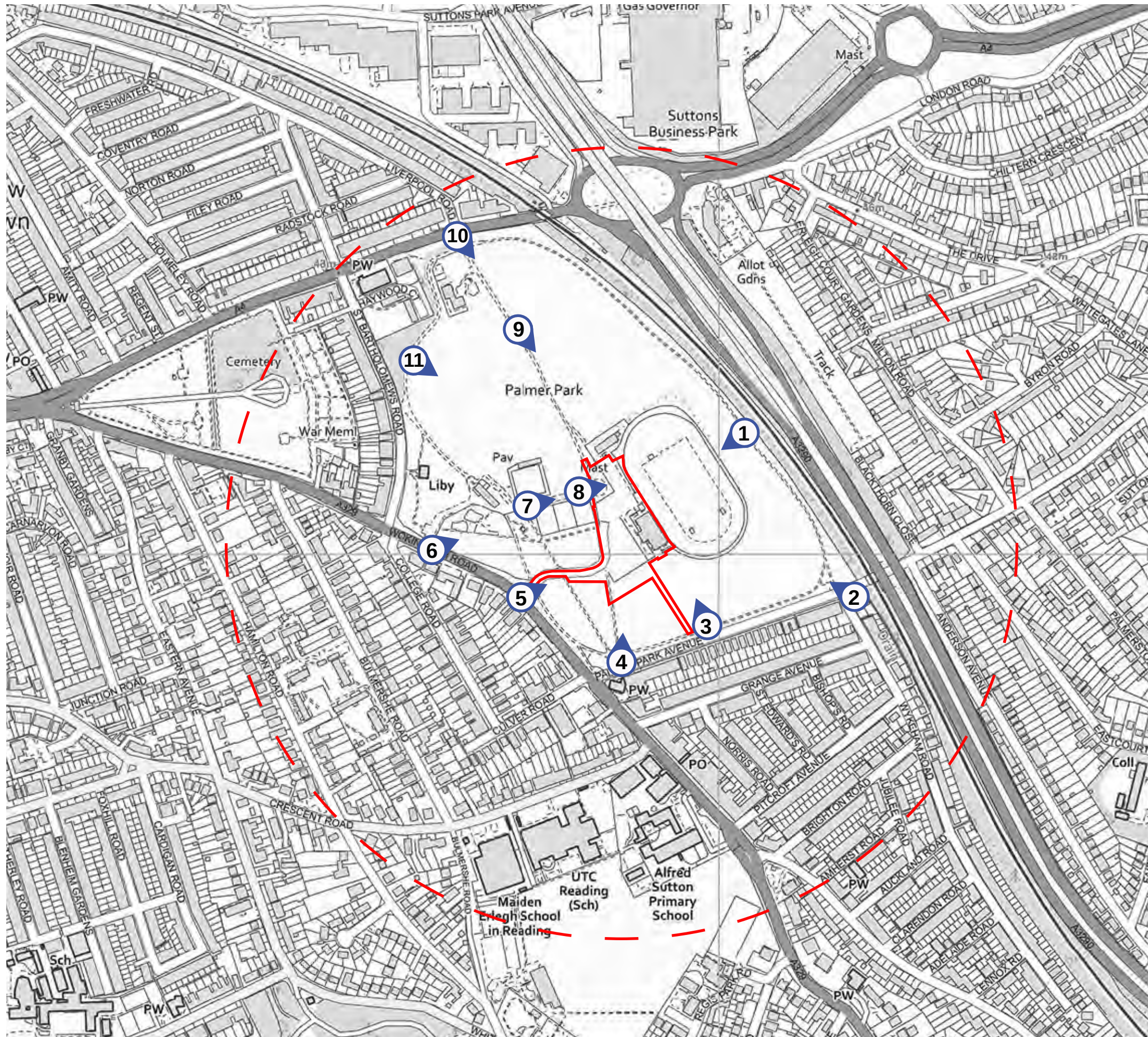
Figure 4: Visual receptors

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2015RE01.Fig4.AppA1

Scale: 1:5,000 @A3

Date: December 2020



Key

-  Site
-  Study area (500 metres)
-  Representative viewpoint

PALMER PARK STADIUM, READING

Figure 5: Views locations

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2015RE01.Fig5.AppA1

Scale: 1:5,000 @A3

Date: December 2020





Representative view 1 - taken from the eastern footpath of the park, close to the railway line, looking west



Representative view 2 - taken from the southern pavement of Palmer Park Avenue at its junction with Wykeham Road looking northwest



Representative view 3 - taken from the southern pavement of Palmer Park Avenue looking north



Representative view 4 - taken from the south western entrance to the park looking northeast

**PALMER PARK STADIUM,
READING**

Figure 6.2: Views (sheet 2 of 6)

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2015RE01.Fig6.2.AppA1

Scale: 1:5,000 @A3

Date: December 2020



Representative view 5 - taken from the vehicle entrance to the park, looking east



Representative view 6 - taken from Wokingham Road looking at the western entrance to the park, looking southeast

**PALMER PARK STADIUM,
READING**

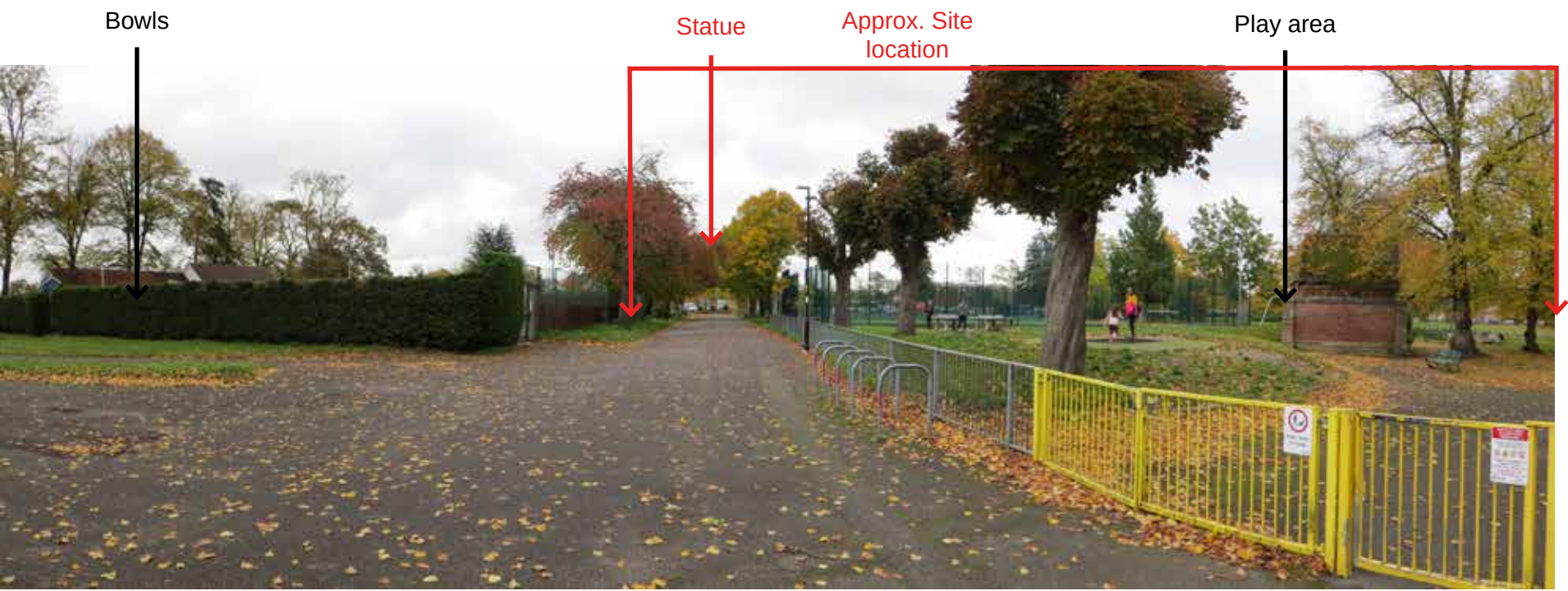
Figure 6.3: Views (sheet 3 of 6)

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2015RE01.Fig6.3.AppA1

Scale: 1:5,000 @A3

Date: December 2020



Representative view 7 - taken from the central footpath (close to Tutus Table Café) looking east



Representative view 8 - taken from the central footpath looking east



Representative view 9 - taken from the northern footpath looking south



Representative view 10 - taken from the northern entrance looking south



Representative view 11 - taken from the north western footpath looking southeast

Appendix B. Relevant Planning Policy Review

B. Planning Policy

Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Listed buildings

- B.1. Section 66 (1) of the Act states, *'in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

- B.2. At a national level the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 1st February 2019, sets out the Government's planning policies for England. Of the core objectives set out in the NPPF, the environmental objective is of relevance to this appraisal. This is:

"to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

- B.3. Chapter 12 of the NPPF (Achieving well-designed places) in paragraph 124 states that

"the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

- B.4. Paragraph 127 requires planning policies to ensure quality developments, which (in summary):

"will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

"are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

"are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

"establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; and

“optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks.”

- B.5. The NPPF promotes early discussions between applicants, the local planning authority and local community in Paragraph 128. Whilst Paragraph 130 states that:

“Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area”

- B.6. Equally it states that

“where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.”

- B.7. Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It applies to plan-making, decision-taking and the heritage-related consent regimes under the 1990 Act.

- B.8. Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as a *‘building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).’*

- B.9. The NPPF requires an applicant to describe the heritage significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting (para 189). Paragraph 193 states that in assessing impact, the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be given to its conservation. It notes that heritage significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or from development within its setting.

- B.10. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as *‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’*

- B.11. Where a development proposal will lead to *‘less than substantial’* harm to the heritage significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 196), whilst giving considerable weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of the listed building (paragraph 29 Barnwell High Court Judgment).

National Planning Policy Guidance

- B.12. The NPPF is supported by the National Planning Practice Guidance (2014). This is intended to provide more detailed guidance regarding the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF and includes guidance on character and visual matters within its design category section. Paragraph 003 of the Design Guidance category supports the need to evaluate and understand

the defining characteristics of an area in order to identify appropriate design opportunities and policies. Paragraph 007 goes on to state that views into and out of larger sites should be carefully considered from the start of the design process.

- B.13. The PPG includes a section called '*Historic environment*' which was updated on 23 July 2019. The PPG notes that '*HAs may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a HA, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals...*' (18a-007). It states that in assessing proposal, where harm is found, the extent of harm should be '*clearly articulated*' as either '*substantial*' or '*less than substantial*'.
- B.14. The PPG notes '*the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places.*

National Design Guide

- B.15. The National Design Guidance states that "*creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve*". It sets out how well-designed places that are "beautiful, enduring and successful" can be achieved. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance.

National Character Areas

- B.16. At a national level the Site falls within the National Character Area: 115 Thames Valley. The key characteristic of National Character Area: 115 Thames Valley relevant to the Site include (in summary):
- *Flat and low-lying land, rising to low, river-terraced hills, which include the prominent local outcrop of chalk on which Windsor Castle sits*

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)

- B.17. The purpose of this note is to provide information to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties in implementing historic environment policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the related guidance given in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These include assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding.
- B.18. In terms of general advice on decision-taking it notes at para 4 that, 'The first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant, the contribution of

its setting to its significance'. The guidance goes on to suggest a number of common steps in assessing significance which have informed the appraisal in section 3.

The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) December 2017

- B.19. This guidance states that it provides *'information on good practice to assist local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties'* and that *'alternative approaches may be equally acceptable, provided they are demonstrably compliant with legislation, national policies and objectives.'*
- B.20. At para 9 it states that, *'Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, although land comprising a setting may itself be designated Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or the ability to appreciate that significance.'*
- B.21. At para. 18 the guidance states that the *'Conserving or enhancing heritage assets by taking their settings into account need not prevent change; indeed change may be positive, for instance where the setting has been compromised by poor development.'* It goes on to say that *'many places coincide with the setting of a heritage asset and are subject to some degree of change over time'*.
- B.22. The guidance proposes a five stage programme of assessment: (1) identifying the assets affected; (2) assessing the degree to which the setting make a contribution to the significance of a heritage asset or allows the significance to be appreciated; (3) assessing the effect of the proposed development; (4) maximising enhancement and minimising harm; and (5) making and monitoring the decision and outcomes.

Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage assets (October 2019)

- B.23. Historic England issued Advice Note 12, Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets in October 2019. The note covers the NPPF requirement that heritage significance is described in order to help local authorities make decisions on the impact of proposals for change to heritage assets. It states, in paragraph 2 of the introduction, that *'the level of detail in support of applications for planning permission and listed building consent should be no more than is necessary to reach an informed decision, and that activities to conserve the asset(s) need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset(s) affected and the impact on that significance'*. It describes a statement of heritage significance as *'an objective analysis of significance, an opportunity to describe what matters and why'*.
- B.24. The advice note states that *'developing applications for heritage-related consents will usually mean following a staged approach to decision-making'*. The stages which would usually be used are as follows:
- Understand the form, materials and history of the affected heritage asset(s), and/or the nature and extent of archaeological deposits

- Understand the significance of the asset(s)
 - Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
 - Avoid, minimise and mitigate negative impact, in a way that meets the objectives of the NPPF
 - Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.
- B.25. It states that the latter three stages are addressed by the LPA, however the last two may also be addressed by the applicant.

Local Policy, Guidance and Appraisals

- B.26. The development plan for Reading Borough Council is set out in the 2019 Local Plan, which guides development within the borough up to 2036. The accompanying proposal map shows that the majority of the Site falls within the allocation ER1j with the remaining element falling within EN7Ed. A cycle route follows the Site's western boundary, Policy TR4.
- B.27. The following policies are considered to be relevant in regard to built heritage, townscape and visual matters;

Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change: states that trees and other planting should be used as part of landscape scheme to provide shading of amenity areas, buildings and streets and to help to connect habitat, designed with native plants that are carefully selected, managed and adaptable to meet the predicted changed climatic conditions.

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm: requires that *“development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”* It goes on to state that such developments will be assessed to ensure that they (in summary):

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.*

Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment: states that *“Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced.”*

Policy EN5: Protection of Significant Views with heritage interest: nine views of acknowledged historic significance have been identified within the borough. None fall within or take in the Site. Views 5 and 8, however, take in elements of the identified study area.

Policy EN6: New Development in an Historic Context: requires that the historic environment will inform and shape new development within areas characterised by heritage assets. Stating that

“New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.”

It goes onto state that when determining planning applications, the following factors relevant to this planning application will be taken into consideration:

- a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);*
- b. Sensitivity to historic context;*
- c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);*
- d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.*

Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space: states that developments that that would *“result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted.”* Palmer Park is recognised as a Local Green Space.

Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland: requires that new developments should *“make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.”*

Policy ER1j: Palmer Park Stadium Area: provides principles that the Proposed Development should accorded to, which include the following points relevant to this appraisal:

- *Ensure that there is no adverse impacts on the use of the park and its sport and leisure facilities;*
- *Ensure that there is no adverse impact on the listed monument and its setting;*
- *Retain public rights of way across the site.*

Palmer Park Development Framework (April 2020)

- B.28. This Development Framework provides framework and design principles for the development of a new swimming pool within Palmer Park. It includes urban design, landscape and architectural guidelines inform the development of the Site and wider park.

B.29. It establishes that Palmer Park is well used both locally and regionally, and has the following observations (summarised):

- *The park is a well used facility on certain days, but potentially underused at other times.*
- *The park is well used, but feels run-down in places.*
- *The North-South path seems to be a well-used route through the park, whereas the East-West routes from the monument and car park to the play area appears to carry fewer pedestrians.*
- *The library building turns its back to the park and currently has very little interaction with other park uses.*
- *The car park and space in front of the stadium lacks structure and clear routes for pedestrians/cyclists. Cars have priority over pedestrians in this space.*
- *Overall the park feels like a collection of uses and functions that lack a clear structure and 'heart'.*
- *The mature lime trees within the park are a fantastic asset and retain the character of the Victorian park design.*

B.30. The Development Framework goes onto provide public realm and architectural designs for the Site and wider park.

South Park Conservation Area Appraisal (2008)

B.31. Located to the west of the identified study area South Park Conservation Area comprises of mid to late Victorian and Edwardian suburban housing centered on Eastern Avenue and Hamilton Road, which run north-south between the main Wokingham Road (A329) east out of Reading to the north and to and across Crescent Road to the south.

Reading Tall Building Strategy (2008)

B.32. The Proposed Development does not consist of a tall building, however, this strategy identifies strategic views within central Reading and long range views into Reading. Mid-range view no. 19 is taken from the northern area of Palmer Park and looks away from the Site, towards Reading Town Centre. No further views fall within or look across the Site or study area.

Wokingham Borough Landscape Character Assessment

B.33. Produced in 2019 the Landscape Character Assessment for Wokingham Borough Council was produced to *"provide an evidence base for planners, developers and land managers to take account of the character and valuable attributes of Wokingham's landscape when considering new development or land uses – and to pursue opportunities to enhance and strengthen landscape character whenever possible."*

- B.34. The eastern portion of the study area falls within J4 Woodley – Earley Settled and Farmed Clay, which the assessment describes as:

“A densely settled area with a strong urban and suburban character. There are pockets of open space remaining which include public parks and sports grounds within the settled area.”

- B.35. The key characteristics for this area are identified as:

- *Gently rolling London Clay ridge*
- *Small tributaries*
- *Subtly wooded ridgeline*
- *Densely settled character associated with Reading, Woodley and Earley and extension of Sonning and Charvil*
- *The small area of remaining open land is greatly influenced by the proximity of urban development and consists of a network of recreational spaces*
- *Very small areas of agricultural land*
- *Well-developed major transport network*
- *Views over surrounding lowlands*

Appendix C. Full Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Methodology

C. Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Methodology

- C.1. This HTVIA has been undertaken in accordance the methodology set out below which draws on best practice guidance as published in the following documents:
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
 - The National Planning Policy Framework (2019), supporting National Planning Policy Guidance and relevant Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Historic England advice;
 - Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013)
 - An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment - Natural England (2014)
 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (2019)
- C.2. The HTVIA is undertaken with a prior understanding of the nature of the development being proposed and the purpose is to assess how the particular proposals may affect the landscape and visual amenity of identified receptors or in other words the landscape as a resource and those who experience it. In line with best practice, whilst interrelated, landscape and visual effects are considered separately.
- C.3. The first stage of the appraisal is to gain a detailed understanding of the existing conditions and a baseline study is undertaken which reviews the existing landscape elements and features, characteristics, including reference to published character assessments. Visual receptors are identified along with specific viewpoints to establish the visibility of the existing site. The next stage considers the value of a particular landscape or view. This information is then used along with an appraisal of the susceptibility to the proposed change to form a judgement about the landscape or visual sensitivity.
- C.4. The development proposals are considered and the effects are described in relation to the landscape character, feature, or view etc. The magnitude of change is established on each landscape or visual receptor and combining an appraisal of this with the established sensitivity, a conclusion is reached about any likely effects. This appraisal considers the proposals at different stages, from construction through to establishment of any mitigation. The effects can be either positive or negative or at times neutral.

Methodology for Appraisal of Built Heritage Effects

- C.5. The Appraisal is prepared in line with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 189) which advises local planning authorities to require an applicant “to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”. The methodology used here draws on guidance set out below, including the Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage assets (October 2019).

- C.6. The evaluation of significance, sensitivity and heritage impacts are based on professional judgement following a site visit and desk-based research.

Heritage receptor

- C.7. A heritage receptor is defined as a heritage asset (HA) which has the potential to be affected by the proposals, either directly or indirectly. For the purposes of this appraisal HAs include listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest ('RPGSHI') and locally listed buildings (archaeology is dealt with in another chapter). Effects can be temporary or permanent, and effects can occur in the short term or long term.

The Method of baseline data collection

- C.8. There are no HAs on the Site but there are a number in the area around the Site. All relevant designated HAs within a 500 metre radius of the Site have been identified.
- C.9. The process of collecting baseline data involved identifying the relevant HAs included in the following documentary and mapping resources:
- Historic England on-line National Heritage List for England;
 - Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and Historic Interest; and
 - Reading Borough Local Plan and other guidance (including Conservation Area Character Appraisals and the local list).
- C.10. A combination of desk-based study and field survey has been undertaken to establish the extent of the study area and the relevant existing above ground heritage baseline conditions of the Site and its surroundings. This includes consideration of:
- National and local heritage policy and guidance;
 - The existing effects of the Site;
 - The physical characteristics of the Site's context; and
 - The nature of the Proposed Development.
- C.11. Site visits were undertaken to check the desktop appraisal with regard to the potential significance of effect of the Proposed Development on the HAs within the surrounding area (and to check for any additional HAs that were not originally identified). The site visit to the Site and the surrounding area was undertaken in October 2020.

Significance criteria

- C.12. The significance of the environmental effects of the Proposed Development upon the relevant receptors is determined by two variables: the sensitivity to change of the HA affected, and the magnitude of effect upon the HA's heritage significance either direct or indirect i.e. on those

aspects of setting that contribute significance. The guidance and criteria set out in the following documents have been used for this appraisal:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (NPPF).
- National Planning Practice Guidance 2019 (PPG).
- Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage assets (October 2019)
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport Circular: Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (November 2018); Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage assets (October 2019); and
- Historic England guidance: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management, 2019 Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second edition, 2017).

Sensitivity to change

- C.13. The sensitivity to change of each HA or groups of assets is considered in relation to both direct and indirect impact. This is based on the designation and grade of the HA and an appraisal of its heritage significance (in light of NPPF policy), i.e. what elements of its fabric / constituent parts and setting contribute to its heritage significance. The heritage significance of each assets and the elements of its setting that contribute to this, including the special architectural and historic interest of statutory listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas, has been assessed.
- C.14. The importance of a HA is determined based on the heritage designations and grades, as set out in **Table C.1**.

Table C.1 Importance

Sensitivity	Type of HA
<i>High</i>	World Heritage Site Grade I or II* listed building Grade I or II* RPGSHI
<i>Medium</i>	Grade II listed building Grade II RPGSHI Conservation area
<i>Low</i>	Locally listed building

- C.15. Consideration of heritage importance and heritage significance together provides the basis for understanding the sensitivity to change of each of the HAs. The sensitivity to change is a professional judgment and assessed as high, medium or low and this overall appraisal of sensitivity will not necessarily correspond with the appraisal of the heritage importance of the HA as high, medium or low. The appraisal of the sensitivity of the receptor under consideration takes into account a judgement about its quality in the round. For example: a Conservation Area or a

Listed Building may have a good or a poor setting, and a good quality setting is more sensitive to change than a poor quality setting; Conservation Areas include within them areas of greater and lesser quality; and so on

Magnitude of change

- C.16. The magnitude of change is assessed according to the degree of change to the HA or its setting (direct or indirect effect) as set out in **Table C.2**.

Table C.2 Magnitude of change

Magnitude of change	Criteria
<i>High</i>	Considerable effect on the HA or its setting
<i>Medium</i>	Change to a HA or its setting that is readily noticeable
<i>Low</i>	Slight change to a HA or its setting
<i>Negligible / None</i>	Very limited or no change to a HA or its setting

Effects appraisal

- C.17. The likely effects is derived through consideration of the magnitude of change and the sensitivity to change of the HAs as set out in **Table C.1**. This appraisal takes into account the heritage significance of the particular HA and how the Proposed Development would affect this. The terms in the boxes in **Table C.3** indicate the effect which results from the relevant combination of magnitude of change and sensitivity.

Table C.3 Overall Appraisal of Effects

Sensitivity	Overall Appraisal of Effects			
<i>High</i>	Major	Major /to moderate	Moderate	Minor to/ Negligible
<i>Medium</i>	Major /to moderate	Moderate	Moderate to / minor	None
<i>Low</i>	Moderate	Moderate to / minor	Minor	None
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Negligible/None</i>
	Magnitude of Change			

- C.18. Effects are also assessed qualitatively as beneficial, adverse, or neutral in respect of their effect on the heritage significance of the HA. This appraisal, based on professional judgment, is in recognition of the fact that an effect on an HA or its setting can enhance its heritage significance (a beneficial effect), harm its heritage significance (an adverse effect) or leave its heritage significance unchanged (a neutral effect). This consideration is independent of whether it is a major, moderate or minor change. This is in line with how decisions are made in relation to changes to HAs in the planning process as set out in the NPPF. It is in line with the statutory requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of a conservation area (which would be a neutral or beneficial effect); or to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of a listed building (which would be a neutral effect).

C.19. An informed appraisal has been undertaken of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the significance of the identified HAs. It has taken into account the nature and condition of the HA and its setting as found today and how these contribute to its heritage significance. As part of this analysis, consideration has been given to:

- the nature and scope of the Proposed Development;
- the location and proximity of HAs to the site;
- the relative sensitivity of the heritage assets and their setting to change; and
- any historical, functional and visual interrelationships between the HAs and the site and also each other, as part of a defined group or ensemble.

C.20. The general conclusions about the impact of the Proposed Development on HAs include consideration of the overall impact on the historic environment in the round.

Methodology for Appraisal of Townscape Effects

Establishing townscape sensitivity

C.21. To assess the likely effects on the townscape the Townscape Sensitivity is established through a consideration of the Townscape Value and the Susceptibility to Change.

The Townscape Value

C.22. Townscape Value is determined through an appraisal of the character of the townscape, its scenic qualities and condition, the elements and features that it contains, and any specific value attached to the townscape whether formally eg through a designation; or informally eg local connections historic or artistic connections or a local landmark. Townscape Value is defined in **Table C.4**.

Table C.4: Townscape Value

Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale of importance/ rarity	Typical examples
Exceptional	A townscape in excellent condition; of high importance, rarity and high scenic quality. No potential for substitution	International	World Heritage Site
High	A townscape in very good condition; of high importance with good scenic quality and rarity. Limited potential for substitution	National, Regional, Local	National Park, AONB, SLA Conservation Area
Medium	A townscape in generally good condition; with moderate importance and scenic quality. Limited potential for substitution.	Regional, Local	Undesignated but valued perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use
Low	A townscape in poor condition or with low scenic quality and	Local	Areas identified as having some redeeming feature or

Value	Typical criteria	Typical scale of importance/ rarity	Typical examples
	importance. Considerable potential for substitution.		features and possibly identified for improvement.
Poor	A degraded townscape in poor condition and no scenic quality and low importance	Local	Areas identified for improvement / recovery.

Townscape Susceptibility to Change

- C.23. The susceptibility of the townscape is concerned with establishing whether or not the townscape, be it a particular character area, townscape type or element can accommodate the proposed development without unacceptable negative consequences. The levels of susceptibility are assessed using the criteria set out in **Table C.5**.

Table C.5: Townscape Level of Susceptibility

Level of Susceptibility	Criteria
High	An area possessing particularly distinctive townscape elements, characteristics or sense of place, and few townscape detractors. A townscape with limited tolerance to change of the type proposed. Or where the proposed development would be in direct conflict with specific townscape management or planning policies.
Medium	An area with some distinctive townscape elements, characteristics, or clearly defined sense of place, but with some townscape detractors. A townscape which is partially tolerant to change of the type proposed.
Low	An area with recognisable townscape character, but few distinctive townscape elements, characteristics, and some, or a number of townscape detractors. The townscape is tolerant of some change of the type proposed. Or Where the character area is separated by distance or features so as to have little or no direct relationship with the site/and or proposed development.
Very Low	An area with limited or no distinctive townscape elements, characteristics, or weak sense of place, and many townscape detractors. An area that is tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed. OR Where the character area is separated by distance or features so as to have no direct relationship with the site/and or proposed development.

Townscape Sensitivity

- C.24. The sensitivity of the townscape is derived by combining the judgements on Townscape Value and Susceptibility to Change described in **Table C.6**.

Table C.6: Townscape Sensitivity

Value	TOWNSCAPE SENSITIVITY		
<i>Exceptional / High</i>	High	High	Medium
<i>Medium</i>	High	Medium	Low
<i>Low to poor</i>	Medium	Low	Low
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low / Very Low</i>
	Susceptibility to Change		

Establishing magnitude of change

- C.25. In order to establish the magnitude of change of the proposed development, including both the loss of existing features and replacement with new elements, an appraisal is made which considers the size, scale, duration and reversibility of the effect on the townscape.
- C.26. Magnitude of Change of the Townscape Effect is assessed using the criteria set out in **Table C.7**.

Table C.7: Townscape Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
<i>High</i>	Where the proposals (or works to facilitate them) would result in the total loss or major alteration of the elements that make up the character of the baseline townscape. Where the introduction of elements are considered to be wholly uncharacteristic in the particular setting. Where the effects of the proposals would be experienced over a large scale and/or influence more than one townscape type/character area.
<i>Medium</i>	Where the proposals (or works to facilitate them) would result in the partial loss or alteration of one or more of the key elements that make up the character of the baseline townscape. Where the introduction of new features may be prominent but not necessarily wholly uncharacteristic in the particular setting. Where the effects of the proposals would be largely experienced within the townscape type/character area within which they will sit.
<i>Low</i>	Where the proposals (or works to facilitate them) would result in minor loss or alteration of one or more of the key elements that make up the character of the baseline townscape. Where the introduction of elements would not generally be considered uncharacteristic in the particular setting and/or Where the proposal occur within other character areas or types and their introduction by virtue of distance will have limited or no effect on the baseline character area.
<i>Negligible / None</i>	Where the proposed scheme (or works to facilitate it) would result in very minor loss or alteration of one or more of the key elements that make up the character of the baseline and / or the introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic in the particular setting and/or Where the proposal occur within other character areas or types and their introduction by virtue of distance will have limited or no effect on the baseline character area.

Establishing the overall appraisal of townscape effects

- C.27. To establish the overall townscape effects, the appraisals of 'sensitivity' and 'the magnitude of change' are combined as illustrated in the matrix set out in **Table C.8**.

Table C.8 Townscape Appraisal of Townscape Effects

Sensitivity	Overall Appraisal of Townscape Effects			
<i>High</i>	Major	Major /to moderate	Moderate	Minor to/ Negligible
<i>Medium</i>	Major /to moderate	Moderate	Moderate to / minor	None
<i>Low</i>	Moderate	Moderate to / minor	Minor	None
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low / Very Low</i>	<i>Negligible/None</i>
	Magnitude Change			

C.28. At times, it may be judged that the effects are negligible or none or, as a result of professional judgement, may be varied from a strict application of the matrix, where this is the case, justification is provided within the main text of the appraisal.

C.29. The effects can be positive/beneficial, negative/adverse or neutral. The criteria applied are set out in **Table C.9**.

Table C.9 Townscape Effect

Beneficial Criteria – Where the proposals
Fits well with scale / landform and/or pattern of townscape Increases characteristic features or enhances the contribution to the wider setting Enhances balance of townscape elements Improves the sense of tranquillity Provides ability to include adequate or appropriate mitigation Complements local/national planning policies or guidance to protect townscape character
Adverse Criteria – Where the proposals
Is out of scale with surrounding townscape / landform and/or pattern of townscape Results in a loss of key townscape features or characteristics or a deterioration in contribution to setting Disrupts the balance of townscape elements Reduces the sense of tranquillity Lacks ability to include adequate or appropriate mitigation Conflicts with local/national planning policies or guidance to protect /manage townscape character
Neutral Criteria
Where the change (whatever the scale) resulting from the proposals will have an indiscernible effect on the character or characteristics of an area Where any change will see one or more elements replaced with another of similar form/extent so as to result in an effect that on balance is neither positive or negative

Methodology for Appraisal of Visual Effects

Establishing visual sensitivity

C.30. To assess the likely effects on views / visual amenity the sensitivity of the receptors (ie those looking at the view) is established through a consideration of the Value and the Susceptibility to Change of a particular viewer or viewpoint.

Value

C.31. Value of a particular view is determined through an appraisal of the location, the nature of the view, its scenic qualities and condition, the elements and features that it contains and is categorised in **Table C.10**.

Table C.10: Visual Receptor's Value

Value	Typical criteria
<i>Exceptional</i>	Where views are of a highly exceptional nature, of high scenic value, often within, towards or across a townscape with a national designation or heritage assets.
<i>High</i>	Where the views have a generally high scenic value. The viewpoint may be within or looking towards a designated area but there may be some incongruous features or elements within the view.
<i>Medium</i>	Where the views are across or towards a townscape in generally good condition; with moderate local importance and/or scenic quality. Limited potential for substitution of some elements within the view.
<i>Low</i>	Where the views are across or towards townscape in poor condition with low to moderate local scenic quality and/or importance. Considerable potential for substitution of some elements in the view.
<i>Poor</i>	Where views are across or towards a degraded townscape in poor condition with limited or no scenic quality and low importance. Considerable potential for substitution of some or all elements in the view.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

- C.32. The appraisal of susceptibility is concerned with establishing to what extent the visual receptor can accommodate the change in the nature of the view or the visual amenity of the view resulting from proposed development. In establishing susceptibility the circumstances in which the view is experienced eg does the view form part of the reason for being in a particular location (visiting a local landmark), or is it secondary to the reason for the person being in a particular location (eg a daily commute to work by car). Each visual receptor is described within the appraisal and typical viewpoints are selected and photographed to provide a representation of the views.
- C.33. The levels of susceptibility are assessed using the following criteria defined in **Table C.11**.

Table C.11: Visual Receptor's Level of Susceptibility

Level of Susceptibility	Typical Criteria
<i>High</i>	Where the receptor is engaged in outdoor recreation including public rights of way and their attention is likely to be focused on the townscape or particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or visitor attractions where the views to the townscape or surroundings are an important part of the experience. Residents at home where views contribute to the setting of a residential area.
<i>Medium</i>	People visiting retail outlets or other destinations as a leisure activity, or at a place of work, where the views to the townscape or surroundings are part of the experience OR where the receptor, normally categorised as High is located in an area of poor scenic value where the views to the surrounding area are unlikely to be the main focus of attention (eg walking routes to work).
<i>Low</i>	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation that does not depend on an appreciation of the view. People travelling by road or rail (unless the route is specifically identified for its views). People at work or in a workplace or a place of education where the views to the townscape or surroundings are not important

- C.34. It should be noted that the susceptibility of the receptors may be reduced if the quality nature of the view is lower.

Visual Sensitivity

- C.35. The sensitive of the receptor is derived by combining the judgements on Value and Susceptibility to Change as set out in **Table C.12**.

Table C.12: Visual Receptor's Sensitivity

Value	VISUAL SENSITIVITY		
<i>Exceptional / High</i>	High	High	Medium
<i>Medium</i>	High	Medium	Low
<i>Low to poor</i>	Medium	Low	Low
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>
	Susceptibility to Change		

Establishing magnitude of change

- C.36. In order to establish the magnitude of change of the proposed development an appraisal is made on the size and scale of the effect, the geographical extent of the effect and its reversibility or otherwise. The proposed scheme is considered based on the nature of the proposals, and a professional interpretation is made in respect of each receptor.
- C.37. Magnitude of Change of the Effect on the Visual Receptor is assessed following the criteria set out in **Table C.13**.

Table C.13: Visual Receptor's Magnitude of Change

Magnitude	Criteria
<i>High</i>	Where the proposals (or works to facilitate them) would result in the total loss or major alteration of the elements that make up the view from a particular location. Where the introduction of elements are considered to be totally uncharacteristic in the particular setting. Where the effects of the proposals would be visible over a large scale and / or at close range
<i>Medium</i>	Where the proposals (or works to facilitate them) would result in the partial loss or alteration of one or more of the key elements that make up the view from a particular location. Where the introduction of new features may be prominent but not necessarily wholly uncharacteristic in the particular setting. Where the effects of the proposals would be largely seen from further afield or as only part of a view.
<i>Low</i>	Where the proposals (or works to facilitate them) would result in minor loss or alteration of one or more of the key elements that make up the view from a particular location. Where the introduction of elements would not generally be considered uncharacteristic in the particular setting.
<i>Negligible / None</i>	Where the proposed scheme (or works to facilitate it) would result in a very minor loss or alteration to the view and / or the introduction of elements would not be uncharacteristic in the particular setting. Where the effects of the proposals would only be seen from a distance and be imperceptible within the context of the wider view.

Establishing the overall appraisal of visual effects

- C.38. To establish the overall appraisal or otherwise of the visual effects, the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of change are combined using the matrix set out in **Table C.14**.

Table C.14: Visual Receptor's Appraisal of Effect

Sensitivity	Overall Appraisal of Visual Effects			
<i>High</i>	Major	Major /to moderate	Moderate	Minor to/ Negligible
<i>Medium</i>	Major /to moderate	Moderate	Moderate to / minor	None
<i>Low</i>	Moderate	Moderate to / minor	Minor	None
	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Negligible/*None</i>
	Magnitude of Change			

- C.39. The results can either be positive/beneficial or negative/adverse. It may also be the case that there are no effects or that effects are judged to be neutral in such instances this has been explained within the text.
- C.40. The effects can be positive/beneficial, negative/adverse or neutral. The criteria applied are set out in **Table C.15**.

Table C.15: Visual Receptor's Effect

Beneficial Criteria – Where the proposals
Fit comfortably within the view Improves the view or an element within the view Do not result in an incongruous feature within the prevailing pattern of townscape Do not obstruct views towards a high quality or scenic townscape Do not obstruct views or detracts from the visual amenity of a view towards a heritage asset. Offers the ability to provide mitigation that will enhance the view or visual amenity. Complements local/national planning policies or guidance on visual amenity or specific views.
Adverse Criteria – Where the proposals
Result in a change to the view or visual amenity that out of scale with surrounding townscape / landform and/or pattern of townscape Results in a loss of positive townscape feature or characteristics within a particular view Results in incongruous features within the prevailing pattern of townscape Obstructs a view towards a high quality or scenic townscape. Obstructs views or detracts from the visual amenity of a view towards a heritage asset. Lacks ability to include adequate or appropriate mitigation Conflicts with local/national planning policies or guidance to protect /manage visual amenity or specific views.
Neutral Criteria
Where the change (whatever the scale) in the view resulting from the proposals neither improves or damages the view or existing visual amenity of a view

Appendix D. Statements of Significance of Heritage Assets

D. Statements of Significance of Heritage Assets

St Bartholomew's group

- D.1. This group comprises 3 grade II listed buildings (all of group value) associated with St Bartholomew. It is located to the north-west of the Site, at the north-west corner of the Park at the junction with of the A4 and St Bartholomew's Road.
- D.2. The Church of St Bartholomew is chiefly of interest as Alfred Waterhouse's first and possibly only large-scale essay in Church building. It dates from 1879 and is built in the gothic style in red brick with grey brick decoration and bands, with an ashlar plinth and recessed reveals, and has a tiled roof. The west front has a central entrance, with a stepped triplet window in a pointed recess above, and a double belfry. It is of 5 bays with an aisled nave. The west porch to the north of the aisle is a later addition by Sir Ninian Comper in 1920.
- D.3. The St Bartholomew's Church Hall, possibly designed by Alfred Waterhouse, dates from c1880. It is built of red brick with grey brick dressings, bands and decoration in the gables, and has tiled roofs. It has a picturesque composition expressed as three bays, each with a large gable to the street (the central one inset), and the two eastern most bays each with three lancet windows.
- D.4. No.60 St Bartholomew's Road, is the Vicarage to St Bartholomew's Church. It was built to the Gothic designs of Alfred Waterhouse in 1883. This 2 and half storeys house, of an asymmetrical design, is built of red brick, with a wide grey and red brick chequer band over the ground floor and in the gables, raised brick diapering and decorative verges. The tiled gabled roof has later chimneys.

Reading Cemetery group

- D.5. This group comprises 4 grade II listed buildings within Reading Cemetery (a RPGSHI, see below). It is located to the north-west of the Site, at the north-west corner of the Park at the junction with of the A4 and St Bartholomew's Road.
- D.6. The 2 storey entrance lodges and gates to cemetery were designed by the local architect William Brown (the list description notes they are however attributed to Nathaniel Briant). They date from c1840 and are built of Bath stone with a hipped slate roof with flanking chimneys. To the rear there is a parapet with a recessed centre, and the side parapets have shallow pediments. The contemporary gates are made of cast iron with a row of roses below the spearhead rails.
- D.7. The Andrews and Barrett Family Monuments, to James Andrews (died 1841) and to George Barrett (died 1858), comprise cast iron urns with flame capped lids standing on large cylindrical drums, and flank the portico of the non-conformist chapel.
- D.8. The Sarcophagus Monument is the tomb of Mary Wienholt who died in 1859, and comprises a Carrara marble sarcophagus on a tall plinth above a base. It is a crown-topped Italianate sarcophagus in the Quattrocento manner, standing on Lion's paw feet.

- D.9. The Monument to Bernard Laurence Hieatt comprises a marble figure of a smiling young man in racing uniform and tall, laced boots. In his right hand he carries a helmet that rests on a tree stump. The figure stands on a tall plinth, slightly flared to base, and with a projecting cornice and stylised floral motif to each upper corner. Bernard Laurence Hieatt died in May 1930, aged 21.

Oaklands group

- D.10. This group of grade II buildings comprises 5 blocks of maisonettes built in 1967 to the designs of Frank Briggs and Peter de Souza of Diamond Redfern and Partners, with landscaping by Sheila Haywood. The list descriptions note they provide an unusually well-planned and crisply-detailed housing scheme, combining frankly modern design with simple, homely materials in the manner of the contemporary Span Estates developments.

Reading Cemetery RPGSHI

- D.11. Reading Cemetery was included on the RPGSHI at grade II on 14 August 2002
- D.12. The entry describes it as a 'mid-19th century cemetery, laid out 1842-3 in formal and informal style for a private cemetery company, with planting by nurserymen Sutton and Son of Reading', going on to note it is designated as an 'early garden cemetery of the third decade of garden cemetery design, for a provincial town'
- D.13. Reading Cemetery is c 4ha and lies on the east edge of the town. The principal architect was Nathaniel Briant (1813-49) who worked in Reading during the 1830s and early 1840s. Briant seems to have been responsible for the layout of the grounds. By the 1890s the cemetery had been extended to the east by a further 1ha.
- D.14. The triangular site is enclosed on two sides by mid 19th century stone walls (along London Road to the north, and Wokingham Road to the south). The main entrance to the cemetery lies at the west corner of the site, where these routes meet. The cemetery is planted with a wide range of mature specimen trees, some of which are very fine; many date from the mid 19TH CENTURY, possibly being part of Suttons' planting. There are several monuments of quality to leading 19TH CENTURY Reading citizens in the cemetery. Some are listed – see above

South Park Conservation Area

- D.15. The South Park Conservation Area was designated on 28 April 1988. it comprises an essentially mid to late Victorian and Edwardian suburb of Reading, mainly centred on Eastern Avenue and Hamilton Road, which run north-south between the main Wokingham Road (A329) east out of Reading to the north and to and across Crescent Road to the south.
- D.16. The Council's Appraisal notes the '*conservation area is a fully built up urban area composed of continuous frontages of two and three-storey buildings with front gardens to the back of pavement edge, albeit with a prevalence of large properties on large plots, allowing significant tree cover within plots. There are no areas of public open space within the Conservation Area itself, but the nearby Palmer Park is available to residents for informal and formal recreation*'; going on to say,

'the presence of many fairly substantial properties in commensurately large grounds, typically bounded brick walls and railings and containing significant tree cover, provide a good setting for individual properties and the character of the Conservation Area as a whole.'

D.17. No views towards the Site are identified in the Appraisal.



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