

**Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield
Avenue, Reading RG1 8EQ
BUILT HERITAGE,
TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL
IMPACT APPRAISAL**

Greenwich Leisure Limited

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**Neaves
Urbanism**

Prepared by
Neaves Urbanism Ltd. in collaboration with
Gareth Jones Heritage Planner
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www.neavesurbanism.co.uk

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Appraisal Methodology	3
3. Baseline Conditions.....	6
4. Appraisal of Effects	18
5. Summary and Conclusions	28
A. Supporting Figures	32
B. Planning Policy	46
C. Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Methodology	55
D. Statements of Significance of Heritage Assets	67

1. Introduction

1.1. This Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (HTVIA) has been prepared to support the application for planning permission for a new leisure centre and surface car parking (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 the former Rivermead Leisure Centre (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 in 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 new replacement leisure centre at Rivermead, followed by demolition of existing centre. New centre will consist of:

- *25m, 8 lane competition pool with part moveable floor*
- *teaching and diving pool with moveable floor*
- *splash pad with elements of play features*
- *250 spectator seats for the pool hall.*
- *six court sports hall with spectators seating (dry diving)*
- *fitness suite (120 stations)*
- *studio spaces*
- *spin studio*
- *café / seating area*
- *soft play area/ double activity zone*
- *party rooms*
- *wet and dry changing areas*
- *new entrance pavilion to retained training pool*
- *188 new car parking spaces*
- *40 new cycle spaces*
- *associated soft and hard landscaping"*

1.4. The Proposed Development has evolved in discussion with local stakeholders and through responding to comments from public consultation. It includes the provision of a new leisure centre including a swimming pool and ancillary uses on the site of the existing Rivermead Centre surface car park.

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 WR3d: Rivermead Leisure Centre with the remaining element falling within EN7 Local Green Space and Public Open Space. All of the Site is located within EN13: Major Landscape Feature of the Thames Valley.
- 1.9. St Peters Conservation Area is located to the north of the study area 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.
- 1.10. Further relevant planning policy context within which the Proposed Development is considered is set out in full in **Appendix B**.

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 5.25 hectares. The built heritage assessment 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 750 metres 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 6.8 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. Pre-application advice received from RBC on 22nd April 2020 advised that the Proposed Development should consider the appearance of the new leisure centre, due to its proximity to an area designated as a 'Major Landscape Feature' and the potential views across the River Thames from Caversham Court and the St Peters Conservation Area.
- 2.12. It identified that a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Heritage Statement would be required to support the planning application to determine the acceptability of the Proposed Development with respect to the effect on the character and appearance of the 'Major Landscape Feature' and views into and across the St Peters Conservation Area, including from Caversham Bridge, The Thames Promenade and Caversham Court Gardens. Referencing the requirements of policies EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, EN6: Development in an Historic Context, Policy EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space, Policy EN11:

Waterspaces and Policy EN13: Major Landscape Features and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). This HTVIA addresses these requirements.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 2.13. 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.
- 2.14. 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.
- 2.15. 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 situated within Rivermead Park, to the northwest of Reading Town Centre, it is irregular in shape and contains the majority of the Rivermead Leisure Complex, its associated surface car park, play area and section of a drainage ditch. Also included within the Site are grassed bunds and a links to the wider footpath network of Rivermead Park. Pedestrian access can be gained throughout the Site. The main vehicle entrance is accessed from Richfield Avenue, which runs along the Site's southern boundary.
- 3.3. The Site is broadly flat at around 39 metres above ordnance datum (AOD). The majority of the Site consists of tarmacked hard standing, with small areas of amenity grass and vegetation.
- 3.4. 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 50 individual trees one group. The AIA establishes that the majority of these trees and group are classified as 'category C', with seven trees identified as 'category U'.
- 3.5. The existing Rivermead Leisure Complex building, which is located in the western area of the Site, was constructed in the late 20th century. It has a 'r' shaped footprint and is broadly the equivalent of four storeys in height. Its façade material includes a red brick plinth and green, dark green and orange coloured metal cladding.
- 3.6. The Site's boundary is defined to the south by Richfield Avenue, to the east by the eastern boundary of the existing car park and base of a grassed bund and to the west by the western boundary of the existing car park and external pitches, as shown in **Figure 1** of **Appendix A**. The northern boundary is not demarked but included within the Site are further grassed bunds and the existing demountable swimming pool that would be retained as part of the Proposed Development.

Historic development of the Site and local area

- 3.7. Caversham, on the opposite bank of the River Thames to the Site, was mentioned as a settlement in the 11th century Domesday Book due to its proximity to the great abbey of Reading (a significant pilgrimage destination during the medieval period). The village expanded rapidly in the 19th century to the extent that a new iron bridge was built across the Thames in 1869, facilitating

links with Reading, which was growing fast after the arrival of the railways. The rapid pace of development meant this bridge was inadequate by the turn of the century.

- 3.8. Little development occurred in the area around the Site until the end of the 19th century, with a hotel and boat house immediately east of Caversham bridge. The rest of the area remained open and in agricultural use. The OS map of 1912 show streets of terraced housing running east of Caversham Bridge, into the city centre, and south of the Site on Cardiff Road, a print works.
- 3.9. Caversham Urban District became part of the Borough of Reading in 1911, with agreement for a replacement bridge and a new Reading road bridge further east. The new Caversham Bridge was not completed until 1926.
- 3.10. The area around the Site remains open in the 1932 OS map, which identifies a Thames side promenade along the wooded south bank of the river along with the earlier towing path. The open fields are marked as liable to flooding. South of here further industry is emerging along Cardiff Road. Little change occurred until the development of the Crown Plaza hotel (on the site of the existing hotel), the large boathouse on the riverside, and the existing sports centre and play area in 1980s. The wider area remained as open land.

Baseline Heritage Appraisal

- 3.11. This section sets out the heritage baseline of the assessment identifying above ground HAs. For this appraisal they comprise of listed buildings, a RPGSHI and a conservation area.
- 3.12. There are no HAs on Site. This appraisal considers the potential impact of the Proposed Development on designated HAs within 500 m of the Site as listed in the **Table 3.1** and shown in **Figure 2**.
- 3.13. 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 assessment where they are of the same sensitivity and form groups of buildings that lie in a similar location relative to the Site.
- 3.14. The significance of the St Peter's Conservation Area (which provides an overview of the heritage sensitivities of the study area) is considered below; the significance of the other HA is considered at **Appendix D**

Table 3.1 Heritage Assets and sensitivity

Heritage asset	Sensitivity
Listed buildings grade II*	
Church of St Peter	High
Listed buildings grade II	
The eleven Tombs in St Peter's Churchyard	Medium
The Riverside Garden Pavilion	Medium

Heritage asset	Sensitivity
Caversham Court & environs - The Retaining wall of St Peter's Churchyard - The Retaining walls of axial east-west garden terrace walk - The Retaining walls to the raised walk to Riverside Garden Pavilion - The Caversham Court Stables - The Screen wall at north-east end of Caversham Court Recreation Ground	Medium
No. 1 St Peter's Hill, Lodge to the Warren	Medium
No. 43 Church Road, Banksfoot	Medium
No. 20 Church Road, The Rectory including garden walls	Medium
Church Road & Buckside - No. 2 Buckside - No. 6, Buckside (Buckside Cottage) - No. 16 Church Road - No. 14 Church Road, Valentine Cottage	Medium
Church Street & Church Road - Nos. 2 & 4 Church Street - Nos. 6 & 8 Church Street - No. 10 Church Street - Nos. 1 to 5 (odd) Church Road	Medium
RPGSHI	
Caversham Court	Medium
Conservation areas	
St Peter's Conservation Area	Medium

Heritage Significance

- 3.15. The appraisal provides statements of significance for the HAs identified in **Table 3.1**, with the St Peter's Conservation Area set out below and the other HAs at **Appendix D**. The 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."

- 3.16. The assessment of significance below and those within **Appendix D** are based on on-site visual inspection, on-line research and the list description of the St Peter's 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.

St Peter's Conservation Area

- 3.17. The St Peter's Conservation Area was designated in 1988. The comprehensive conservation area appraisal (the 'Appraisals') was adopted in November 2018.
- 3.18. The Appraisal notes, 'St Peters Conservation Area, north of the River Thames in Caversham, includes the church of St Peter, founded in the 12th century, and Caversham Court Gardens, a historic riverside garden refurbished in 2009. It also incorporates the medieval core of the original Caversham village, running from the end of Bridge Street, along Church Road and up St Peters

Hill. This was the old pilgrim route from Reading Abbey towards Oxford, and linked the agricultural hinterland with the village, the economy of which was based on the River Thames.'

- 3.19. The Appraisal provides a list of the key characteristics of the conservation area; those relevant to this assessment can be summarised as follows:
- The heavily-wooded ridge above the Thames providing a green backdrop to the conservation area is crucial in views into it from across the river, particularly from Caversham Bridge and the Thames Promenade. There are also important views of the river and the bridge from Caversham Court Gardens, and glimpsed views of the river from elsewhere in the conservation area.
 - St Peters Church and its tower (listed grade II*), together with Caversham Court (a grade II RPGSHI), dominate the conservation area (see **Appendix D**).
 - Tree cover and green spaces, especially around St Peter's and in Caversham Court, with specimen trees in the latter, are important.
 - The form of the original bridgehead village is still apparent.
 - The built form reflects that origin. A core of listed 16th and 17th century village buildings with an irregular building line (See **Appendix D**).
 - The early village is overlaid with mainly late Victorian and Edwardian buildings, constructed over a short time period.
 - The CA breaks down into four sub-areas of distinctive character.
- 3.20. Sub area A 'Caversham Court and the Church' is described as 'the most historic and attractive part of the Conservation Area and the chief justification for its designation.' The character of the garden is described as 'defined by terraces rising up from the river, fine specimen trees, river views, attractive walls and interesting small buildings, and the footprint of Caversham Court which is set out in the paving.'
- 3.21. In respect of views of the river the Appraisal states, "the vistas and views from Caversham Bridge towards and across the Conservation Area", and also "along the Thames Promenade on the south bank of the river", are a unique component. There is an important view of a green escarpment rising from the river, with glimpses of the Church tower, from both the bridge and the south bank. There are also important views of the river and the bridge from Caversham Court Gardens, and glimpsed views of the river from elsewhere in the Conservation Area.'
- 3.22. The Appraisal also identifies views out of the conservation area from the church yard and Caversham Court Gardens, looking across and along the River Thames (the gazebo in the Gardens was built to take advantage of these views; listed grade II, see **Appendix D**), noting that the Thames-side Promenade is an attractive walk on the opposite side of the river, but that the buildings in this view are unattractive. It concludes that elsewhere, views out of the conservation area are very limited.

Baseline Townscape Character

- 3.23. 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

- 3.24. The Site and study area falls within the National Character Area Profile '110 Chilterns'. 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 will be made within this appraisal.

Borough Townscape Character

- 3.25. 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

- 3.26. In total four townscape character areas (TCA) have been identified:
- TCA1: River Thames Corridor
 - TCA2: Residential (split up into two types TCA2A: Residential: Caversham and TCA2B: Residential: North Reading).
 - TCA3: Light Industrial (split up into two types TCA3A: Light Industrial: Northwest Reading and TCA3B: Light Industrial: North Reading).
 - TCA4: Transport Corridor
- 3.27. The TCAs are illustrated on **Figure 3**. Based on the limited inter-visibility between the Site and TCA2B: Residential mid 20th century and TCA3B: Light Industrial: North Reading, these TCAs are not discussed further.

TCA1: River Thames Corridor

- 3.28. The River Thames and its associated corridor run from west to east of the study area and takes in the Site. Its character ranges from being narrow corridor framed by built form at the pinch point of Caversham Bridge to encompassing areas of open space such as Rivermead Park and Caversham Court Gardens. The landform is broadly flat with mature native trees and drainage ditches marking historic field patterns.
- 3.29. The area is dominated by the river and its associated uses. Along its banks are Reading Rowing Club, to the south, and Reading Canoeing Club, to the north. Also positioned to the north of the river are the manicured gardens of residential properties that back onto it. These are a typical characteristic of the river's corridor.

- 3.30. The River Thames is considered to be of regional importance and RBC recognise Rivermead Park as being a Major Landscape Feature. TCA1: River Thames Corridor is therefore assessed to be of high townscape value.

TCA2A: Residential: Caversham

- 3.31. The historic core of Caversham is located at the junction of Church Street and Church Road, which reflects its position close to a crossing point of the River Thames. This is reflected in the age of the buildings present along these routes, which include the grade II listed building of the church of St Peters. This core falls within the St Peters Conservation Area (as shown in **Figure 2**). The supporting Appraisal recognises that Caversham expanded rapidly once a new bridge was built in the mid-19th century.
- 3.32. Caversham is situated on the lower slopes of the Chilterns. Within the study area the topography ranges from around 40 metres AOD next to the River Thames up to a high point at St Peters Avenue and Grass Hill junction at approximately 70 metres AOD.
- 3.33. The predominant land use is residential with a local shopping centre situated along Church Street. The residential built form is typically detached, two storeys in height, with a vary brick colour façade and detailing. The residential area to the northeast of the study area is laid out in a tight grid pattern and trees are limited to back gardens; whilst the area to the northwest contains large residential properties that are set in large gardens and wide treed lined streets.
- 3.34. TCA2A: Residential mid to late 19th century includes South Park Conservation Area and, within the study area, there is one grade II* listed building (church of St Peters), 21 grade II listed buildings and the grade II registered park and garden of Reading Old Cemetery. The TCA is considered to have a high to medium townscape value.

TCA3A: Light Industrial: Northwest Reading

- 3.35. Situated to the south of the Site TCA3A: Light Industrial: Northwest Reading includes a mix of modern commercial, industrial and business park uses. Built form has typically medium footprints that are set within small areas car parking, creating a coarse/loose urban grain.
- 3.36. Buildings range in height from two to around four storeys with no consistent material palette and vegetation is limited to street trees set within car parking areas.
- 3.37. There is little permeability through the area due to the railway line marking the areas southern boundary.
- 3.38. There are no designated heritage assets within TCA3A: Light Industrial: Northwest Reading and it is considered to have a low townscape value.

TCA4: Transport Corridor

- 3.39. TCA4: Transport Corridor includes the wide railway line that links Reading Station with the Southwest of England. Elements of the railway line are set on raised embankments as they pass through the study area and create a high level of noise. The raised nature of this transport route provides panoramic views to Reading Town Centre and Caversham.
- 3.40. The railway line provides a physical boundary within the townscape. Within the study area there is one southwest access point under the railway line, Cow Lane. There is no further pedestrian access within the TCA.
- 3.41. 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 TCA4: Transport Corridor is considered to have a low townscape value.

Baseline Visual Appraisal

- 3.42. 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.
- 3.43. 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

- 3.44. 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).
- 3.45. The extent of existing visibility looking out from the Site is summarised below.
- Glimpsed to open views to the Thames Side Promenade.
 - Glimpsed to partial views to industrial and leisure properties associated with Richfield Avenue.
 - Glimpsed to partial views to the residential properties and Caversham Court public open space to the north of the River Thames.

Stage 2 – Appraisal of views

- 3.46. 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)

- 3.47. 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.
- 3.48. The visual receptors are illustrated in **Figure 4** and a series of representative views are set out **Figures 6.1 to 6.8** from the points shown in **Figure 5**.

RE01: No. 8 The Warren, Cambusmoon, Summerhill, Blew Gareth, Warren Court and the White Lodge

- 3.49. These two storey, semi-detached and detached, residential properties lie to the north of the Site, a short distance away. They are located on the lower slopes of the Chilterns and residents are likely to have partial views from the upper southern façade's windows towards the Site, although it is considered that the visibility is restricted in the summer when the mature trees that are located along the river and Rivermead Park are in leaf. The scenic quality of these views is moderate as it takes in the Warren and the River Thames and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE02: Properties nos 4 to 7 Warren Court, nos 6 to 9 Wychcotes, Warren House Court, odd numbers 1 to 11 St Peters Avenue

- 3.50. These two storey, detached, residential properties are located above RE01 residential properties on the slopes of the Chilterns. Residents are likely to have glimpsed views from the southern façade's windows towards the Site, although it is considered that the visibility is restricted in the summer when the mature trees that are located within Rivermead Park are in leaf. The scenic quality of these views is moderate as it takes in the River Thames along with the skyline of Reading Town Centre and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE03: Properties to the south of The Warren between Isomer and Darland

- 3.51. These two and three storey, residential properties back onto the River Thames. It is considered that limited glimpsed views maybe possible to the Site's building in the winter when the mature trees that are located within Rivermead Park are not in leaf. The scenic quality of these views is moderate as it takes in an open view of the River Thames and its value is assessed as being medium.

RE04: Properties to the south of Church Road between Rectory and Buckside Cottage

- 3.52. These two and three storey, residential properties back onto the River Thames. It is considered that glimpsed views maybe possible to the Site's building in the winter when the mature trees that are located within Rivermead Park are not in leaf. The scenic quality of these views is moderate as it takes in the River Thames along with Caversham Bridge and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE05: Properties associated with Caversham

- 3.53. The residential properties in Caversham are located on the slopes of Chilterns and are typically two storeys in height. It is considered that none of the residential properties windows are take in the Site. The scenic quality of these views is moderate and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

RE06: Properties associated with North Reading

- 3.54. The Victorian terrace of two storey residential properties associated with North Reading are located to the southeast of the Site. 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: Properties associated with Promenade Road and The Willows

- 3.55. The residential properties to the east of the Site are positioned behind Caversham Bridge and range between two and four storeys in height. It is considered that none of the residential properties windows are take in the Site. The scenic quality of these views is moderate and its value is assessed as being medium to low.

PR01: Thames Path and RI01: River Thames

- 3.56. A partial to no kinetic view can be gained from users on the Thames Path and the river itself as it crosses through Rivermead Park. Views from the Thames Path are illustrated in representative views 9 to 13 of **Appendix A Figures 6.4 to 6.6**.
- 3.57. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium, due to the high scenic value of Caversham, to the north, and the landscape of the park to the south having local scenic quality.

PR02: Cow Lane

- 3.58. A limited glimpsed view can be appreciated by users of this public right of way due to the dense hedgerow that follows its boundary. A view is illustrated in representative view 18 of **Appendix A Figure 6.8**. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as low, due to the limited scenic value afforded from the route.

OT01: Rivermead Park

- 3.59. Open to glimpsed views can be afforded onto the Site and its buildings depending on the users position within the park, as shown in representative views 9 to 14 of **Appendix A Figures 6.4 to 6.6**. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as medium to low, due to the landscape of the park being in overall moderate condition and having local scenic quality.

OT02: Richfield Avenue Light Industrial

- 3.60. Located to the south of Richfield Avenue the users of the light industrial estate are likely to get glimpsed to no views of the Rivermead Leisure Centre within the Site. The value of the visual

receptor's views is assessed as poor as they have limited importance and no scenic quality and there is considerable potential for substitution of some or all elements in the view.

OT03: Light Industrial to the north of the railway line

- 3.61. Positioned behind the light industrial estate buildings that face Richfield Avenue, it is considered that no views can be gained to the Site, due to the intervening built form. The value of the visual receptor's views is assessed as poor, due to the limited importance and no scenic quality.

OT04: Premier Inn and Crowne Plaza Hotel

- 3.62. Intervening vegetation prevents views to the Site from the windows of the Premier Inn and Crowne Plaza Hotel that face onto it. It is considered that partial to glimpsed views are likely to be gained in the winter when the trees are not in leaf. The scenic quality of these views is low to moderate and its value is assessed as being low.

OT05: Reading Rowing Club Boat House

- 3.63. Reading Rowing Club Boat House addresses the River Thames and there are no associated windows facing onto the Site. The scenic quality of the views towards the river and Caversham Bridge is moderate as it takes in an open view of the River Thames and its value is assessed as being medium.

OT06: Reading Canoe Club

- 3.64. Partial to glimpsed views can be gained from the Reading Canoe Club to the Site's Rivermead Leisure Centre buildings. It is considered that the visibility would increase in the winter when the trees present within Rivermead Park are not in leaf. The scenic quality of the views towards the river and Caversham Bridge is moderate as it takes in an open view of the River Thames and its value is assessed as being medium.

OT07: Caversham Court Gardens

- 3.65. Glimpsed views can be gained to the Site's Rivermead Leisure Centre buildings from the southern area of Caversham Court Gardens, as illustrated in representative views 4 to 6 of **Appendix A Figures 6.2 to 6.3**. It is considered that the visibility would increase in the winter when the trees present within Rivermead Park are not in leaf.
- 3.66. The scenic quality of the views from this visual receptor is considered to be high to medium. A view looking towards Caversham Bridge has been identified as a local view within the St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal. The value of the view from this visual receptor is considered to be high.

OT08: Church of St Peter

- 3.67. The majority of views within the graveyard of the Church of St Peter are restricted by the trees that are present within it and the allotments to the south. It is, however, considered that limited

glimpsed views are likely to be gained to the Site's Rivermead Leisure Centre in the winter. This is demonstrated in representative view 7 of **Appendix A Figure 6.4**.

- 3.68. The scenic quality of the views from this visual receptor is considered to be high to medium. Views looking towards the River Thames have been identified as a local view within the St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal. The value of the view from this visual receptor is considered to be high.

RD01: Tessa Road

- 3.69. Tessa Road provides an access point to the light industrial estate from Richfield Avenue. Its junction also provides a link to the Rivermead Leisure Complex. This route provides a partial view into the Site and its associated building, as shown in representative view 16 of **Appendix A Figures 6.7**. The scenic quality afforded from the associated views are low and the value of the views from this visual receptor is low.

RD02: Richfield Avenue

- 3.70. Running along the Site's southern boundary the views to the Rivermead Leisure Complex vary from partial to glimpsed views depending on the position and season, as demonstrated in representative view 15 of **Appendix A Figures 6.7**. The scenic quality of the views from this visual receptor is considered to be low and the value low.

RD03: Caversham Road Bridge

- 3.71. The open nature of the River Thames affords panoramic views both up and downstream from the central section of Caversham Road Bridge. Glimpsed views can be gained to the Site's building from this vantage point, as demonstrated in representative views 1 and 2 of **Appendix A Figure 6.1**.
- 3.72. The scenic quality of the views from this visual receptor is considered to be high to medium. A view looking upstream has been identified as a local view within both the St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal and Reading Tall Building Strategy. The value of the view from this visual receptor is considered to be high.

RD04: Church Road

- 3.73. No views can be gained to the Site due to the intervening built form of Caversham. 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 route. Its overall value is assessed as being low.

RD05: The Warren

- 3.74. Positioned to the north of the Site and the River Thames, limited glimpsed views can be gained to the Site's building from a section of vehicle users of the Warren, as shown representative view 8 of **Appendix A Figure 6.4**. 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.

RA01: South Western Railway

- 3.75. Fleeting views can be gained by users of the South Western Railway Line to the Site's building. 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 assessments 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 a replacement leisure centre located on an area of surface carpark and children's play area, to the south-eastern corner of the Site. This allows continuity of the existing leisure service provision, with the current Rivermead Leisure Centre being kept open whilst the Proposed Development is constructed. The existing centre would then be demolished to form a surface car park.
- 4.6. The Proposed Development's leisure centre is 'L' shaped and would not exceed the height of the current Rivermead Leisure Centre's 10 court sports hall. The entrance hub at its central corner is slightly higher and would be situated at the main entrance from Richfield Avenue. The layout of the leisure centre provides spaces with dynamic activities to be glimpsed from this entrance, creating an active frontage from Richfield Avenue.
- 4.7. The Proposed Development's leisure centre façade material is split up into two different zones:
 - Lower cladding would consist of dark blue. / slate coloured composite cladding, providing a visual base colour, grounding the cladding.
 - Upper cladding consisting of white composite cladding with intermittent grey panels in a random pattern, with the intent of visually breaking up the elevation from a distance.
- 4.8. In designing the Proposed Development's leisure centre's façade consideration has also been given to views from the surrounding properties located to the north across the River Thames. Screening is provided by the retained northeast mound which would be extended in height with

excavated material and new soft landscaping. Above this mound windows to the first floor would provide views of activities within the centre; whilst the cladding to this elevation has been broken up through creating angled sections and subtle variations in the colours.

- 4.9. The demountable building to the north of the Site would be retained when the current Rivermead Leisure Centre has been demolished. The Proposed Development would extend and improve upon the existing raised bunds that are present to the north and east of the Site to further screen views from Rivermead Park and the Thames Path. The Proposed Development's leisure centre is separated from the car park on its east side by a public plaza. This space, and the leisure centre behind, would frame the car park to the east.
- 4.10. The AIA submitted as part of this planning application identifies that the six trees identified as 'category 'U' would be removed due to their impaired quality. A further 18 individual trees would be removed to accommodate the Proposed Development. All of these are classified as 'category C'. The lost trees would be replaced by over 100 trees as part of the landscape strategy.
- 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. There are no HAs on Site and the Site does not lie within a HA. There would be no direct impact on any identified built heritage receptor.
- 4.14. 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.
- 4.15. There would be an effect on the setting of the St Peter's Conservation Area, the Caversham Court RPGSHI and the grade II listed gazebo (all of medium significance). The magnitude of change is considered to be low. The effect would be minor to moderate and neutral. There would be no harm to the significance of these HAs.
- 4.16. The Proposed Development would be visible in some views from these HAs, seen beyond the tree planting along the river edge, in between the existing Crown Plaza Hotel and the swimming pool of the existing leisure centre complex, beyond a large modern play area and some landscape bunds and planting. It would be of a comparable height to this existing built form and continue the existing

character of development found in the area. Of a higher design quality than the existing leisure centre, and sited close to the Crown Plaza Hotel (and city centre), it would enhance the existing situation.

- 4.17. It is views from the south bank and Caversham Bridge of these HAs that are considered to be of most significance in respect of their settings. These would remain unchanged, as do views of the bridge from these HAs. The views out of St Peter Conservation Area, Caversham Court and from the gazebo are also of significance, but less so. Of these views it is those up and down the river that are more picturesque. The views directly across the river, towards the Site, comprise the treed river promenade which provides a pleasant edge to the river, but beyond the landscape is of lesser quality and large scale C20 development in Reading is visible.
- 4.18. There would be a low magnitude of change on the setting of St Peter's Church. This effect would be minor to moderate and neutral. There would be no harm to the significance of this HA. The church sits in an elevated position compared to the gardens below and this affords a view out in direction of the Site that encompasses more of the modern city of Reading beyond. The Proposed Development would be seen through the tree planting along the river edge, in between the existing Crown Plaza Hotel and the retained swimming pool of the existing leisure centre, against the backdrop of industrial buildings along Cardiff Road. In the summer months it would be screened to a large degree by trees.
- 4.19. In respect No. 20 Church Road, The Rectory including garden walls, and the Church Road & Buckside group, their distance from the Site, and the scale of the Proposed Developments, together with the nature of the surrounding townscape and landscape, means that the magnitude of change would be negligible to low, the effect would be minor and neutral. There would be glimpsed views of the Proposed Development from these HAs, where it would be seen in conjunction with the neighbouring developments.
- 4.20. In respect of No. 1 St Peter's Hill, Lodge to the Warren, no. 43 Church Road, Banksfoot, the Church Street & Church Road group, the eleven Tombs in St Peter's Churchyard, and the Caversham Court & environs group, their distance from the Site and the scale of the Proposed Developments, together with the nature of the surrounding townscape and landscape, means that the magnitude of change and effect would be "none".

Effects on Townscape Character

- 4.21. 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**.
- 4.22. 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.

- 4.23. The Site falls within TCA1: River Thames Corridor, this has been recognised as having a high value within the baseline section of this appraisal. The Proposed Development would result in a contemporary building that reflects the scale and mass of the existing Rivermead Leisure Centre and adjacent Premier Inn Hotel. The building positively addresses Richfield Avenue and is set behind planted earth bunds that reduce the visual effect on the surrounding Rivermead Park.
- 4.24. It is considered that the Proposed Development would not detract from the character or appearance of the Major Landscape Feature of Rivermead Park and that TCA1: River Thames Corridor would be tolerant to change of the type proposed. It also would follow the principles set out within RBC's Local Plan policy WR3d and has a low susceptibility to the change proposed, as defined in the methodology set out in **Appendix B**.
- 4.25. Through assessing the 'value' and 'susceptibility to change' it is concluded that TCA1: River Thames Corridor has a medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development. Overall it is considered that the Proposed Development would have a direct, permanent, low magnitude of change to TCA1: River Thames Corridor resulting in a **moderate to minor** and **beneficial** effect.
- 4.26. The Proposed Development indirectly effects 'TCA3A: Light Industrial: Northwest Reading' from which glimpsed views are possible. It would have an indirect, permanent, low magnitude of change. This results in a **no** effect.
- 4.27. Limited glimpsed views are possible from 'TCA2A: Residential: Caversham' and the Proposed Development would have an indirect, permanent, very low magnitude of change. This results in a **minor** and **neutral** effect.
- 4.28. There is no to limited inter-visibility between the Proposed Development TCA2B: Residential mid 20th century and TCA3B: Light Industrial: North Reading and TCA4: Transport Corridor 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

- 4.29. 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.
- 4.30. 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.

- 4.31. In undertaking this visual appraisal consideration has been given to the field photography of the representative views set out within **Figures 6.1 to 6.8** of **Appendix A**.
- 4.32. 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 and the current visual effect of the Rivermead Leisure Complex.
- 4.33. 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 associated with Caversham, RE06: Properties associated with North Reading and RE07: Properties associated with Promenade Road and The Willows
 - Other – OT03: Light Industrial to the north of the railway line and OT05: Reading Boat Club
 - Road - RD04: Church Road
- 4.34. **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**.
- 4.35. The following provides a summary of the effects for the key receptors / receptor groups in the first year of operation.

RE01: No. 8 The Warren, Cambusmoon, Summerhill, Blew Gareth, Warren Court and the White Lodge and RE02: Properties nos 4 to 7 Warren Court, nos 6 to 9 Wychcotes, Warren House Court, odd numbers 1 to 11 St Peters Avenue

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

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.37. In the winter it is considered that glimpsed views are likely to be gained to the Proposed Development's leisure centre through the mature trees in Rivermead Park from the windows of the upper floors of the properties that face the Site. The Proposed Development's built form is of a similar scale and mass to the existing Rivermead Leisure Centre. Its façade of white composite cladding with intermittent grey panels in a random pattern, would help to break up the perceived mass of the leisure centre within views.
- 4.38. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being low. 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 to the south of The Warren between Isomer and Darland and RE04: Properties to the south of Church Road between Rectory and Buckside Cottage

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

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.40. Limited glimpsed views are likely to be gained from the properties back gardens to the Proposed Development's leisure centre through the mature trees in Rivermead Park in the winter. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being negligible. 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.

PR01: Thames Path and RI01: River Thames

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

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.42. In the winter partial views are likely to be gained to the Proposed Development's leisure centre through the mature trees in Rivermead Park. The Proposed Development would not affect the key features identified for the view from Thames Path within RBC's Reading Tall Building Strategy. With the view across an open, largely undeveloped river floodplain landscape retained.
- 4.43. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being low. Combining this magnitude of change with this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in a **moderate to minor** and **beneficial** effect within the views from these leisure routes.

PR02: Cow Lane

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

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.45. In the winter glimpsed views are likely to be gained to the Proposed Development's leisure centre. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from this visual receptor is assessed as being very low. 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 this public right of way.

OT01: Rivermead Park

- 4.46. 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 and adjacent River Thames.

The value was assessed in the baseline section as medium and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.47. The Proposed Development's leisure centre reflects the scale of the existing Rivermead Leisure Centre. It is set behind existing planted earth bunds that reduce the visual effect from the surrounding users of the park. 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.

OT04: Premier Inn and Crowne Plaza Hotel

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

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.49. Where windows are orientated towards the Site partial to glimpsed views of the Proposed Development's leisure centre's eastern façade. Here the façade of white composite cladding with intermittent grey panels in a random pattern, would help to break up the perceived mass of the leisure centre within views. The Proposed Development's 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 **moderate to minor** and **beneficial** effect within the views from them.

OT06: Reading Canoe Club

- 4.50. The users of the visual receptor susceptibility to change is low as the views are experience by people engaged in outdoor sport that do not depend on an appreciation of the view. The value was assessed in the baseline section as medium and the sensitivity is therefore judged to be medium.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.51. The Proposed Development's leisure centre 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 low. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **minor** and **neutral** effect within the views.

OT07: Caversham Gardens Court and OT08 Church of St Peter

- 4.52. The users of these visual receptors susceptibility to change is high. Their value was assessed in the baseline section as high and their sensitivity is therefore judged to be high.

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.53. The Proposed Development's building would result in the alteration to the views experienced by users of this public open space to the south of the River Thames. The building is not uncharacteristic in the particular context and its contemporary design and façade would improve the scenic quality of the views. The magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being low. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **minor** and **neutral** effect within the views.

RD01: Tessa Road and RD02: Richfield Avenue

- 4.54. 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

- 4.55. From a section of both Tessa Road and Richfield Avenue its users would gain partial views of the Proposed Development's leisure centre entrance hub. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from these visual receptors are assessed as being low. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptors results in **no** effect within views.

RD03: Caversham Road Bridge

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

Effect of Proposed Development

- 4.57. As the users of this route travel over Caversham Road Bridge views can be gained up and down stream of the River Thames. A glimpsed view of the Proposed Development's leisure centre's northern and eastern façade would be gained in the background of the view. The Proposed Development would not affect the key features identified for the view from Caversham Bridge within RBC's Reading Tall Building Strategy. With the open aspect across the river and adjacent flood plain retained along with the view to the uninterrupted wooded skyline of Caversham.
- 4.58. The Proposed Development's magnitude of change in the views from the visual receptors is assessed as being negligible. Combining this with the sensitivity of the visual receptor results in **minor** and **neutral** effect within the views

RD05: The Warren

- 4.59. The users of this visual receptors 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

- 4.60. From a limited section of the Warren its users would gain glimpsed views of the Proposed Development's leisure centre. 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 views.

RA01: South Western Railway

- 4.61. 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

- 4.62. Fleeting, glimpsed views are likely to be gained to the roof of the Proposed Development's leisure centre 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					
Church of St Peter (grade II* listed building)			High	Negligible to low	Moderate to minor and neutral
The eleven Tombs in St Peter's Churchyard (grade II listed building)			Medium	None	None
The Riverside Garden Pavilion (grade II listed building)			Medium	Negligible to low	Moderate to minor and neutral
Caversham Court & environs group (grade II listed buildings)			Medium	None	None
No. 1 St Peter's Hill, Lodge to the Warren (grade II listed buildings)			Medium	None	None
No. 43 Church Road, Banksfoot (grade II listed buildings)			Medium	None	None
No. 20 Church Road, The Rectory including garden walls (grade II listed buildings)			Medium	Negligible to low	Minor and neutral
Church Road & Buckside group (grade II listed building)			Medium	Negligible to low	Minor and neutral
Church Street & Church Road group (grade II listed buildings)			Medium	None	None
Caversham Court (RPGSHI)			Medium	Low	Moderate to minor and neutral
St Peter's Conservation Area			Medium	Low	Moderate to minor and neutral
Townscape character areas					
TCA1	High	Low	Medium	Low	Moderate to minor and beneficial
TCA2A	High to medium	Medium	Medium	Very low	Minor and neutral
TCA2B	Medium to low	Low	Low	None	None
TCA3A	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
TCA3B	Low	Low	Low	None	None

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Effects
TCA4	Low	Low	Low	None	None
Visual receptors					
RE01	Medium to low	High	Medium	Low	Moderate to minor and neutral
RE02	Medium to low	High	Medium	Low	Moderate to minor and neutral
RE03	Medium	High	Medium	Negligible	Minor and neutral
RE04	Medium to low	High	Medium	Negligible	Minor and neutral
RE05	Medium to low	High	Medium	None	None
RE06	Medium to low	High	Medium	None	None
RE07	Medium to low	High	Medium	None	None
PR01	Medium	High	High	Low	Moderate and beneficial
PR02	Low	High	Medium	Very low	Minor and neutral
RI01	Medium	High	High	Low	Moderate and beneficial
OT01	Medium to low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate and beneficial
OT02	Poor	Low	Low	Low	None
OT03	Poor	Low	Low	None	None
OT04	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Moderate to minor and beneficial
OT05	Medium	Medium	Medium	None	None
OT06	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor and neutral
OT07	High	High	High	Low	Moderate to minor and neutral
OT08	High	High	High	Negligible	Minor and neutral
RD01	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
RD02	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
RD03	High	Medium	High	Very low	Minor and neutral
RD04	Low	Low	Low	None	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 5.25 hectares and consists of the provision of a new leisure centre including a swimming pool and ancillary uses on the site of the existing Rivermead Centre south east surface car park

Heritage

- 5.3. There are no HAs on Site but there are a number of HAs in the area around the Site, all on the opposite bank of the River Thames in Caversham. All but one of these HAs are of medium sensitivity; St Peter's Church is of high sensitivity. There would be no direct effect on any HA.
- 5.4. The Proposed Development, when visible, would be seen beyond the tree planting along the river edge, in between the existing Crown Plaza Hotel and the swimming pool of the existing leisure centre complex. It would be of a comparable height to this existing built form and continue the existing character of development found in the area. Of a higher design quality than the existing leisure centre, and sited close to the Crown Plaza Hotel (and city centre), it would enhance the existing situation.
- 5.5. There would be a minor to moderate and neutral effect on the setting of St Peter's Church, St Peter's Conservation Area, the Caversham Court RPGSHI and the grade II listed gazebo; a minor and neutral effect on the setting of no. 20 Church Road, The Rectory including garden walls, and the Church Road & Buckside group; and the effect would be "none" on no. 1 St Peter's Hill, Lodge to the Warren, no. 43 Church Road, Banksfoot, the Church Street & Church Road group, the eleven Tombs in St Peter's Churchyard, and the Caversham Court & environs group.
- 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. Four 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 the flood plain of the River Thames and TCA1: River Thames Corridor.
- 5.8. The Proposed Development would result in a new leisure centre that positively addresses Richfield Avenue. The public realm strategy for the plaza in front of the leisure centre improves the scenic

quality of this area of the park. The layout incorporates the majority of the trees on the Site's boundary, which would help to assimilate the Proposed Development into Rivermead Park.

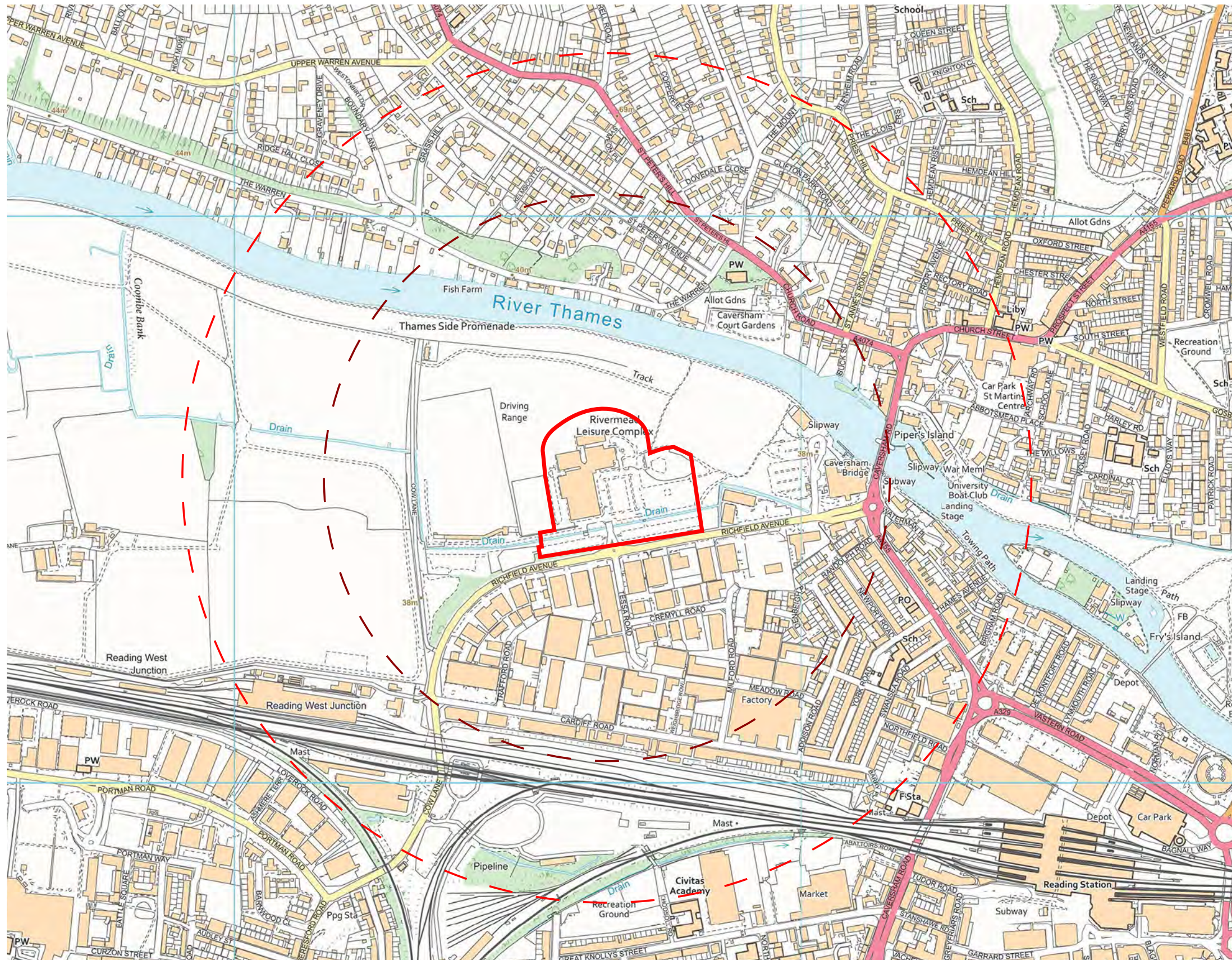
- 5.9. Through making improvements to this context the Proposed Development would improve the townscape character of the 'TCA1: River Thames Corridor', leading to an overall moderate to minor and beneficial effect. The Proposed Development would also indirectly lead to a minor and neutral effect on the character of the adjacent 'TCA2A: Residential: Caversham', which is located to the north of the Site.

Visual amenity

- 5.10. The trees present within Rivermead Park, and along the River Thames to the north and Richfield Avenue to the south, influence the extent of the Site and Rivermead Leisure Centre within it. The Site is visible from the park itself, the Thames Path and the River Thames. It is considered to be visible from the industrial and leisure properties associated with Richfield Avenue and the residential properties to the north. Views can be gained from Caversham Court Gardens and Caversham Bridge to the upper floors of the Rivermead Leisure Centre. Fleeting, glimpsed views are possible from 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 Proposed Development's leisure centre would not exceed the height of the current Rivermead Leisure Centre's 10 court sports hall. Its northern and eastern façade material has been carefully selected to reduce its visual effect within the views from the north. Whilst the entrance hub at its southwest corner helps to activate the centre and would help with orientation and wayfinding from Richfield Avenue.
- 5.12. The appraisal of visual receptors identifies that the Proposed Development would result in the following visual effects:
- Moderate and beneficial – PR01: Thames Path, RI: River Thames and OT01 Rivermead Park
 - Moderate to minor and beneficial - OT04: Premier Inn and Crowne Plaza Hotel
 - Moderate to minor and neutral – RE01: No. 8 The Warren, Cambusmoon, Summerhill, Blew Gareth, Warren Court and the White Lodge, RE02: Properties nos 4 to 7 Warren Court, nos 6 to 9 Wychcotes, Warren House Court, odd numbers 1 to 11 St Peters Avenue: , OT07: , OT08: and RD03:
 - Minor and neutral - RE03: Properties to the south of The Warren between Isomer and Darland, RE04: Properties to the south of Church Road between Rectory and Buckside Cottage, PR02: Cow Lane, OT06: Reading Canoe Club, OT07: Caversham Court, OT08 Church of St Peter and RD03: Caversham Road Bridge.
- 5.13. The remaining visual receptors are likely to have no effects to the Proposed Development.

- 5.14. The Proposed Development would not affect the key features identified within RBC's Reading Tall Building Strategy for the view from Caversham Bridge and from the Thames Path. With the open aspect across the river and adjacent flood plain retained, due to the Proposed Development's leisure centre being situated to the Site's southern boundary.
- 5.15. Considering how developed the Site is currently and how it would change following the implementation of the Proposed Development, it is considered that it would not detract from the character or appearance of the Major Landscape Feature of the Thames Valley. The Proposed Development would be visually appreciated at a local scale.

Appendix A. Supporting Figures



Key



Site



Heritage study area (500 metres)



Townscape and visual study area (750 metres)

RIVERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE, READING

Figure 1: Site context

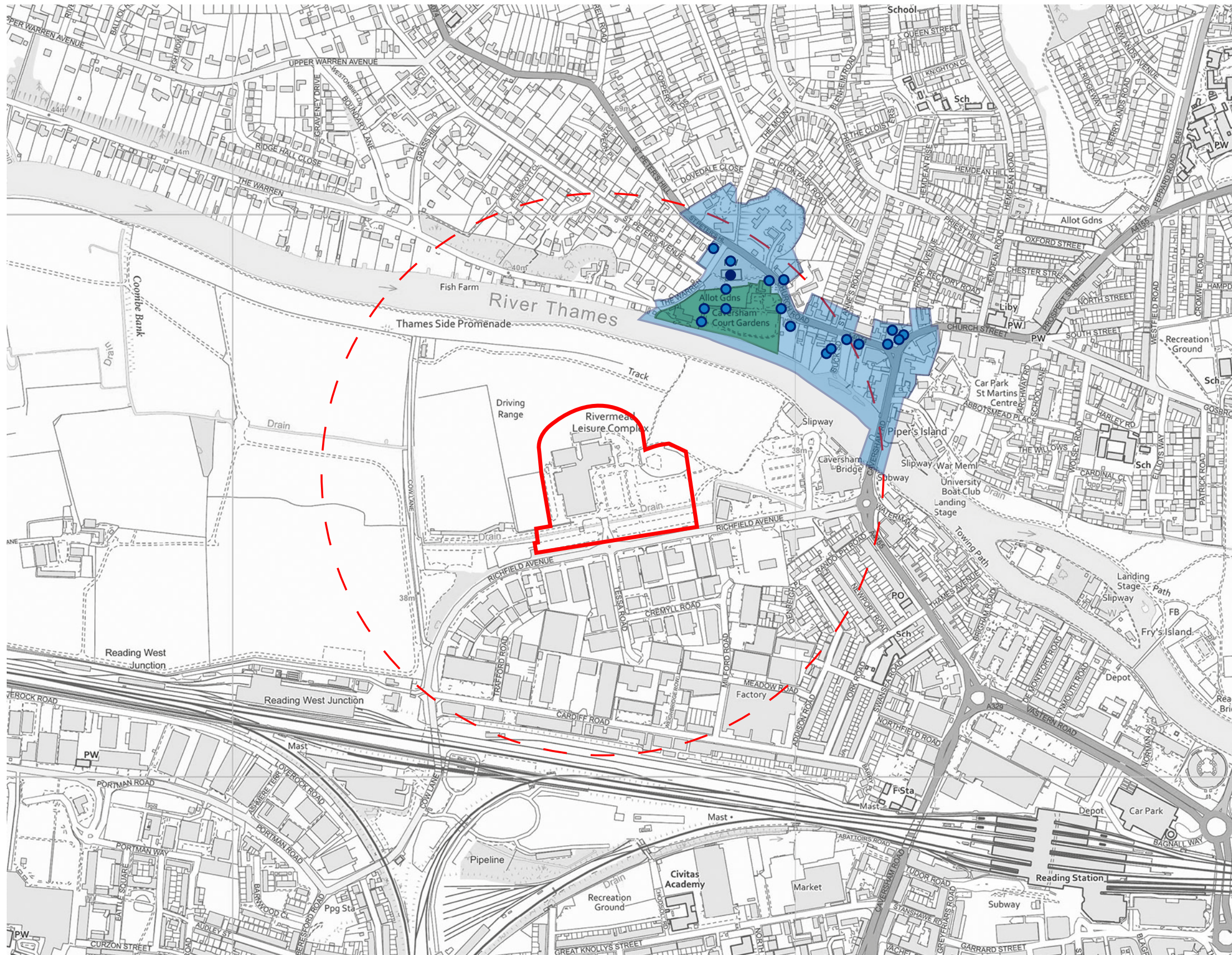
Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig1.AppA1

Scale: 1:7,500 @A3

Date: December 2020





Key

Site

Heritage study area (500 metres)

Grade II listed building

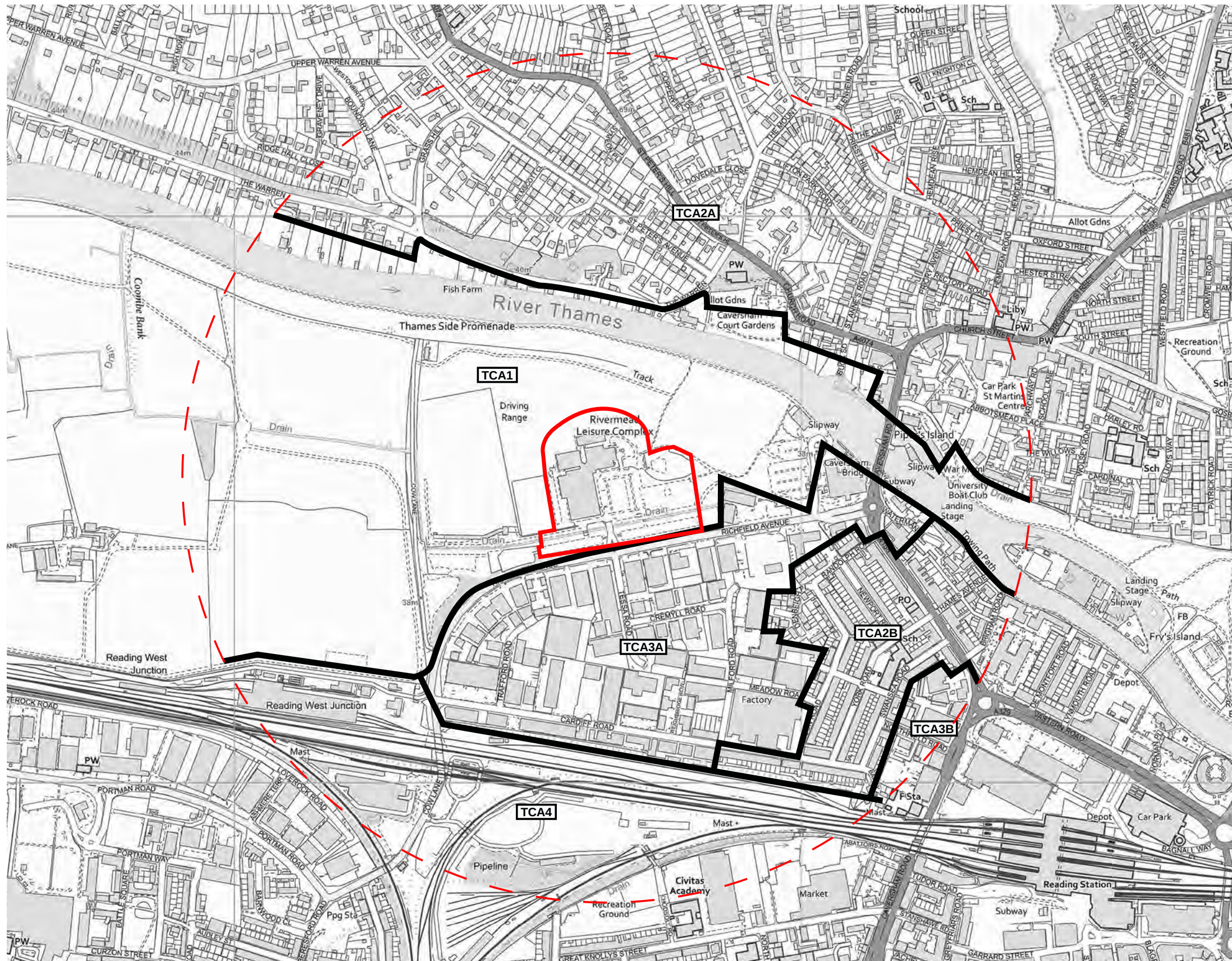
Conservation Area

Registered Park and Garden

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RIVERMEAD LEISURE
 CENTRE, READING
 Figure 2: Heritage assets
 Client: GLL
 Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig2.AppA1
 Scale: 1:7,500 @A3
 Date: December 2020

Neaves
 Urbanism



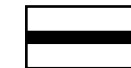
Key



Site



Townscape study area (750 metres)



Townscape character areas (TCA)

TCA1: River Thames Corridor

TCA2A: Residential: Caversham

TCA2B: Residential: North Reading

TCA3A: Light Industrial: Northwest Reading

TCA3B: Light Industrial: North Reading

TCA4: Transport Corridor

RIVERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE, READING

Figure 3: TCA

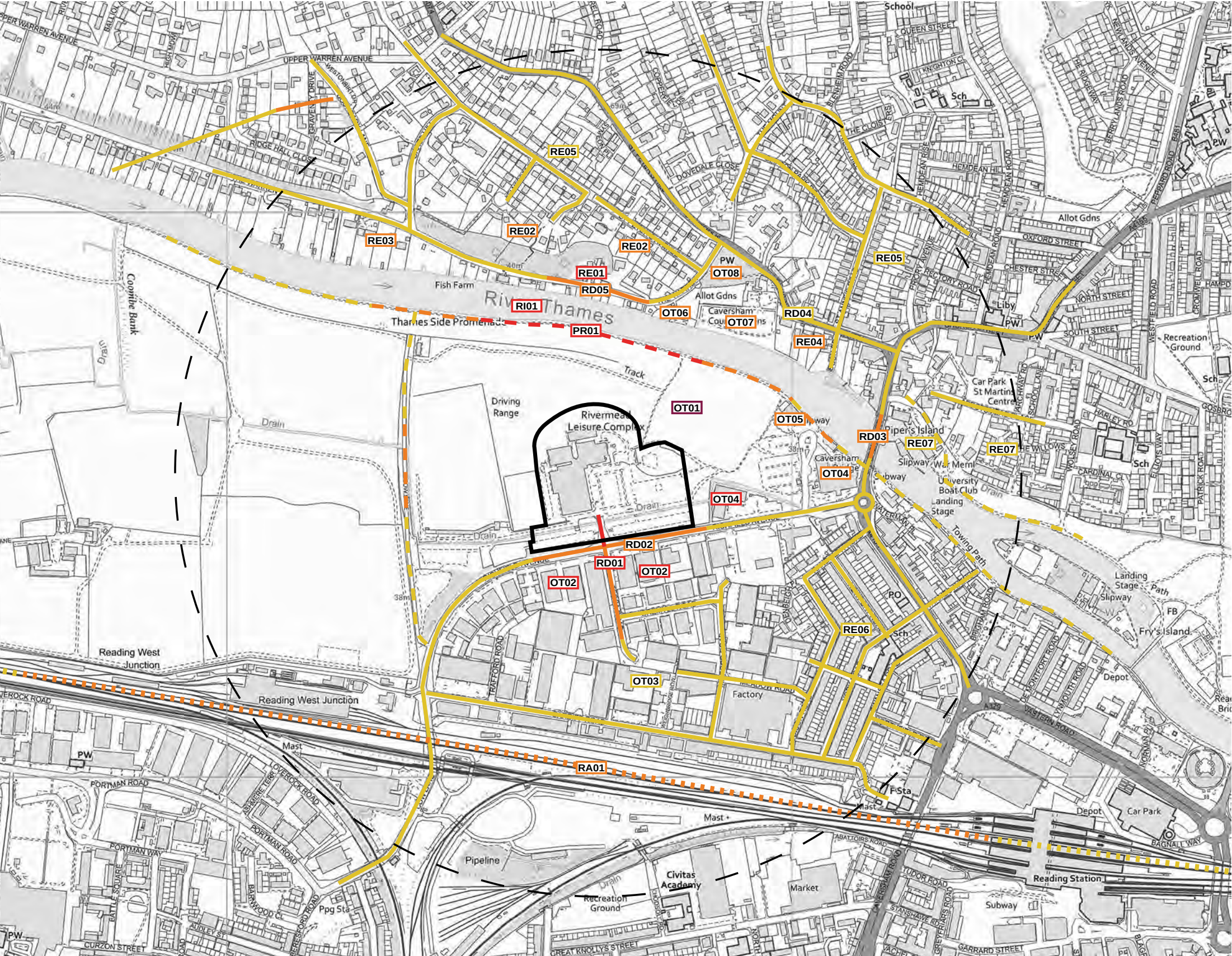
Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig3.AppA1

Scale: 1:7,500 @A3

Date: December 2020





Key

 Site

 Visual study area (750 metres)

RD01

Public Highways

RA01

Rail

RE01

Residential Properties

OT01

Other Properties

Receptors

Visibility

Open

Partial

Glimpsed

No view

Properties

Roads

PROW















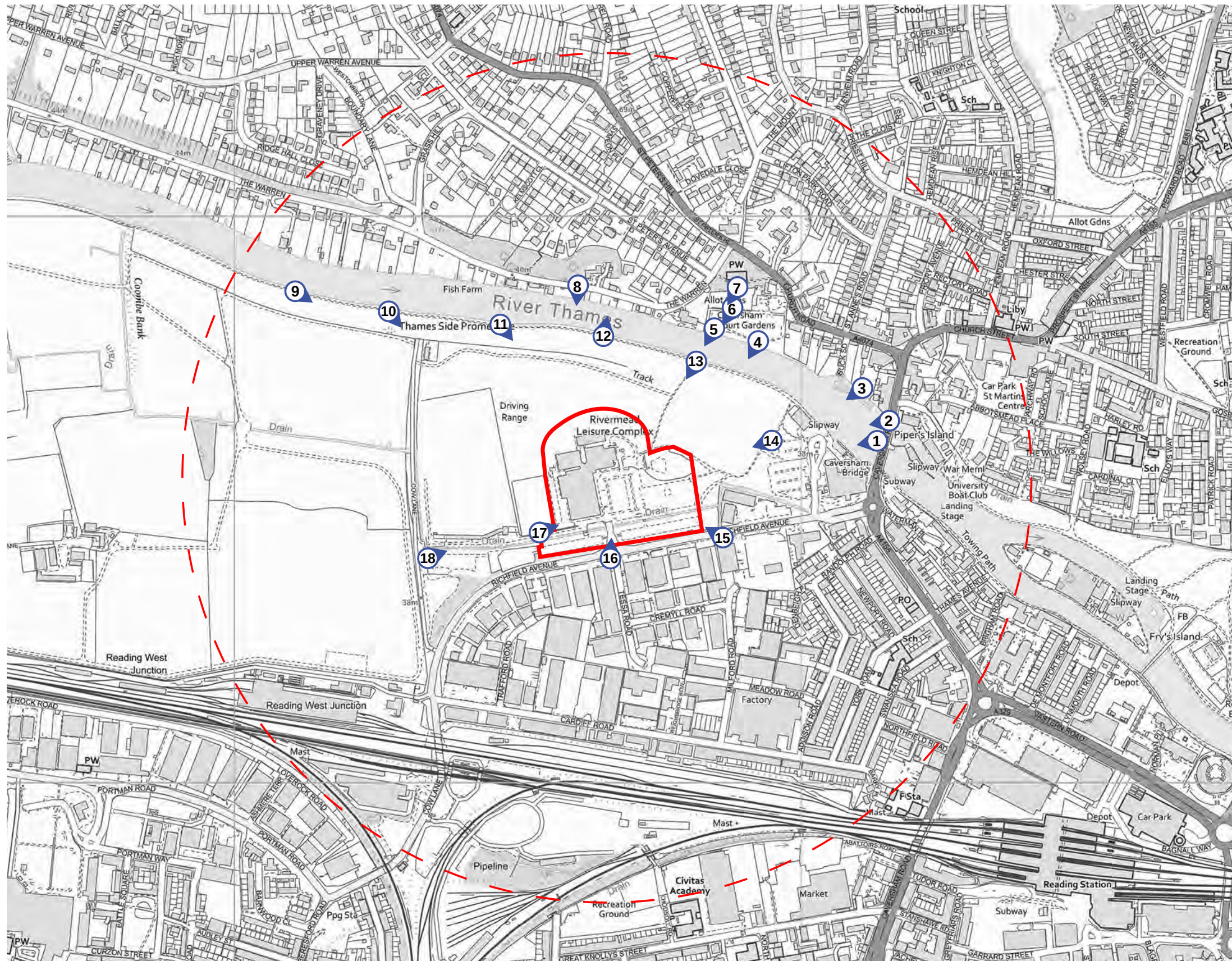












Key



Site



Visual study area (750 metres)



Representative viewpoint

RIVERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE, READING

Figure 5: Views locations

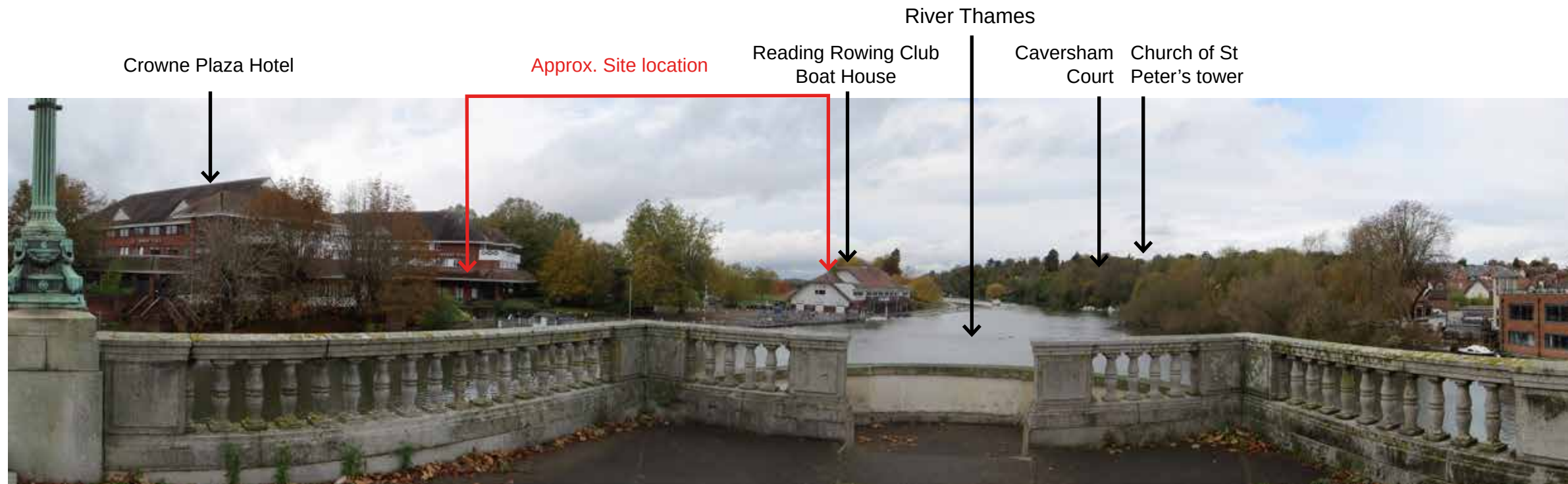
Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig5.AppA1

Scale: 1:7,500 @A3

Date: December 2020





Representative view 1 - taken from the centre of the western side of Caversham Bridge, looking west



Representative view 2 - taken from the northern end of the western side of Caversham Bridge, looking southwest



Representative view 3 - Griffin Public House Car Park

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

Figure 6.1: Views (sheet 1 of 8)

Client: GLL

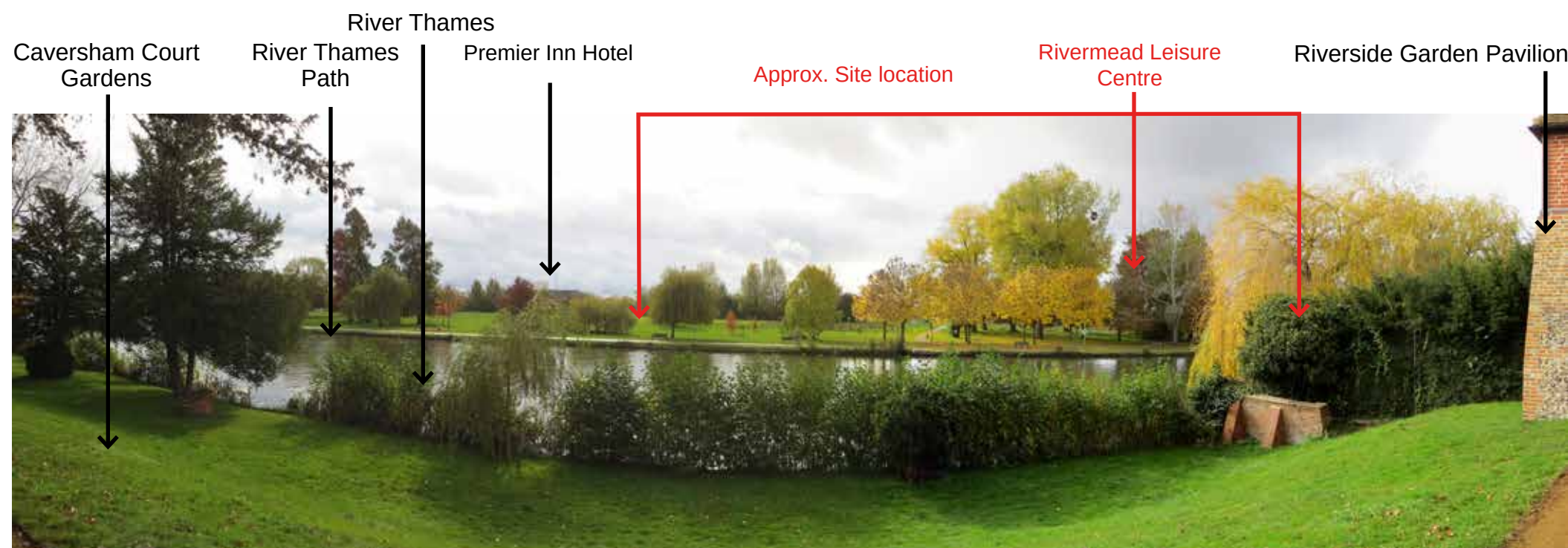
Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.1.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020



Representative view 4 - taken from Caversham Court Gardens looking south



Representative view 5 - taken from Caversham Court Gardens looking south

RIVERMEAD LEISURE CENTRE, READING

Figure 6.2: Views (sheet 2 of 8)

Client: GLL

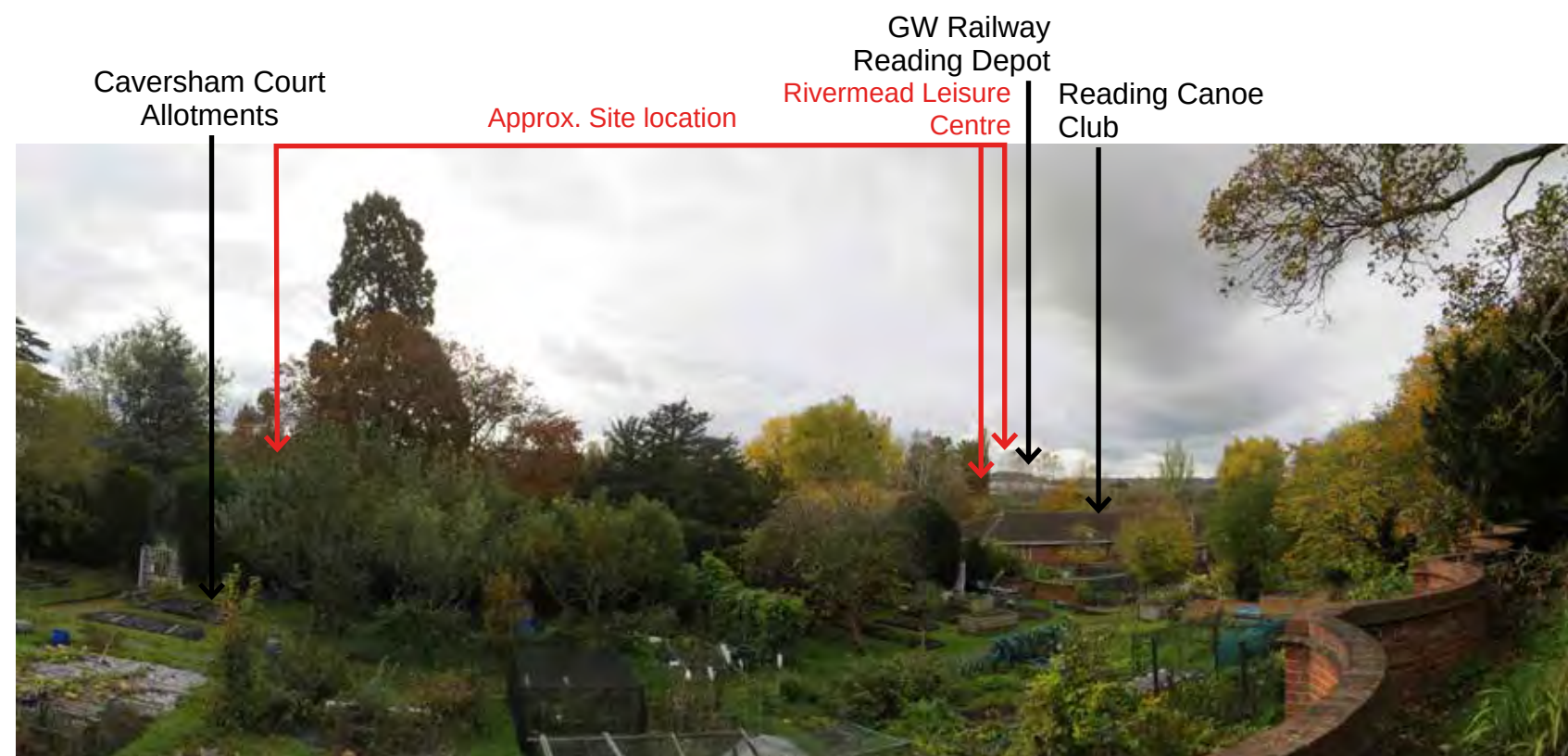
Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.2.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020



Representative view 6 - taken from Caversham Court Gardens, close to the allotments, looking south



Representative view 7 - taken from the raised area of St Peters Churchyard, looking south

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

Figure 6.3: Views (sheet 3 of 8)

Client: GLL

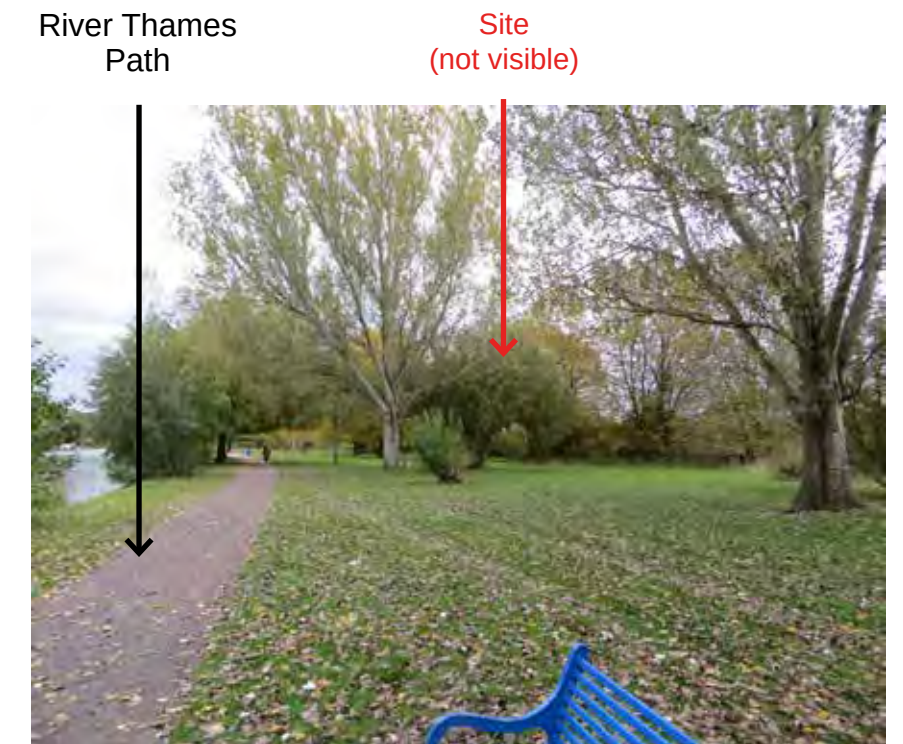
Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.3.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020



Representative view 8 - taken from the Warren looking south



Representative view 9 - taken from the River Thames Path looking southeast



Representative view 10 - taken from the River Thames Path looking southeast

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

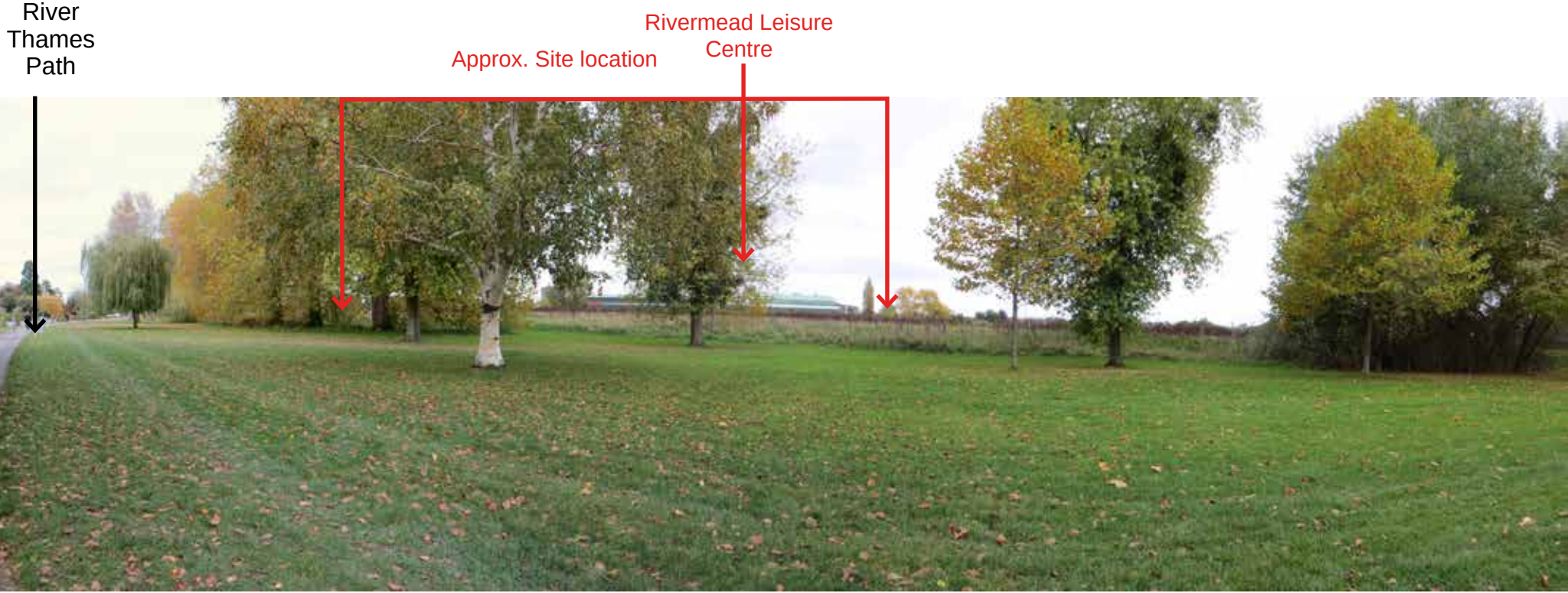
Figure 6.4: Views (sheet 4 of 8)

Client: GLL

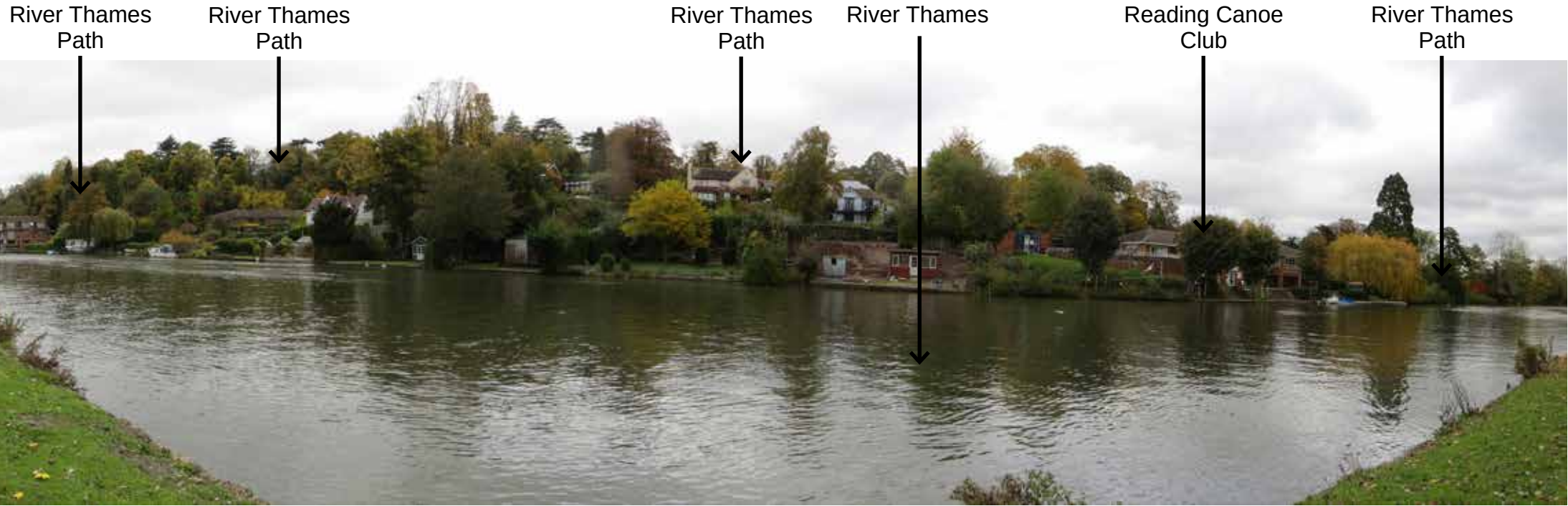
Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.4.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020



Representative view 11 - taken from the River Thames Path looking south



Representative view 12 - taken from the River Thames Path looking north towards Caversham

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

Figure 6.5: Views (sheet 5 of 8)

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.5.AppA1

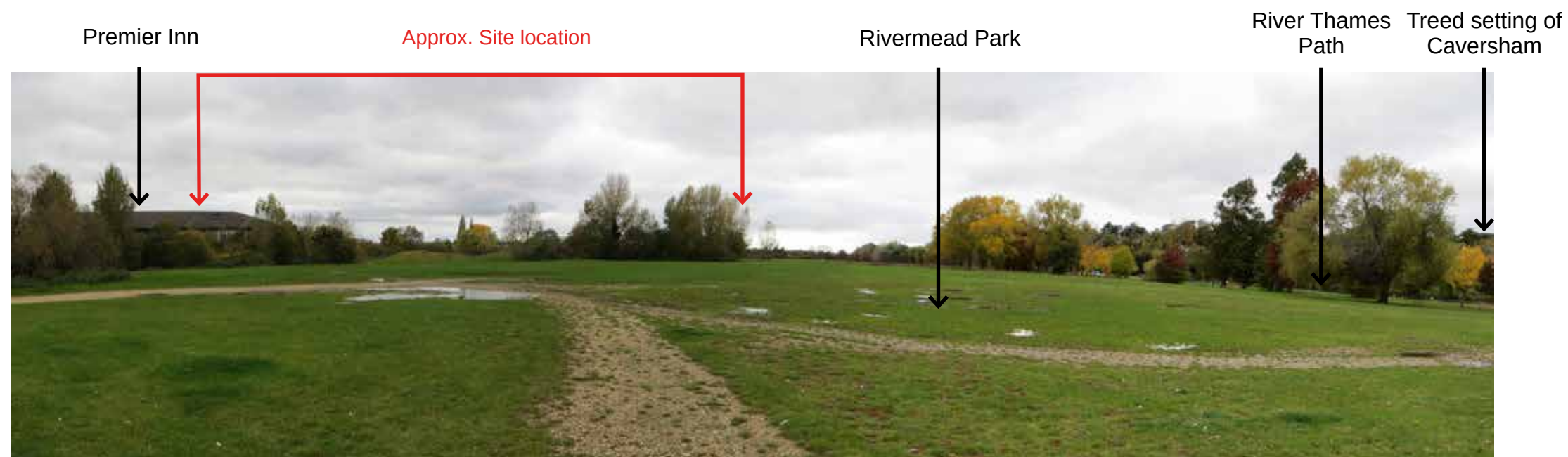
Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020





Representative view 13 - taken from the River Thames Path looking southwest



Representative view 14 - taken from the edge of the Rivermead Park car park

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

Figure 6.6: Views (sheet 6 of 8)

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.6.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020

Approx. Site location

Richfield Road



Representative view 15 - taken from Richfield Road, looking northwest

Caversham
Garden Centre

Rivermead Leisure
Centre

Approx. Site location

Richfield Road

Tessa
Road



Representative view 16 - taken from Richfield Road and Tessa Road junction, looking north

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

Figure 6.7: Views (sheet 7 of 8)

Client: GLL

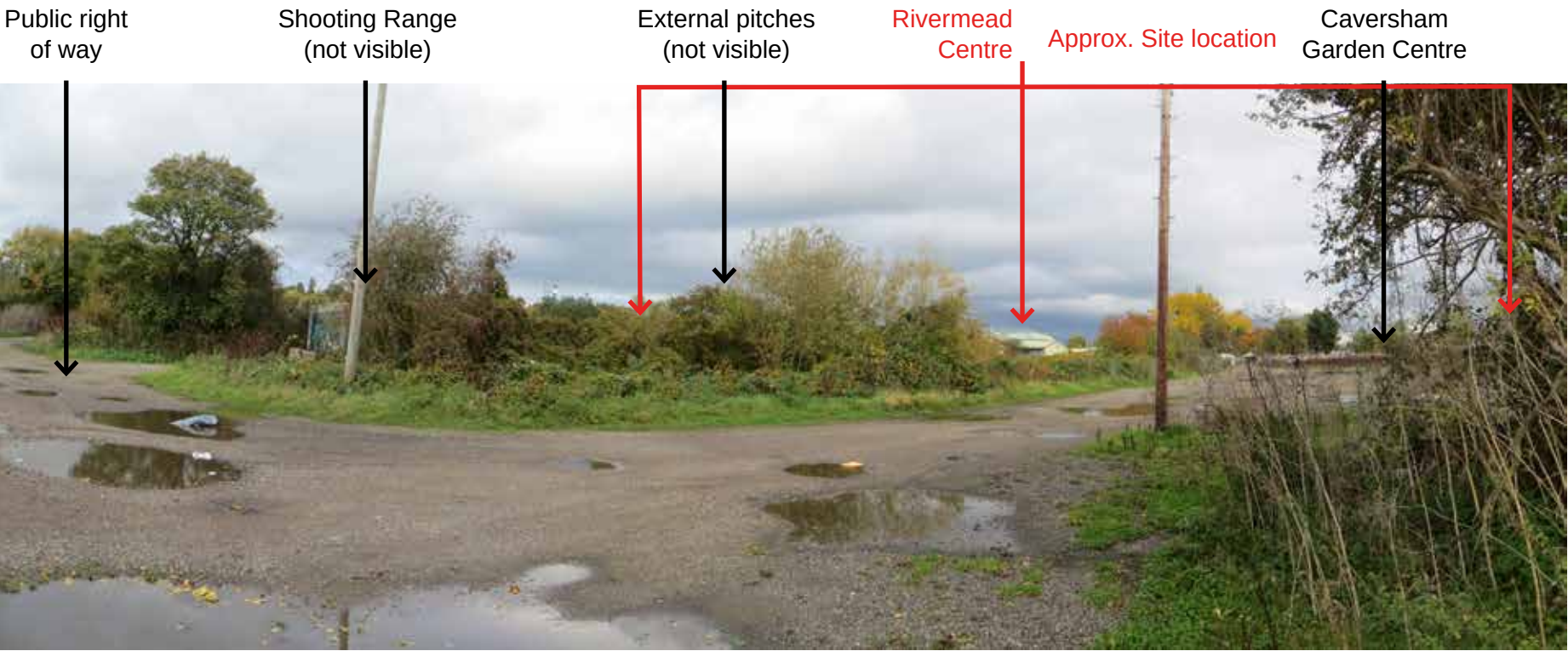
Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.7.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020



Representative view 17 - taken from within the Rivermead Leisure Complex, looking east



Representative view 18 - taken from along the public right of way, looking east

**RIVERMEAD LEISURE
CENTRE, READING**

Figure 6.8: Views (sheet 8 of 8)

Client: GLL

Dwg. No: 2016RE01.Fig6.8.AppA1

Scale: NTS

Date: December 2020



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: 110 Chilterns. The key characteristics of National Character Area: x relevant to the Site include (in summary):
- *The River Thames and its flood plain mark a distinctive area in the south. The river is a focus for settlement, abstraction and recreation.*
 - *Extensive rights of way, commons, open access downland, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside. The Thames Path, the Ridgeway and the Grand Union Canal are high-profile recreation routes; locally promoted routes include the Chilterns Cycleway. Private leisure land uses, including golf courses and horse paddocks, are common near urban centres.*

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 my assessments at 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 WR3d with the remaining element falling within EN7. All of the Site is located within EN13: Major Landscape Feature.
- 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 acknowledge 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.” Rivermead and Thameside Promenade is recognised as a Local Green Space and referenced EN7Wp.

Policy EN11: Waterspaces requires that the boroughs waterspace will be protected and enhanced so that “they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, flood mitigation, local character, heritage and visual amenity”. It goes on to state that development within the vicinity of a watercourse will be acceptable if it meets the following (summarised):

- Provide appropriate, attractive uses and buildings that enhance the relationship of buildings, spaces and routes to the watercourse, including through creating or enhancing views of the watercourse, and create a high quality public realm;
- Make positive contributions to the distinct character, appearance, historic significance, landscape and amenity of the watercourses;
- Provide a strengthened role for watercourses as important landscape features, wildlife corridors, historic features and recreation opportunities;

Policy EN13: Major Landscape Features and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty); states that “Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature.” The Site and study area falls within the Major Landscape Feature of the Thames Valley on the supporting proposals map.

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 WR3d: Rivermead Leisure Centre: provides principles that the Proposed Development should accord to, none are relevant to this appraisal.

St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal (2018)

B.28. Located to the north of the identified study area St Peters Conservation Area comprises of one of the oldest settled parts of Reading, the medieval core of the original Caversham village, and is situated to an important crossing of the River Thames. includes the 12th century church of St Peter and Caversham Court Gardens, a historic garden that was refurbished in the early 21st century.

B.29. The Appraisal states that:

“Views into the Conservation Area from the river, especially from Caversham Bridge, and out of the area across the Thames, show its riverside setting and the green escarpment which rises above it. Fine mature trees, especially Victorian conifers, are particularly prominent. The green spaces of Caversham Court Gardens and St Peters churchyard are tranquil havens alongside the busy Church Road, and the wall of trees rising up the slope at the area’s western end provides an important backdrop to the Conservation Area”

B.30. The supporting Map 3 of the Appraisal establishes views and wide views. Those relevant to the Site and this HTVIA include:

- Wide view from Caversham Bridge (upstream)
- View from Caversham Court Gardens to Caversham Bridge
- Views south towards the River Thames from St Peters churchyard.

Reading Tall Building Strategy (2008)

B.31. 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. Those relevant to this appraisal include:

- P. From Caversham Bridge

- 7. From the Thames Path East of Reading

B.32. Appendix 1 of the Reading Tall Building Strategy sets out the key features to be protected within each of these views.

P. From Caversham Bridge

B.33. Key features include:

- “Open aspect across the river and adjacent flood plain;
- Views of an uninterrupted wooded skyline;
- Foreground views of the stone balustrades of Caversham Bridge”

7. From the Thames Path East of Reading

B.34. The supporting paragraph states:

“The view is across an open, largely undeveloped river floodplain landscape, although the tranquil character is partially eroded by views of leisure uses on the floodplain e.g. the fairground. Expanses of floodplain and recreational grassland are interrupted by views of riverside vegetation and individual clumps of trees. The skyline is also interrupted by the upper floors of Thames Tower in the background of the view. The introduction of further tall buildings to the skyline would further erode the tranquil character. There is a high sensitivity to the inclusion of further tall buildings to the view.”

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 assessment 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 assessment 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 assessment 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 Assessment 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 assessment 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 750 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 will be 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 will include 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 assessment 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.

Effects criteria

- C.12. The 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 assessment:

- 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 assessment 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, will be 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 assessment of sensitivity will not necessarily correspond with the assessment of the heritage importance of the HA as high, medium or low. The assessment 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** below.

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

- 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 assessment 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 Assessment of Significance of Effects

Sensitivity	Overall Assessment 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 assessment, 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 assessment 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.

Limitations and Assumptions

C.21. There are no limitations of assumption for this assessment.

Methodology for Appraisal of Townscape Effects

Establishing townscape sensitivity

C.22. 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.23. Townscape Value is determined through an assessment 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

	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.24. 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.25. 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.26. 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 assessment is made which considers the size, scale, duration and reversibility of the effect on the townscape.
- C.27. 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.28. To establish the overall townscape effects, the assessments of 'sensitivity' and 'the magnitude of change' are combined as illustrated in the matrix set out in **Table C.8**.

Table C.8 Townscape Assessment of Townscape Effects

Sensitivity	Overall Assessment 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.29. 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.30. 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.31. 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.32. Value of a particular view is determined through an assessment 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 in 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.33. The assessment 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 assessment and typical viewpoints are selected and photographed to provide a representation of the views.

C.34. 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.35. 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.36. 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.37. In order to establish the magnitude of change of the proposed development an assessment 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.38. 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.39. To establish the overall assessment 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 Assessment of Effect

Sensitivity	Overall Assessment 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.40. 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 will be explained within the text.
- C.41. 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. Statement of Significance of Heritage Assets

D. Statements of Significance of Heritage Assets

Grade II* listed buildings

Church of St Peter

- D.1. The Church of St Peter is listed grade II*. This pleasant parish church dates from various periods from the C12 onwards and is principally C15 and high Victorian. It is built of flint with Bath stone dressings and with an old tile roof. The west tower, built by Morris and Stallwood, is of three stages with a hipped roof screened by a high corbelled parapet, and dates from 1878. Nothing remains of the Norman church except for the south doorway with the crude chevron, and a reset window now in the Vestry. The five bay nave with three bay chancel was lengthened in 1924-25 by Sir Ninian Comper. The north aisle has a good perpendicular east chapel with an angel busts on the capital dating from C15. Its setting comprises the churchyard and Caversham Court RPGSHI, both with many mature trees.

Grade II listed buildings

Church Group

- D.2. Eleven Tombs in St Peter's Churchyard are listed grade II. 1. 1858 Charles Washington Lovegrove and family. 2. 1813 John Flory Howard. 3. 1828. Benjamin Lancaster. 4. 1778. Low table tomb. 5. 1802. Tim Van der Stegen. 6. 1765. Margaret Bowd. 7. 1802 Stephens family vault. 8. 1802. Elizabeth Lunn. 9. 1848. John Lawton. 10. 1790s. Benwell Family vault. 11. C17 table tomb.

Riverside Garden Pavilion at Caversham Court (the gazebo)

- D.3. The Riverside Garden Pavilion at Caversham Court is listed grade II. This 2 storey Garden Pavilion, reached by a raised walk from the main axial terrace, was built by the Lovedays of Caversham Court and dates probably from the early to mid C17 (said to bear the date 1617). The 1st floor is timber framed and entered from a raised terrace, the ground floor is built of brick. It is an early example of Flemish bond with a hipped old tile roof.
- D.4. The RPGSHI entry for Caversham Court notes 'the first floor, designed as a viewing platform, has windows set into each of the other three sides overlooking the garden to west and east and the river to the south and former meadows beyond, possibly formerly with views towards the centre of Reading (now obscured by C20 buildings).' Its main setting comprises Caversham Court RPGSHI and its riverside position (close to the Reading Canoe Club).

Caversham Court & environs group

- D.5. Caversham Court stables are listed grade II. These 2 storey stables of the now destroyed Caversham Court date from the mid to late C17 with some alterations. They are built in brick, with a string at the 1st floor level and with an old tile roof. There is a modern extension to the left and a cobbled courtyard in front, as well as a large late C19 detached coach house to the east. They are enclosed to the street by a flint stepped wall with ashlar and flint gatepiers.

- D.6. The screen wall at north-east end of Caversham Court is listed grade II. This Gothic wall, probably by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, dates from the early to mid C19. It is built in flint on ashlar with a brick basement. It is about 10 foot high with a stone coping and occasional pinnacles.
- D.7. The retaining wall of St Peter's Churchyard is listed grade II. This high retaining wall, mostly 12 to 15 foot high, dates from the C18 or early C19. It is built of red brick in an interesting design with piers linked by concave sections of wall.
- D.8. The retaining walls of the axial east-west garden terrace walk at Caversham Court are listed grade II. Dating from the C17 and altered and probably rebuilt in C18, the walls support a huge yew hedge behind the walk. They are built in red brick and about 4 foot 6 inches high with stone gate piers (incorporating C12 corbel heads probably from Reading Abbey) to the steps.
- D.9. The retaining walls to the raised walk to the riverside garden pavilion at Caversham Court are listed grade II. These 8 to 5 foot high walls date from the C17. They are built mostly in brick and partly flint with brick banding and buttresses to the west.

No. 1 St Peter's Hill, Lodge to the Warren

- D.10. No. 1 St Peter's Hill, the Lodge to The Warren is listed grade II. This picturesque 2 storey cottage orneer, formerly thatched with lower eaves, dates from the early C19. It is built of squared and knapped flint with ashlar quoins and bracket eills and has scalloped bargeboards and a tiled roof.

No. 43 Church Road, Banksfoot

- D.11. No. 43 Church Road, Banksfoot, is listed grade II. This 2 storey with attic house dates from the early and mid C18. It is built of colourwashed brick with an old tile roof with a tall chimney to the right, a modern garage extension (with re-used beams), and a flint garden wall to the street.

No. 20 Church Road, The Rectory including garden walls

- D.12. No. 20 Church Road, The Rectory including garden walls, is listed grade II. This detached villa dates from 1843 with late C19 and early C20 alterations and additions. It is built of red brick with slate roofs. It is of special interest as a good quality 1840s villa with attractive features such as the handsome door surround with scrolled decoration and the iron veranda. The earlier garden walls are also of particular note.

Church Road & Buckside group

- D.13. No. 2 Buckside is listed grade II. This 2 storey house dates from the mid C18, the river front is much altered and extended. It is built of painted and rendered brick, with a brick block eaves cornice to an old tile hipped roof.
- D.14. No. 6 Buckside (Buckside Cottage), is listed grade II. This 2 storey and attic altered cottage dates from the C16. It is of timber frame construction with colourwashed brick infilling and an old tile roof. The east front to the lane has 2 tile hung gables. The north and south fronts have tile hung gables and irregular casements.

- D.15. No. 16 Church Road is listed grade II. This 2 storey house dates from the C17. It is timber-framed with a pebbledash front and has an old tile roof with an end chimney to the right.
- D.16. No. 14 Church Road, Valentine Cottage, is listed grade II. These one and a half storeys, two bay cottage dates from the late C17 (the front is probably a replica). It is built of red brick with a half hipped old tile roof with gabled half dormers above the ground floor. There is a two storeys extension to the rear.

Church Street & Church Road group

- D.17. Nos. 2 & 4 Church Street (formerly listed as no. 4 Church Street) is listed grade II. This two and a half storey building dates from the C18, and has been altered and refronted. It comprises a C20 stucco two storey shop front with a C19 tile roof with 3 gabled dormers and a crested ridge.
- D.18. Nos. 6 & 8 Church Street are listed grade II. This 2 storey altered cottage row dates from the C17. It is built of colourwashed brick and plaster with an old tile roof.
- D.19. No. 10 Church Street is listed grade II. This two storey altered house dates from the mid to late C17. It is timber framed with 1 bay to the road. It has a hipped corner to the old tiled roof, formerly thatched, 3 chimneys and a catslide roof to the rear.
- D.20. Nos. 1 to 5 (odd) Church Road are listed grade II. These two and a half storey houses date from the late C17. They are built of brick (painted) with old tile roofs, hipped to the left, and with brick ridge chimneys and three dormers. On the ground floor there are three shop fronts with curved fascia brackets dating from the C20.

Caversham Court RPGSHI

- D.21. Caversham Court was included on the RPGSHI at grade II on 30 September 1987.
- D.22. The register entry describes Caversham Court as a 'C17 garden related to the former rectory (demolished early C20), now a public park.'
- D.23. Until the Reformation, Notley Priory in Bucks owned St Peter's church, Caversham and its rectory, it being surrendered in 1538 and sold into private ownership. Following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 the Rectory was leased to Thomas Loveday (d 1681) who subsequently bought the property and probably laid out the garden; following his death it was leased to Christ Church, Oxford. By 1909 Caversham Court, as the Rectory was by then called, was sold by the owner Lt Col Caversham Simonds, whose family seem to have owned the property from 1799 (Markham and Arnold). It was again sold in 1931, and shortly afterwards the site was bought by Reading Corporation, the house being demolished in 1933, and the gardens opened to the public at Easter 1934. The site continues today (1998) to be used as a public park.
- D.24. Caversham Court lies at the heart of the oldest part of Caversham. The 1.5ha site is bounded to the south by the river, and to the north largely by the churchyard lying adjacent and above to the

north, this boundary being marked by a 4-5m high brick retaining wall (C18 and later, listed grade II, see above).

- D.25. The garden lies at the south, bottom end of a slope from the Chiltern Hills to the north, having been dramatically terraced from the north boundary with the churchyard (which lies c 4m higher than the terraced garden compartment below) down to the riverside. The setting is urban, with views across the river from the garden to the former meadows beyond (now public open space). The church dominates views north.
- D.26. The main entrance approach is from the east off the A4074 Church Road, and is flanked by a 3m high panelled wall of flint and stone (early-mid C19, possibly A W Pugin, listed grade II, see above). Caversham Court stood towards the east side of the site. The house was demolished in 1933, and there are no visible remains (the plan of the house has been recreated in the Heritage Lottery funded restoration scheme). The east-facing stable yard lies to the north of, and adjacent to, the site of the former house, entered via a short drive west off Church Road.
- D.27. The garden is divided into two main sections to the north and south of an axial terraced walk running east/west through the centre, 50m north of the river. The walk leads west overlooking the terraced lawn below, and the river and former meadows beyond, arriving at the north end of the remains of a raised walk running south, supported by brick walls (C17, listed grade II).
- D.28. The raised walk leads 20m south to a two-storey brick gazebo (early-mid C17, listed grade II see above).
- D.29. The terraced lawn, lying below the main east/west axial path and running down to the river, is divided by a low grass bank running west to east, and contains specimen exotic trees, together with shrub and flower beds.
- D.30. The site of the C19 kitchen garden is now used as allotments, dominated by a large brick boathouse/clubhouse (1997-8) standing in the west half.



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