



TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Crowne Plaza Carpark, Reading

Prepared on behalf of

BDH Hotels

Ref: 2824-RE-01 Rev P1

Date: June 2019

CROWNE PLAZA CARPARK, READING

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CONTENTS:

	Page:
1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	1
3. Assessment of Baseline Conditions	3
4. Scheme Proposals	20
5. Effects of Scheme Proposals	21
6. Summary & Conclusions	29

APPENDICES (at rear of document):

Appendix A:	Methodology and Definition of Terms
Appendix B:	Supporting Figures: 2824-AS-01 Site Context and Study Area 2824-AS-02 Representative Viewpoints 2824-AS-03 Townscape Character Representative Views: 2824-PS-01 Representative Views 1 to 12
Appendix C:	Landscape Proposals (Squires Young Drawing xxx)
Appendix D:	Massing Wirelines 2824-PS-02 Massing Wirelines of Originally Submitted Scheme 2824-PS-03 Massing Wirelines of Proposed Scheme
Appendix E:	Extracts of Published Guidance

Rev	Description	Date	By
*	Draft Issue for Client Comment	17/06/19	CR
P1	Issued for Planning	05/07/19	CR

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) has been commissioned by Rapleys, on behalf of BDH Hotels, and prepared by Landscape Architects, Allen Pyke Associates Ltd, specialists in advising on the landscape, townscape and visual sensitivity of potential development sites and assessing the effects of scheme proposals.
- 1.2. It provides an assessment of the potential townscape and visual impacts associated with the proposed development of a 132-room hotel with associated access, car parking and landscaping at the Crowne Plaza Hotel car park, Richfield Avenue, Reading.

Overview of Townscape & Visual Considerations

- 1.3. The site falls within the Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature as designated in the adopted and emerging development plans of Reading Borough Council. It is viewed from the Thames Promenade, Caversham Bridge and the St Andrews Conservation Area.
- 1.4. This TVIA has been prepared with the aim of assessing the predicted impacts on visual receptors currently enjoying views from the designated landscape and historic areas.
- 1.5. Consultation with Reading Borough Council has been key to establishing the design and assessment criteria and to ensure compliance with relevant and up to date planning policy at a national and local level.
- 1.6. The TVIA demonstrates that the scheme proposals will have no residual significant adverse effects on visual receptors within the designated areas and that the new built form will be appropriate in the context of the existing settlement pattern along the Thames Promenade. The scheme proposals present an opportunity to improve near distance views by enhancing boundary treatments where they currently detract from the scenic quality. There will be limited effects on any significant views with historic interest which are identified in planning policy.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The assessment applies a methodology developed by Allen Pyke Associates based on best practice as set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Third Edition, 2013 (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA. (See Appendix A)

- 2.2. GLVIA3 states that the role of a Landscape/ Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is to *“consider the effects of development on the landscape as a resource in its own right and the effects on views and visual amenity”*. It refers to ‘landscape’, as adopted by the Council of Europe in the European Landscape Convention 2002, as being *“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and /or human factors.”* The application of the Convention is inclusive referring to natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas, including land, inland water and marine areas and it goes on to state that it *“concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as every day or degraded landscapes”*.
- 2.3. The GLVIA3 requires that professional judgements are *“reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods”* and that *“in carrying out an LVIA the landscape professional must always take an independent stance, and fully and transparently address both the negative and positive effects of a scheme in a way that is accessible and reliable for all parties concerned”*. A definition of each of the terms used throughout this report is found in Appendix A.
- 2.4. The assessment is undertaken in two parts; first the baseline study (Section 3.0 below), whereby a combination of desk-based research and site visits (November 2018) are used to assess the existing site conditions and consider the landscape elements (landform, vegetation, historic features, adjacent development, relevant planning policies and key views) that make up the site and its surrounding context. This information contributes to an assessment of the susceptibility and sensitivity of landscape character and visual amenity. Visual amenity considers existing views into and out of the site from a variety of public viewpoints and, where relevant, from residential properties. It should be noted, however, that access to private properties is not usually possible so an assessment based on the nearest accessible viewpoint is used. This process assists in identifying the locations from which people may view the site and future development (Visual Receptors).
- 2.5. The second part (Section 4.0 below), describes the scheme proposal and provides an assessment at Section 5.0 of the potential effects of the proposed built form and mitigation proposals, on the sensitivity of the landscape / townscape and visual amenity established in the baseline survey. The results have been used to assess the potential magnitude of change that might be brought about by the proposed development and the significance of any temporary or residual effects.

3. ASSESSMENT OF BASELINE CONDITIONS

Landscape Context

- 3.1. The site and its immediate setting are generally flat and low lying, forming part of the River Thames floodplain which is mainly open space adjacent to the Thames Promenade. To the south the level landscape is characterised by a range of large scale industrial and leisure uses associated with Richfield Avenue. To the north the land rises up beyond the Thames to the residential areas of Caversham Heights.
- 3.2. 2824-AS-01 at Appendix A identifies the site in the context of the urban area of Reading and the adopted landscape planning policies which are subject of this TVIA. It is wholly contained within the Thames Major Landscape Feature and abuts Public and Strategic Open Space at Thamesmead. A public carpark serves the open space and abuts the site's northern boundary.
- 3.3. Caversham Bridge and Caversham Court are historically significant features within close proximity to the site. Both are contained within the St Peters Conservation Area. Caversham Court is a Registered Park and Garden which lies to the north of the River Thames, approximately 150m from the site's northern boundary. Caversham Bridge is located 60m to the north east.
- 3.4. The Thames Path is a National Trail which passes the site 30m to the north along the towing path. It is known as the Thames Promenade in the urban context associated with Reading and Caversham. It is accessed directly from Richfield Avenue although it is not classified as a National Trail where it passes the site's eastern boundary.

Land Use

- 3.5. The site is currently used as a carpark for visitors to the Crowne Plaza Hotel which is accessed from Richfield Avenue and fronts onto the Thames Promenade. It extends to approximately 1.4 acres (0.11 ha).
- 3.6. Land uses within the immediate vicinity of the site include:
- The Crowne Plaza Hotel immediately to the west;
 - A public carpark immediately to the north providing access to the Thames Promenade and open space;
 - Reading Rowing Club to the north of the site, beyond the carpark;

- Richfield Avenue to the south with mixed use including a café, petrol garage and a single block of 4 storey residential flats (Caversham Place);
- Richfield Avenue to the south west with mixed use including Premier Inn hotel, Toby Carvery and Mercedes Benz of Reading;
- Rivermead Leisure Centre, playground and open space to the west and north west respectively;
- To the north of the river the land use is predominantly residential, with the exception of the St Peters Church and Caversham Court and the rowing club.

Vegetation and Site Boundaries

- 3.7. The site is generally flat with the majority surfaced by tarmac. Boundaries are formed by a 2m high metal security palisade fence with scrub and planting adjacent.
- 3.8. A tree survey carried out by Squires Young in March 2018 provides the following assessment of the trees on site:
- 3.9. A total of twenty-nine individual trees and three groups were surveyed and classified according to the BS 5837 valuation criteria. Of the individual trees surveyed:
 - *‘None were classified as BS5837 Category A, representing trees of high quality and value.*
 - *Six were classified as Category B, which represents trees which should be retained wherever possible, these trees mainly provide screening and make up part of the wider street scene.*
 - *Twenty-two trees were identified as Category C, which represents trees of low quality, due to past management or structural defects.*
 - *One was graded U’.*
- 3.10. Trees species include Crack Willow, Golden Ash, Italian Alder, London Plane, Norway Maple and Small leaved Lime.
- 3.11. The site is subject to Tree Preservation Order 118/09 which covers 11 Alder trees and additional Plane trees. The TPO trees on the site boundaries are of arboricultural Condition B and are visible

from the adjacent townscape and open space. They are considered the most sensitive landscape features on the site.

3.12. Photos of the site and its immediate setting are provided below:



Toilet block at site entrance with site security boundary fencing adjacent



Mature London Plane trees adjacent to the site along Thames Side Promenade



Eastern boundary formed by low trees and scrub with alder trees within site visible beyond.



The sites eastern boundary is formed by security fencing with scrub and a low timber knee rail adjacent.



Carpark to the north of the site. Alder trees within the site visible through security fencing



Carpark and alder trees within the site with alder trees to islands.

Policy Context and Designations

National Policies

- 3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) gives details of the national policy context and was published in 2012 and updated in February 2019. The document provides the framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 3.2. The following sections are relevant to this note:
 - **Section 2** highlights that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
 - **Section 8** recognises that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.
 - **Section 12** focusses on achieving well designed spaces which are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.
 - **Section 13** focusses on the Green Belt and the aim of policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.
 - **Section 15** highlights the need to conserve and enhance the natural environment, particularly paragraphs 170 to 172.

Local Policies

- 3.3. The Reading Borough Council Core Strategy was adopted in January 2008 and forms the current development plan for the Borough. It was altered in January 2015 to include an alteration to policy CS16.
- 3.4. The following adopted policies are considered relevant to this TVIA:
- 3.5. **Policy CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment:** *‘Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include Listed Buildings; Conservation Areas and other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.*

- 3.6. **Policy CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space:** *'Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of areas designated as a Major Landscape Feature.'* This includes the Thames Valley....*'New development should seek to maintain and enhance the natural beauty and visual amenity of the Borough's open space and landscape areas. Development resulting in the loss of existing landscape features or detracting from the character or appearance of the Borough's major landscape areas will be resisted. The extent to which new development prevents or lessens the visual impact on major landscape features and other landscape values is largely dependent on the location, design and scale of proposals.'*
- 3.7. St Peters Conservation Area lies to the north of the site. The Conservation Area Statement was updated in November 2018 to include Caversham Court Bridge. The Statement identifies character areas and views into and out of the Conservation Area which should be considered in development control in the borough. With regards to views out it states the following:
- 'Only the churchyard and Caversham Court Gardens have significant views out of the area, across and along the River Thames. The gazebo in the Gardens was built to take advantage of such views. Although the Thames-side Promenade is an attractive walk on the opposite side of the River, the buildings in this view are unattractive. The new swimming pool adjacent to Rivermead Leisure Centre is visible from Caversham Court Gardens, and it will be important that sufficient tree planting takes place to screen the building as much as possible. Immediately to the west of Caversham Court the Reading Canoe Club building blocks off views to and from that direction and is detrimental to the setting of the Conservation Area.'*
- 3.8. Reading Borough Council are currently working on their new Local Plan for the Borough. The following additional emerging policies within the Pre-Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2017) are considered relevant to this TVIA:
- 3.9. **Policy EN2: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest:** *'New development should not harm and where possible should make a positive contribution to views of acknowledged historical significance. The following views merit special protection: View 3. View upstream from Caversham Bridge...'*

- 3.10. The Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (Entec, on behalf of Reading Borough Council, January 2008) is a draft document which is included as evidence base on the Council's planning website. The document suggests preferred locations for tall buildings (ten storeys and above) within Reading town centre. Whilst its study area does not include the site, it does extend to Caversham Bridge and Richfield Avenue and reference is made to the views from Caversham Court and Caversham Bridge as high sensitivity views.

Existing Landscape Character

National and Regional Landscape Character

- 3.11. At a national scale Natural England identifies the wider landscape associated with the northern edge of Reading as the Chilterns (Area 110).
- 3.12. Due to the site's urban setting it demonstrates limited characteristics of the wider Chilterns landscape. The key characteristic relevant to the site and study area include:
- *'The River Thames offers a variety of recreation opportunities, particularly as it passes through towns fronting the river;*
 - *The River Thames and its flood plain mark a distinctive area in the south. The river is a focus for settlement, abstraction and recreation.*
 - *Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks.*
 - *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.*
- 3.13. The following key landscape objectives are considered relevant to this assessment:
- *SEO 3: Conserve the Chilterns' groundwater resource, River Thames and chalk streams by working in partnership to tackle inter-related issues at a catchment scale and also across the water supply network area. Seek to secure, now and in the future, sustainable water use and thriving flood plain landscapes that are valued by the public.*

- 3.14. The Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (Land Use Consultants, on behalf of Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit, October 2003) identifies part of the study area as falling within Landscape Character Area B3 Reading Thames Lower Valley Floor.
- 3.15. It is described as follows: *'The majority of this character area is within the settled areas of Reading and Earley (therefore not assessed). This area of the Thames includes a number of Eyots (islands) that create a distinctive river character. The landscape in the non-urban area comprises urban fringe uses such as business parks, a sewage farm, a leisure centre and transportation corridors (road and railway). However, there are many public footpaths providing opportunities for access.'*
- 3.16. Key characteristics relevant to the site and study area include:
- *'Flat and open broad lowland floodplain enclosed with steep valley sides;*
 - *Wide, deep, meandering natural river corridors;*
 - *Deciduous wooded context created by variety of woodlands ...including riverbank trees;*
 - *Important transportation networks often parallel to the river corridor;*
 - *Variety of settlement forms including urban towns at important river confluences...*
 - *Presence of historic valley edge parks that extend onto the valley floor'.*
- 3.17. The landscape character area is identified as having a strong landscape character with a declining landscape condition. The overall landscape strategy is to *'conserve and restore'* the landscape character. In particular, in relation to the study area, is the priority to conserve and enhance the visual and recreational qualities of the river and canal landscape.

Allen Pyke commentary on landscape sensitivity at a National and Regional scale

- 3.18. The landscape character at a national and regional scale has been considered by Allen Pyke in the context of the site and the study area. The character and condition of the landscape varies from moderate to high with the strongest landscape character and sense of place being associated with the River Thames and its open corridor. There exists a range of valued landscapes across the Chilterns. The Thames Corridor and its floodplains are not designated at a national scale but are valued in the character assessments and at a local level. The sensitivity of the landscape at a national and regional scale is assessed as moderate to high.

Local Landscape / Townscape Character

- 3.19. The townscape within the study area has been partially assessed in both The St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal and the Reading Tall Buildings Strategy. Additional Townscape

Character areas relevant to the Site and its immediate setting have been provided by Allen Pyke Associates. The townscape areas discussed below are illustrated on Figure 3 (2824-AS-03 Townscape Character).

3.20. The St Peter's Conservation Area identifies the following townscape character areas as located within the study area:

- **Caversham Court and the Church:** described as *'This is the most historic and attractive part of the Conservation Area and the chief justification for its designation'*.
- **Church Road** links Caversham Court and its gardens with the Bridge Street junction. *'The trees around the edge of the former chalk pit in which it has been built make an important contribution to the green backdrop of this area. Beyond its boundary wall, The Mount is an attractive, mellow pedestrian route which contributes much to this area.'*
- **The Junction Area:** described as *'the historic meeting point of roads converging on Caversham Bridge, which is reflected in still being totally dominated by traffic and the accompanying clutter.'*
- **The Bridge Street Corridor:** *'The significance of this corridor lies in the way it links the important buildings around the junction with the bridge and the riverside, rather than in any intrinsic merit in the buildings themselves.'*

3.21. The Reading Tall Buildings Strategy identifies two further townscape character areas which include:

- **Caversham Road:** Described as *'predominantly residential, two storey, red brick buildings. A small-scale townscape. The buildings are in good condition. The consistent architectural style creates a strong townscape. There is a low capacity for the development of buildings (over ten storeys) due to the low rise, small scale residential character which predominates. Taller buildings would dilute the townscape pattern and would be uncharacteristic. The area is also inappropriate in terms of market demand and transport connections.'*
- **Kings Meadow** (Townscape Character Area 23): *'The large expanse of open meadows creates a large townscape scale. The meadows are a well-maintained recreational resource and*

contribute positively to the townscape character. The majority of the site is protected open space and therefore inappropriate as a location for tall buildings.

Allen Pyke commentary on sensitivity of published local Townscape Character Areas

- 3.22. The character and condition of the townscape varies across the townscape. Positive landscape features associated with the Conservation Area (including the managed open space areas, historic buildings and interface with the River Thames) provide a strong sense of place. This is eroded in areas associated with the main roads heading into and out of Reading by detracting elements such as heavy vehicle traffic, street signage and junctions and general street clutter detracting from the built form.
- 3.23. The value of the townscape varies in accordance with the local designations which include the Conservation Area, the Major Landscape Feature, Registered Park and Garden and Public and Strategic Open Space.
- 3.24. Allen Pyke's assessment of the sensitivity of these published townscape character areas is provided in table 1 below.

Site Character

- 3.25. The site and its immediate setting are excluded from the Conservation Area Appraisal as it has not been designated for any architectural or historic merit. It is excluded from the study area of the Tall Buildings Strategy as it is not considered to fall within the centre of Reading. It is included in the Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment within the Reading Thames Lower Valley Floor; however, it does not display any characteristics typical of the rural landscape. Allen Pyke have distinguished two further townscape / character areas, namely Richfield Avenue and Thamesmead Open Space in order to provide a consistent assessment of the local townscape in the study area.

Richfield Avenue

- 3.26. The site forms part of a mixed-use corridor associated with Richfield Avenue. The townscape is characterised by a range of uses including the busy road corridor with its pedestrian footways, crossings, signage and street lighting; parking courts associated with the existing hotel uses, petrol service station and car sales areas; large scale buildings up to 6 storeys in height fronting onto the road corridor. Mature trees either side of the road provide a break in the built form and create the sense of an avenue along the road. Glimpses from the road towards the Thamesmead open space and towpath are limited and mostly filtered by the mature trees and parking areas.

3.27. In the context of the wider and local townscape and landscape character assessments Allen Pyke's assessment of the townscape sensitivity is as follows:

- *Townscape Character: Low. The area has no recognisable townscape pattern. It has a disparate collection of elements that make little contribution to the intactness of the area, and result in a limited sense of place.*
- *Townscape Condition: Moderate. Where the area is reasonably managed and of average landscape quality.*
- *Townscape Susceptibility to change: Low. The components and qualities of the area could be affected, and the character area would have a high ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Townscape Value: Moderate to Low. Undistinguished with some redeeming feature/features and possibly identified for or being improved, however it is partially designated as Major Landscape Feature.*
- *Townscape Sensitivity: Low. The elements that make up the character area are of little merit and could be restored or replaced without detriment to the overall character area.*

Rivermead Open Space

3.28. This area includes the open space areas which form the setting to the Thames on its southern side. It is characterised by the towpath as it varies from its urban setting in the east at Caversham Bridge to the parkland setting within the open space areas in the west forming part of Thamesmead. Positive elements in the landscape include the approach to Caversham Bridge and the open managed amenity grass associated with the Rivermead open space. The key characteristic is the range of open views across the river towards St Peters Conservation Area and views along the towpath towards Caversham Bridge. Detracting elements in the landscape are those that clutter or obstruct these open views, including the Reading Rowing Club building and storage areas and various street furniture elements in close proximity to the promenade.

3.29. In the context of the wider and local townscape and landscape character assessments Allen Pyke's assessment of the townscape sensitivity of Thamesmead Open Space is as follows:

- *Townscape Character: Moderate to high. The area has a recognisable pattern, but it has some incongruous elements that detract from the overall sense of place.*
- *Townscape Condition: Moderate. Where the area is reasonably managed and of average landscape quality.*
- *Townscape Susceptibility to change: Medium to high. The components and qualities of the could be moderately affected. The area has a medium to high ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Townscape Value: Moderate. Designated as Major Landscape Feature and Strategic Public Open Space Local level of importance.*

- *Townscape Sensitivity: Moderate to high. The elements that make up the character area or view are of merit and could in part be restored without a notable detriment to the overall character area.*

3.30. Based on the published assessment discussed above and our own in-house methodology Allen Pyke Associates have provided an assessment of the sensitivity of the townscape / landscape as follows:

Name	Character	Condition	Susceptibility to change	Value	Sensitivity
National and Regional Landscape Character					
The Chilterns (NCA 110)	Moderate to high	Moderate	Medium to high	Moderate to high	Moderate to high
B3 Reading Thames Lower Valley Floor	Moderate to high	Moderate	Medium to high	Moderate to high	Moderate to high
Local: St Peter's Area Conservation Areas:					
Caversham Court and the Church	High	Good	High	Moderate	High
Church Road	Moderate to high	Good	High	Moderate	High
The Junction Area	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate	Low
The Bridge Street Corridor	Moderate to high	Moderate	Medium to high	Moderate	Moderate to high
Local: Reading Town					
Caversham Road	Moderate to high	Moderate	Medium	Low	Moderate
Kings Meadow	Moderate to high	Moderate	Medium to high	Moderate	Moderate to high
Local: The Site					
Richfield Avenue	Low	Moderate	Low	Moderate to Low	Low
Rivermead Open Space	Moderate to high	Moderate	Medium to high	Moderate	Moderate to high

Table 1: Summary table of Landscape Character Area Sensitivity

Visual Assessment

- 3.31. The most sensitive visual receptors are those experiencing direct views towards the site from within the Major Landscape Feature; from the Thames Promenade; from Caversham Bridge and from within St Peters Conservation Area immediately north of the Thames.
- 3.32. From the wider landscape there are limited views to the site due to the nature of the built-up area and the intervening topography associated with the Thames Corridor.

- 3.33. The visual receptors and a selection of representative viewpoints have been identified on 2824-AS-02. The views are provided at 2824-PS-01. These indicate the extent to which the Site is visible and, where visible, the extent to which it contributes to the view experienced.
- 3.34. Site visits were carried out in November 2018 and March 2019 to assess the varying visibility of the site from several public vantage points including roads and public rights of way. Visibility from local properties was also assessed. The study was used to establish the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI). The ZVI is the area from which the Site and future proposals might be seen and is determined by the landform, topographical features such as surrounding buildings and vegetation (whose screening capacity may change through the seasons) and the scale and height of the proposed development.
- 3.35. The photographs included are from early Spring 2019, before deciduous trees came into leaf, allowing an understanding of the degree to which the site's visibility varies through the seasons.
- 3.36. The methodology has been applied to assess the 'Type of Receptor', 'Nature of View' and 'Value of View' for each Visual Receptor (VR). The 'Type of Receptor' and 'Nature of View' determines the 'Susceptibility to Change' while the 'Value of View' and 'Susceptibility of Change' determines the 'Sensitivity' of each Visual Receptor. This is summarised in Table 2 below. (The definitions used can be found in Appendix A).
- 3.37. An assessment of each visual receptor and anticipated effects is provided below.
- 3.38. VR1 – Residents of Caversham Place have glimpsed views towards the Site from the opposite side of Richfield Avenue. The building is set back approximately 20m from the road edge. Mature trees and vegetation on both sides of the road filter the views from the four storeys. The canopies of the mature trees either side of Richfield Avenue obstruct views out towards the site and the Thames beyond. During winter months there may be filtered views across the site towards the river. Positive features in the view include the mature trees (some of which are the subject of Tree Preservation Orders) within the Major Landscape Feature. Detracting elements in the view include the traffic and road signage along Richfield Avenue. View 1 is taken from Richfield Avenue and shows the relationship between Caversham Place and the site.
- *Visual Receptor Type: A. Residents at home*
 - *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements;*

- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. The components and qualities of the view could be easily affected, and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change in their view.*
- *Value of the view: Moderate. The view is not rare and contains urbanising elements which detract from the scenic quality; however, it contains some positive attributes and is towards the Thames Major Landscape Feature.*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: Moderate. The elements within the site that make up the view could in part be restored or replaced/removed without a notable detriment to the overall view.*

3.39. VR2 – Motorists and visitors to mixed use at Richfield Avenue have glimpsed oblique views towards the Site from the opposite side of Richfield Avenue. Mature trees either side of the road obstruct views towards the site. Positive features in the view include the avenue of trees. Detracting elements in the view include the traffic, street lighting, fencing and road signage along Richfield Avenue. The Premier Inn and Toby Carvery obstruct views towards the Thames and the Thames Promenade. Views 1 and 2 are taken from Richfield Avenue and are indicative of the views towards the Site.

- *Visual Receptor Type: B. Users of retail and employment sites and busy roads where the views are secondary to the activity at hand*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements;*
- *Susceptibility to change: Low. Where the components and qualities of a landscape/view could be affected in a minor/negligible manner and would have a high ability/capacity to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: Low. A view of little/no intrinsic merit and contains some positive attributes and/or a view which is not rare and does not have any local value attached to it.*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: Low. Where the elements of the site that make the view are of little merit and could be restored or replaced without detriment to the overall view.*

3.40. VR3 – Visitors to Crowne Plaza Hotel have views into the site from the front carpark and from the west and north west facing balconies. The mature trees adjacent to the site's north eastern boundary currently filter views both to the site and to the Thames and are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Detracting features in the view include the carparks which extend towards the rear façade and service area of the Reading Rowing Club. Security fencing, the public toilet block, signage, bollards, litter bins and boat storage trailers present clutter in the landscape which detract from the scenic quality of the views towards the west and north west and diminishes the setting

of the Thames Promenade as it connects from Richfield Avenue to the Thames. The most valued views from the hotel are towards the north, across the Thames towards St Peters Conservation Area and Caversham Bridge. The site makes no notable contribution to these views.

- *Visual Receptor Type: A. Visitors to a hotel set within a valued landscape setting where their interest may be focussed on the surrounding landscape.*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements.*
- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. Elements in the views towards the west could be affected and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: Moderate. The views towards the west have no intrinsic merit but do contain some positive elements (namely the mature trees). The Site is not visible in the more valued views from the northern elevation towards the St Peters Conservation Area and Thames.*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: Moderate. The elements within the site that make up the view could in part be restored or replaced/removed without a notable detriment to the overall view.*

3.41. VR4 – Visitors to Premier Inn Hotel have views from the north facing windows towards the Thames. Vegetation alongside the ditch forming the Premier Inn boundary filters the majority of these views. The site is visible in the right of these views to the front of the 4 storey Crowne Plaza Hotel. The Reading Rowing Club building and parking areas are visible in the view. Vegetation along the site's boundaries will filter views to the site's elements. Positive elements in the view include the open space which extends towards the Thames Promenade. Rows of trees adjacent to the Promenade filter views towards the Thames and the St Peters Conservation Area beyond. Detracting elements in the view include the Reading Rowing Club's rear facade and service area and the public carpark which forms a break in the treed promenade.

- *Visual Receptor Type: A. Visitors to a hotel set within a valued landscape setting where their interest may be focussed on the surrounding landscape.*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements.*
- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. Elements in the views could be affected and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: Moderate. A view of some scenic value or intrinsic merit, natural/man-made beauty with few incongruous elements within, towards or across a locally important landscape (namely the Thames Major Landscape Feature).*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: Moderate. The elements within the site that make up the view could in part be restored or replaced/removed without a notable detriment to the overall view.*

3.42. VRs 5 and 6– Users of Thameside Promenade Carpark and Reading Rowing Club have views across the public carpark towards the site, through the 2m high security fencing. Views towards the open

space and treed promenade associated with the Thames are in the opposite direction. The site makes no contribution to views across the open space which is valued in Thames Major Landscape Feature from these receptors.

- *Visual Receptor Type: B. Users of parking area, sports and recreational facilities where the views are secondary to the activity at hand.*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements.*
- *Susceptibility to change: Low. Where the components and qualities of the view could be affected, and the visual receptor would have a high ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: Low. A view of little/no intrinsic merit which does not have any local value attached to it. (Valued views are in the opposite direction).*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: Low. The elements within the site that make up the view could be restored, replaced or removed without a notable detriment to the overall view.*

3.43. VR7 – Walkers and Cyclists using Thameside Promenade and Thames Path enjoy transient open views across the Thames Major Landscape Feature as they pass the site. Positive element in the view include the clusters of parkland trees and open lawns within the open space areas; the Thames and its towpath activity; the mature parkland landscape of Caversham Court on the opposite side of the river; Caversham Bridge and the mature TPO trees which filter views towards the urban edge of Reading. Detracting elements include the Reading Rowing club building which obstructs the open riverside views and the public carpark with its associated street clutter. Whilst the other buildings along Richfield Avenue (including Crowne Court Plaza, the Premier Inn and the Leisure Centre) are large in scale and dated in architectural style they do not interfere with the open nature of the views along the riverside open space. The site is visible between the two hotel buildings however the views are filtered by intervening vegetation. its features make no notable contribution to the scenic quality of the views across the Major Landscape Feature.

- *Visual Receptor Type: A. People engaged in outdoor recreation including the use of public rights of way.*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements. Its features only form a small part of the view;*
- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. Elements in the views could be affected and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: High. The view is of good scenic value across a valued landscape.*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: High. The elements that make up the view would be difficult to restore without detriment to the overall view.*

3.44. VR8 – Walkers and Motorists at Caversham Bridge enjoy an open, elevated view over the Thames Major Landscape Feature, framed to the left by the Thames Promenade and to the right by the mature landscape associated with Caversham Court and the St Peters Conservation Area. This view is identified as a key view in the Conservation Area Statement and is recognised as a 'Significant View with Heritage Interest' in Reading Borough Council's emerging planning Policy EN2. Positive elements in the view include the clusters of parkland trees and open lawns within the open space areas; the Thames and its towpath activity; the mature parkland landscape of Caversham Court; and the mature TPO trees which filter views towards the urban edge of Reading. Detracting elements include the Reading Rowing club building and the public carpark with its associated street clutter. Crowne Court Plaza is large in scale and dated in architectural style but is effective in framing the view adjacent to the urban edge of Reading. The mature TPO trees adjacent to the Thames Promenade soften this urban edge. The site is difficult to perceive beyond the TPO trees. Its features make no notable contribution to the scenic quality of this valued view across the Major Landscape Feature.

- *Visual Receptor Type: A. People engaged in outdoor recreation including the use of public rights of way.*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements. Its features only form a small part of the view;*
- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. Elements in the views could be affected and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: High. The view is of good scenic value, from a heritage feature, towards a Conservation Area and across a valued landscape.*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: High. The elements that make up the view would be difficult to restore without substantial detriment to the overall view.*

3.45. VR9 – Visitors to Rivermead Park and Leisure Centre have open views across the open space towards the Thames. The site is visible in the right of these views to the front of the 4 storey Crowne Plaza Hotel. The Reading Rowing Club building and parking areas are visible in the view. Positive elements in the view include the open space which extends towards the Thames Promenade. Rows of trees adjacent to the Promenade filter views towards the Thames and the St Peters Conservation Area beyond. Detracting elements in the view include the Reading Rowing Club's rear facade and service area and the public carpark which forms a break in the treed promenade.

- *Visual Receptor Type: A. People involved in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest may be focussed on the landscape.*

- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements.*
- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. Elements in the views could be affected and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: Moderate. A view of some scenic value or intrinsic merit, natural/man-made beauty with few incongruous elements within, towards or across a locally important landscape (namely the Thames Major Landscape Feature).*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: Moderate. The elements within the site that make up the view could in part be restored or replaced/removed without a notable detriment to the overall view.*

3.46. VRs 10, 11 and 12 – Visitors to Caversham Court and St Peters Church and residents at the Warren and Caversham Heights enjoy views across the Thames towards the Thames Promenade and Caversham Bridge. High rise buildings at Richfield Avenue (and from higher vantage points further afield in central Reading) form the backdrop in these views. Clusters of parkland trees along the Thames Promenade filter views towards the site. The site and its features make no notable contribution to these views.

- *Visual Receptor Type: A. Visitors to Heritage Assets; residents at home within the St Peters Conservation Area*
- *Nature of View: Poor. The view to the site is obstructed by intervening elements.*
- *Susceptibility to change: Medium. Elements in the views could be affected and the receptor would have a medium ability to accommodate the proposed change.*
- *Value of the view: High. The view is of good scenic value, from the Conservation Area across the Major Landscape Feature.*
- *Sensitivity of Visual Receptor: High. The elements that make up the view would be difficult to restore without substantial detriment to the overall view.*

Ref	Name	Type of receptor	Nature of view	Susceptibility to change	Value of view	Sensitivity
VR 1	Residents at Caversham Place	A	Poor	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
VR 2	Motorists & visitors to Richfield Avenue	B	Poor	Low	Low	Low
VR 3	Visitors to Crowne Plaza	A	Poor	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
VR 4	Visitors to Premier Inn Hotel	A	Poor	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
VR 5	Users of Thameside Promenade	B	Poor	Low	Low	Low
VR 6	Users of Reading Rowing Club	B	Poor	Low	Low	Low
VR 7	Walkers at Thameside Promenade and Towpath	A	Poor	Medium	High	High

Ref	Name	Type of receptor	Nature of view	Susceptibility to change	Value of view	Sensitivity
VR 8	Walkers & motorists at Caversham Bridge	A	Poor	Medium	High	High
VR 9	Visitors to Rivermead Park and Leisure Centre	A	Poor	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
VR10	Visitors to Caversham Court	A	Poor	Medium	High	High
VR11	Visitors to St Peters Church	A	Poor	Medium	High	High
VR12	Residents at the Warren and Caversham Heights	A	Poor	Medium	High	High

Table 2: Summary table of sensitivity of visual receptors

4. SCHEME PROPOSALS

- 4.1. The application proposes a 132-bed hotel comprising a reception area, café/restaurant, meeting room facilities, a small gym and back of house facilities provided on the ground floor with four floors of accommodation above.
- 4.2. The building will be orientated in an east-west direction, following the alignment of Richfield Avenue and the neighbouring Crowne Plaza Hotel, and will be located centrally within the car park area. It will be of a slim rectangular form, with a mansard type roof. It will present a modern building, of simple form, with clean lines providing both horizontal and vertical emphasis through use of materials and fenestration.
- 4.3. Access will be derived from Richfield Avenue, along the Promenade using the existing access to the existing Crown Plaza car park.
- 4.4. The scheme proposals will see the removal of two groups of BS condition C trees within the carpark site. Existing tall landscape features visible in sensitive views (including the Condition B TPO London Plane Trees along the Thameside Promenade) will be retained and protected.
- 4.5. Detailed Landscape Proposals (prepared by Squires Young and included at Appendix C) focus on enhancing the existing boundaries through a robust planting scheme which will improve near distance views and provide an enhanced townscape setting in the context of the adjacent open space areas.

5. EFFECTS OF THE SCHEME PROPOSALS

- 5.1. This section of the report considers the significance of the effects of the proposed development on both the townscape character and visual amenity.
- 5.2. The effects of development are considered in terms of Magnitude of Change and the Sensitivity of both the landscape / townscape character areas and visual receptors. Effects are predicted at three stages: 'during construction', at 'year 1 operation' and at 'year 15', to establish the temporary and residual implications of the development proposals. Year 15 is used to determine the Residual Effects when the established planting proposals would have matured and achieved their full screening potential. The definitions of terms used are found in Appendix A.

Effects on National and Regional Landscape Character

- 5.3. The scheme proposals will see no loss of key features which define the Chilterns National Character or the Reading Thames Lower Valley. The new built form will make no change to the sense of place along the Thames nor will it impact the visual and recreational qualities of the river. There will be no residual effects on landscape character at National or Regional scale.

Effects on Local Townscape Character

- 5.4. The scheme proposals will see the introduction of a 5 storey (4 + ground) building which will be no higher than the adjacent built form of the adjacent hotel uses. Existing security fencing which forms the current boundary to the parking will be removed. New planting to the site boundaries will enhance the sense of enclosure within the site and improve the sense of place for the adjacent Thamesmead Open Space.
- 5.5. During construction the only notable townscape effects will be on Richfield Avenue with traffic and site operations dominating the site and its entrance. There will be a low change to the townscape character of the adjacent open space by nature of the introduction of a built form element. Existing trees will be retained to maintain the sense of place along the Promenade. There will be no notable effects on the townscape character of the St Peter's Conservation Area, or the Reading built up area.
- 5.6. At year 1 the new building will reinforce the townscape character of Richfield Avenue by providing a new built form which is in keeping with the scale and massing of the adjacent land uses fronting onto the Avenue. Existing trees will be retained and will continue to contribute to the streetscape

character. The townscape forming the setting to the Thamesmead Open Space will be reinforced and will provide an enhanced sense of enclosure to the open space areas. There will be a residual minor to beneficial effect on Richfield Avenue and the Thamesmead Open Space. The direction of the effects will be beneficial with the new building fitting well within the existing townscape pattern and providing an enhanced balance of built form elements forming the backdrop to the views.

5.7. A summary of the anticipated effects on Landscape and Townscape Character is provided below:

Name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change			Significance of Effects and Direction of Change on Landscape Character		
					Temporary Effects		Residual Effects
		Construction	Year 1	Year 15	Construction	Year 1	Year 15
National and Regional Landscape Character							
The Chilterns (NCA 110)	Moderate to high	None	None	None	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
B3 Reading Thames Lower Valley Floor	Moderate to high	None	None	None	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Local Townscape Landscape Character							
Caversham Court and the Church	High	Negligible	None	None	Minor; Adverse	Neutral	Neutral
Church Road	High	Negligible	None	None	Minor; Adverse	Neutral	Neutral
The Junction Area	Low	None	None	None	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
The Bridge Street Corridor	Moderate to high	Negligible	None	None	Minor; adverse	Neutral	Neutral
Caversham Road	Moderate	None	None	None	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Kings Meadow	Moderate to high	None	None	None	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Richfield Avenue	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Moderate; Adverse	Minor; Beneficial	Minor; Beneficial
Riversmead Open Space	Moderate to high	Low	Low	Low	Minor to moderate; Adverse	Minor to moderate; Beneficial	Minor to moderate; Beneficial

Table 3: Summary of effects on Townscape Character

Effects on Visual Receptors

5.8. Pre-application discussions with Reading Borough Council have been key to establishing a clear understanding of the potential effects on visual receptors resulting from the scheme proposals.

Massing wireline views have been produced for views selected by Reading Borough Council as follows:

- *View 1 from Richfield Avenue, to demonstrate the magnitude of change in views from nearby receptors looking directly into the site;*
- *View 3 from the Thames Promenade to demonstrate the magnitude of change in views from walkers using the Promenade;*
- *View 5 to demonstrate the magnitude of change to views across the Thamesmead Open Space;*
- *View to demonstrate the magnitude of change in views from St Peters Conservation Area and Caversham Court.*

5.9. The massing wireline views have been produced for two schemes to demonstrate a reduction in the change in the views resulting from the current scheme proposals. 2824-PS-02 provides the selected massing wireline views for the originally submitted scheme, namely a five-storey block with plant as an additional roof element. 2824-PS-03 provides the selected massing wireline views for the current scheme proposals which removes the plant from the top of the roof and amends the roof element to show a pitch in response to Reading Borough Council's pre-application design comments.

5.10. A description of the potential effects on all visual receptors is provided below.

5.11. Effects on VR1 – Residents at Caversham Place

Vegetation along Richfield Avenue will not be affected by the scheme proposals and will continue to form the positive elements in the view and to filter views towards the Site. The most notable changes in the view will be during construction and during the winter months when high level machinery and construction traffic may be glimpsed through the intervening vegetation. The magnitude of change will be medium with a corresponding moderate effect. The direction of the effects will be adverse; however, these effects will be short lived. On completion the new building will be seen to complement the Richfield Avenue street scene by respecting the existing townscape character whilst providing improved architectural treatments which will enhance the view. During winter months the residents will have filtered views across Richfield Avenue towards the new 5 storey building. The change in the view will be low due to the filtering by intervening vegetation. A low change in the view from this high sensitivity receptor results in a moderate effect. The detailed design of the facade will provide visual interest through variation in textures, tones and

forms thereby providing an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within, and has the potential to improve, views towards the townscape associated with Richfield Avenue.

5.12. Effects on VR2 – Motorists and visitors to mixed use at Richfield Avenue

The new 5 storey building will be visible on the skyline beyond the vegetation which forms the site boundaries. It will not detract from any special qualities in the view, but instead will be seen as appropriate in the context of the built-up area associated with Richfield Avenue mixed use. The most notable changes in the view will be during construction and during the winter months when high level machinery and construction traffic will be visible at the vehicular entrance from Richfield Avenue. The magnitude of change will be medium with a corresponding minor effect due to the low sensitivity of the receptors. The direction of the effects during construction will be adverse, however these effects will be short lived. The detailed design of the facade will provide visual interest through variation in textures, tones and forms thereby providing an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within, and has the potential to improve, views towards the townscape associated with Richfield Avenue. The retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting will further enhance the aesthetics of the new built form with the new tree planting in the parking to the south of the hotel providing a further enhancement to the view. The direction of the residual effects will be beneficial.

5.13. Effects on VR3– Visitors to Crowne Plaza Hotel

The mature trees along the Thames Promenade (as it connects Richfield Avenue to the Thames) will not be affected by the scheme proposals. They will continue to form positive elements in the view and to filter views towards the Site and the open space associated with the Thames Major Landscape Feature adjacent. The new five storey building will be visible through the trees during winter months. Views from the north facing balconies will see no notable change to their views towards the St Peters Conservation Area and Thames as a result of the proposed development. There will be glimpsed views of the working construction site from the west facing windows of the hotel. The low change to the views from this moderate sensitivity receptor will result in a minor effect. Whilst the introduction of additional built form to the backdrop view could be seen as adverse, the scale of the new building will be appropriate to the existing streetscape. Furthermore, the detailed design of the facade will provide visual interest through variation in textures, tones and forms thereby providing an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within, and has the potential to improve, views towards the townscape associated with Richfield Avenue. The retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting will further enhance the aesthetics of the

new built form with the new tree planting in the parking to the south of the hotel providing a further enhancement to the view. The direction of the residual effects will be beneficial.

5.14. Effects on VR4– Visitors to Premier Inn Hotel

Visitors to the Premier Inn will continue to enjoy views across the open space towards the tree lined Thames Promenade. The new built form will be visible on the skyline but will not obstruct views to, or detract from any, of the positive elements in the view. The new built form will be appropriate in scale and massing and its architectural detailing will ensure an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within the existing townscape. There will be a low change in the view in the context of the existing Crowne Plaza hotel and Reading Rowing Club buildings. The low change in view to this moderate sensitivity receptor will result in a minor effect. Adverse effects will only be during the construction operations when high level machinery will be a visual detractor on the skyline. These temporary effects will be short-lived. The retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting will further enhance the aesthetics of the new built form. The direction of the residual effect will be beneficial.

5.15. Effects on VRs 5 and 6– Users of Thameside Promenade Carpark and Reading Rowing Club

Views from the rowing club and carpark towards the Thames and across the open space will not be affected by the proposals. The 5-storey high building will see a medium to low change in the views towards the south depending on the proximity to the Site boundary. It will be visible on the skyline but will be seen as appropriate in its scale and massing in the context of the other hotel buildings along Richfield Avenue (namely Crowne Court Plaza and the Premier Inn). The change to the views from this low sensitivity receptor will result in a minor effect. Adverse effects will be short-lived during the construction phase. On completion the new built form will be appropriate in scale and massing and its architectural detailing will ensure an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within the existing townscape. The enhanced boundaries will improve ground level views into the site at Year 1. The retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting and the establishment of the site's boundaries will further enhance the aesthetics of the new built form. The direction of the residual effect will be beneficial.

5.16. Effects on VR7– Walkers and Cyclists using Thameside Promenade and Thames Path. Walkers and

cyclists will continue to enjoy views across the open space and the river. The new built form will be visible on the skyline in the backdrop of the view but will not obstruct views to, or detract from any, of the positive elements in the view. Walkers passing the site, heading towards the Thames from Richfield Avenue, will see a moderate change in their views with the new building views

beyond the TPO trees. The new built form will be appropriate in scale and massing and its architectural detailing will ensure an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within the existing townscape. Planting to the site boundaries will enhance the ground level views which were previously into a carpark. The medium to low change in view to this high sensitivity receptor will result in a substantial to moderate effect depending on the proximity and orientation of the view. Adverse effects will be short-lived during the construction stage. The retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting will enhance the aesthetics of the new built form. The direction of the residual effect will be beneficial.

- 5.17. Effects on VR8 – Walkers and Motorists at Caversham Bridge. Visitors to Caversham Bridge will continue to enjoy this strategic view. The new built form will be partially visible on the skyline, behind the Crown Court Plaza and the TPO trees. It will not obstruct views to, or detract from any, of the positive elements in the view. It will be appropriate in scale and massing and its architectural detailing will ensure an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within the existing townscape. The low change in view to this high sensitivity receptor will result in a moderate effect. During construction there may be glimpses of high-level machinery which will result in an adverse effect. Enhancement to the site boundaries and the retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting will further enhance the aesthetics of the new built form. The direction of the residual effect will be beneficial.

- 5.18. Effects on VR9– Visitors to Rivermead Park and Leisure Centre
Visitors to the Park will continue to enjoy views across the open space towards the tree lined Thames Promenade. The new built form will be visible on the skyline but will not obstruct views to, or detract from any, of the positive elements. The new built form will be appropriate in scale and massing and its architectural detailing will ensure an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within the existing townscape. The low change in view to this moderate sensitivity receptor will result in a minor effect. Effects during construction will be adverse but short-lived. The tree planting within the open space will continue to filter views towards the site.

- 5.19. Effects on VRs 10, 11 and 12– Visitors to Caversham Court and St Peters Church and residents at the Warren and Caversham Heights
Visitors and residents within Conservation Area will continue to enjoy views across the Thames towards the tree lined Thames Promenade. The new built form may be glimpsed through the intervening trees along the promenade. It will not obstruct views to, or detract from, any of the positive elements in the view. It will be appropriate in scale and massing in the context of the other

buildings along Richfield Avenue. The negligible change in view to these high sensitivity receptors will result in a minor effect. During construction high level machinery may be visible and could result in temporary adverse effects. On completion there will be no deterioration or improvement of the view.

5.20. Table 4 below provides a summary of the anticipated effects on visual receptors.

Ref	Name	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change			Significance of Effects and Direction on Visual Amenity		
						Temporary Effects		Residual Effects
			Constru- ction	Year 1	Year 15	Construction	Year 1	Year 15
VR 1	Residents at Caversham Place	Moderate	Medium	Medium	Low	Moderate; Adverse	Moderate; Adverse	Minor; Beneficial
VR 2	Motorists & visitors to Richfield Avenue	Low	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Beneficial	Minor; Beneficial
VR 3	Visitors to Crowne Plaza	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Moderate; Adverse	Moderate; Beneficial	Minor; Beneficial
VR 4	Visitors to Premier Inn Hotel	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Beneficial
VR 5	Users of Thameside Promenade Carpark	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Beneficial
VR 6	Users of Reading Rowing Club	Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Beneficial	Minor; Beneficial
VR 7	Walkers at Thameside Promenade and Towpath	High	Medium to Low	Low	Low	Substantial to Moderate; Adverse	Moderate; Beneficial	Moderate; Beneficial
VR 8	Walkers & motorists at Caversham Bridge	High	Low	Low	Low	Moderate; Adverse	Moderate; Beneficial	Moderate; Beneficial
VR 9	Visitors to Rivermead Park and Leisure Centre	Moderate	Low	Low	Low	Moderate; Adverse	Moderate; Beneficial	Moderate; Beneficial
VR10	Visitors to Caversham Court	High	Low	Low	Low	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Neutral	Minor; Neutral
VR11	Visitors to St Peters Church	High	None	None	None	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
VR12	Residents at the Warren and Caversham Heights	High	Low	Low	Low	Minor; Adverse	Minor; Neutral	Minor; Neutral

Table 4: Summary of Significance of Effects on Visual Amenity

6. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1. The site falls within the Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature as designated in the adopted and emerging development plans of Reading Borough Council.
- 6.2. An assessment of landscape and townscape character at a national to local scale concludes that the most sensitive characteristics of the townscape in the vicinity of the site are the open Thames corridor with its views across the river towards St Peters Conservation Area and along the Thames Promenade. The site itself is characteristic of the Richfield Avenue townscape which has the ability to accommodate the proposed development without substantial townscape effects. Mature trees within the Richfield Avenue townscape are positive elements which provide some improvement to the setting of the built-up area. The mature trees along the site's eastern boundary are valued in the local townscape assessment.
- 6.3. Pre-application discussions with Reading Borough Council have indicated that the potential effects of the proposed building on views from within and across the Strategic Open Space will be a key consideration in determining the application. Massing wirelines of the previously submitted scheme and the current scheme proposals have been provided to demonstrate the anticipated magnitude of change. The accompanying Design and Access Statement provides further detail on the treatment of the building with the aim of introducing a facade which will provide visual interest through variation in textures, tones and forms thereby providing an attractive scheme which has the potential to improve the streetscape of Richfield Avenue.
- 6.4. The majority of the visual effects will be minor due to the nature of the intervening townscape and the mature landscape elements which form the setting to the Thames Promenade and the St Peters Conservation Area.
- 6.5. The Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment concludes that the most notable residual visual effects will be on residents at Caversham Court and visitors to Crown Plaza hotel who currently enjoy glimpsed views across the site from the upper floor windows and from walkers approaching the Thames from Richfield Avenue along the Thames Promenade. Their views will be permanently changed however the existing features which are dominant (namely the mature trees along Richfield Avenue) will continue to filter the views and the new built form will be appropriate to its setting in the Richfield Avenue streetscape.

- 6.6. Walkers and cyclists using the Thameside Promenade and Thames Path (within the Strategic Open Space) will see changes in their views as they pass and approach the site, however the positive elements which are valued in these views, namely the open views across and along the Thames towards Caversham Bridge and the St Peters Conservation Area, will not be affected.
- 6.7. Where views from within the Strategic Open Space are affected by the proposals the changes will be low in the context of the wider panoramic views across the open space and Thames corridor. The scale and massing of the new building will be appropriate to the existing townscape associated with Richfield Avenue and the urban edge of Reading. In near distance views the detailed design of the facade will provide visual interest through variation in textures, tones and forms thereby providing an attractive scheme which sits aesthetically within, and hence improves, the existing townscape. Improvements to the site boundaries and the retention (and enhancement) of existing tree planting will further enhance the aesthetics of the new built form. The direction of all residual effects will be beneficial.
- 6.8. There will be no notable adverse effects on significant heritage views or on valued views across the Thames Major Landscape Feature. Historic features and areas of historic importance such as the St Peters Conservation Area Caversham Court Registered Park and Gardens including their settings, will not be affected.
- 6.9. The scheme proposals will not detract from the character or appearance of areas designated as a Major Landscape Feature and will maintain the natural beauty and visual amenity of the Borough's open space and landscape areas. The location, design and scale of the proposals will be appropriate to the existing townscape setting and will result in a well-designed scheme which is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and townscape setting. It will provide an innovative enhancement to the existing townscape. As such the scheme proposals respond to planning policy guidance and objectives at a national and local scale.

APPENDIX A:

LVIA Methodology and Definition of Terms

ALLEN PYKE ASSOCIATES

(Landscape Consultants)

**Methodology & Definition of
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Terms**

METHODOLOGY & TERMS FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This document set out the methodology and terms used by Allen Pyke Associates in LVIAs and Environmental Statements to establish and describe the potential effects on landscape character and visual amenity of a development

The methodology has been adapted from the guidance given in the Landscape Institute/IEMA publication 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (3rd Edition 2013).

The approach has been adapted to allow the assessment of broad urban areas but is not designed to provide the detailed appraisal required for specific townscape studies (see Landscape Institute TCA Technical Note: 05/2017)

The assessment process is divided into two stages:

- **STAGE 1: Assessment of Existing Baseline Conditions & Sensitivity**
- **STAGE 2: Assessment of the Effects of the Proposed Development**

STAGE 1: ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING BASELINE CONDITIONS & SENSITIVITY

The '**Sensitivity**' of the existing **landscape/townscape character** or **view** is determined through the combined assessment of the '**susceptibility to change**' and '**value**' of the area or view. The '**susceptibility to change**' is defined as '*the ability of the landscape to accommodate the proposed development without undue negative consequences*'. '**Susceptibility**' is derived by combining the '**Character**' of the area or type of ranking of the receptor experiencing the view with an assessment of its '**Condition**' of the landscape or the '**nature of the view**'.

1. DETERMINING SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

1a. Assessing Landscape/Townscape Character:

The '**Character**' of an area is defined using the following criteria:

Character	Criteria
High	Where the area is wholly/predominately intact, may have no/few incongruous elements or forms part of a wider distinct pattern/coherent landscape/townscape and has a highly recognisable or distinct sense of place.
Moderate	Where the area has a recognisable pattern, may have some incongruous elements that detract from/only make a moderate contribution to the intactness of the area, and provide some sense of place.
Low	Where the area has no recognisable pattern/structure, or may have few similar coherent/a disparate collection of elements that make little/no contribution to the intactness of the area, and result in a limited/no sense of place.

The '**Condition**' of the **Landscape/Townscape** is **defined** using the following criteria:

Condition	Criteria
Good	Where the area is highly managed/excellent good repair/quality
Moderate	Where the area is reasonably managed/average repair/quality
Poor	Where the area is un-managed/poor repair/quality

1b. Assessing Visual Amenity:

'Visual Receptor Types' are ranked in accordance with the land use of the viewpoint from which people (the receptors) will experience the view. These are defined using the following criteria:

Visual Receptor Type Ranking	Criteria
Type A - High	- Residents at home or using their gardens; - People engaged in outdoor recreation, including the use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views; - Visitors to heritage assets, and/or to other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience; - Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by local residents.
Type B - Moderate	- Users of outdoor sport or recreation facilities that do not involve or depend on an appreciation of views in the landscape; - People at their place of work whose attention may be focussed on their work or activity, not on their surroundings. - Users of retail and employment sites, sports and recreational facilities where the views are secondary to the activity at hand; - Users of public roads and transport routes where views add to the travel experience.
Type C - Low	- Users of Industrial sites, agricultural land, derelict or abandoned land, or busy commuter links where there is little appreciation of the view.

The 'Nature of the View' is defined as follows and considers the extent to which the site can be seen from a particular receptor:

Nature of View	Criteria
Good	Where there is an open view/panoramic view to or from the site and/or is not enclosed or interrupted by natural/man-made features.
Moderate	Where the view to or from the site is largely open and/or partially screened/enclosed and is interrupted by some natural/man-made features and/or the site is in the distance.
Poor	Where the view to or from the site is largely screened/obscured by intervening features, or is enclosed and/or only forms a minor part of the view, or the site is difficult to perceive in the distance.

1c. Quantifying Susceptibility to Change

Combining the 'Character' with 'Condition' or 'Visual Receptor Ranking' with 'Nature of the View' determines the 'Susceptibility to Change' of an area or view:

MATRIX TABLE: LANDSCAPE & VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

Character/Receptor Ranking	LANDSCAPE/TOWNSCAPE & VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY		
High/Type A	High	High	Medium
Moderate/Type B	High	Medium	Low
Low/ Type C	Medium	Low	Low
	Good/High	Moderate/Medium	Poor/Low
	Condition/Nature of View		

The **definition** of the landscape/townscape or visual ‘**Susceptibility to Change**’ is:

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Where the components and qualities of an area/view could be easily affected and would have a low ability/capacity to accommodate the proposed change.
Medium	Where the components and qualities of an area /view could be moderately affected and would have a medium ability/capacity to accommodate the proposed change.
Low	Where the components and qualities of an area /view could be affected in a minor/negligible manner and would have a high ability/capacity to accommodate the proposed change.

2. DETERMINING SENSITIVITY

2a. Assessing the Value of Landscape/Townscape Character

The ‘**Value**’ of an area is defined as follows and considers any relevant designation or local recognition:

Value	Criteria	Examples	Level of importance/rarity
Exceptional	Very high importance and rarity.	World Heritage Site	International
High	High importance and rarity.	National Park, AONB, Broads or other statutory/inalienable area designations	National, Regional
Moderate	Moderate importance.	Non-statutory landscape (SLA, AGLV), Conservation Area, Heritage Coast, or valued undesignated area recognised through use/association/ publications.	County, Local
Low	Low importance with positive characteristics.	Undistinguished and undesignated area with some redeeming feature/features and possibly identified for or being improved.	Local
Poor	Low importance but with negative characteristics.	Area having few/no redeeming features and/or possibly identified for recovery.	Local

2b. Assessing the Value of the View

The ‘**Value of a view**’ is defined as follows and considers the relationship between specific features or locations with local residents and visitors and their enjoyment or quality of the view:

Value of View	Criteria
Exceptional	A view of high scenic value, natural/man-made beauty, and/or is uninterrupted by incongruous elements, and/or is an important recognised view within/towards or across a statutory designated landscape or heritage/locally important feature/viewpoint.
High	A view of good scenic value, natural/man-made beauty, and/or uninterrupted by incongruous elements, and/or is a recognised view within/towards or across a designated landscape or heritage/locally important feature/significant viewpoint.
Moderate	A view of some scenic value or intrinsic merit/natural/man-made beauty with some incongruous elements within, towards or across a locally important landscape/view or towards a locally recognised feature or reference point.
Low	A view of little/no intrinsic merit and contains some positive attributes and/or a view which is not rare and does not have any local value attached to it.
Poor	An open or partially screened view which is unsightly with no positive attributes and/or a view which is not rare and does not have any local value attached to it.

2c. Quantifying Sensitivity

MATRIX TABLE: SENSITIVITY

Combining the 'Value' and the 'Susceptibility to Change' determines landscape/townscape character and visual sensitivity to change:

Landscape/ Visual Value	SENSITIVITY TO CHANGE		
Exceptional/High	High	High	Moderate
Moderate	High	Moderate	Low
Poor/Low	Moderate	Low	Low
	High	Medium	Low
	Landscape or Townscape/Visual Susceptibility		

The **definition** of 'Landscape/Townscape or Visual Sensitivity' is as follows:

Landscape/Visual Sensitivity	Criteria
High	Where the elements that make up a character area or view are of considerable merit and/or would be difficult to restore or could not be replaced/removed without substantial detriment to the overall character area or view.
Moderate	Where the elements that make up a character area or view are of merit and/or could in part be restored or replaced/removed without a notable detriment to the overall character area or view.
Low	Where the elements that make up a character area or view are of little merit and/or could be restored or replaced/removed without detriment to the overall character area or view.

STAGE 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The assessment of ‘**Magnitude**’ and ‘**Significance**’ of the effects on both **Landscape/Townscape Character**’ and ‘**Visual Receptors**’ is undertaken during three periods to identify the temporary operational and residual effect of the proposed development:

- **Construction** (temporary effects)
- **Year 1** - Operational Period (temporary effects with landscape/mitigation treatments established in part)
- **Year 15** – Operational Period (residual effects after landscape/mitigation treatments established in full)

The ‘**Significance of the Effects**’ on landscape character and visual receptors can be positive or negative (the ‘**Direction**’) and are described as being either ‘**Beneficial**’ or ‘**Adverse**’. Where the development is unlikely to have any discernable influence the ‘**Direction**’ is described as being ‘Neutral’.

DETERMINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EFFECTS OF DEVELOPMENT

The ‘**Significance**’ of the effects of development on landscape character and visual receptors is determined by combining the assessment of:

- the ‘**Sensitivity**’ of the landscape or view, as established in the (Stage 1) baseline assessment; and
- the potential ‘**Magnitude of Change**’ resulting from the proposed development.

2a. Assessment of Magnitude of Change

The following criteria are considered when assessing the ‘**Magnitude of Change**’ on landscape/townscape character or views:

- Scale, duration and/or reversibility of development;
- Effect of any components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the scheme;
- The change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features or aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape/townscape;
- The addition of new features or elements that will influence the area’s character; and,
- The landscape proposals and/or mitigation treatments.

The ‘**Magnitude of Change**’ on landscape/townscape character or view is **defined** using the following criteria:

Magnitude of Change	Criteria
High	Where the scale/type/extent of the proposed scheme (or works to facilitate it) would be the dominant element in or adjacent to a character area or view.
Medium	Where the scale/type/extent of the proposed scheme (or works to facilitate it) would be one of a number of important elements in or adjacent to a character area or view.
Low	Where the scale/type/extent of the proposed scheme (or works to facilitate it) would be a minor element in or adjacent to a character area or view.
Negligible/None	Where the scale/type/extent of the proposed scheme (or works to facilitate it) would be remote and/or be an inconsequential element in or adjacent to a character area or view.

2b. Quantifying the Significance of Effects

Combining the ‘**sensitivity**’ (from the Baseline Assessment) with the ‘**magnitude of change**’ including the contribution of the landscape proposals and/or mitigation measures determines the ‘**significance of effects**’ on landscape/townscape character or views/visual receptors:

MATRIX TABLE: SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

Sensitivity	SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS			
High	Substantial	Substantial	Moderate	Minor*/Neutral
Moderate	Substantial	Moderate	Minor	Neutral
Low	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Neutral
	High	Medium	Low	Negligible*/None
	Magnitude of Change			

The 'Significance of Effects' to the temporary or residual changes in landscape/townscape character or for a view/visual receptor are defined as follows:

Effects on Character/Views	Criteria
Substantial	Where the scheme would cause a substantial change in the quality, condition and/or nature of the existing character area or view and the new development (or works to facilitate it) would be the dominant element.
Moderate	Where the scheme would cause a notable change in the quality, condition and/or nature of the existing character area or view and the new development (or works to facilitate it) would be one of a small number of elements in the overall setting.
Minor	Where the scheme would cause a slight change in the quality, condition and/or nature of the existing character area or view and the new development (or works to facilitate it) would be one of many elements in the overall setting.
Neutral	Where the scheme would cause a negligible or no change in the quality, condition and/or nature of the existing character area or view and the new development (or works to facilitate it) would be obscured or hidden by many other elements in the overall setting.

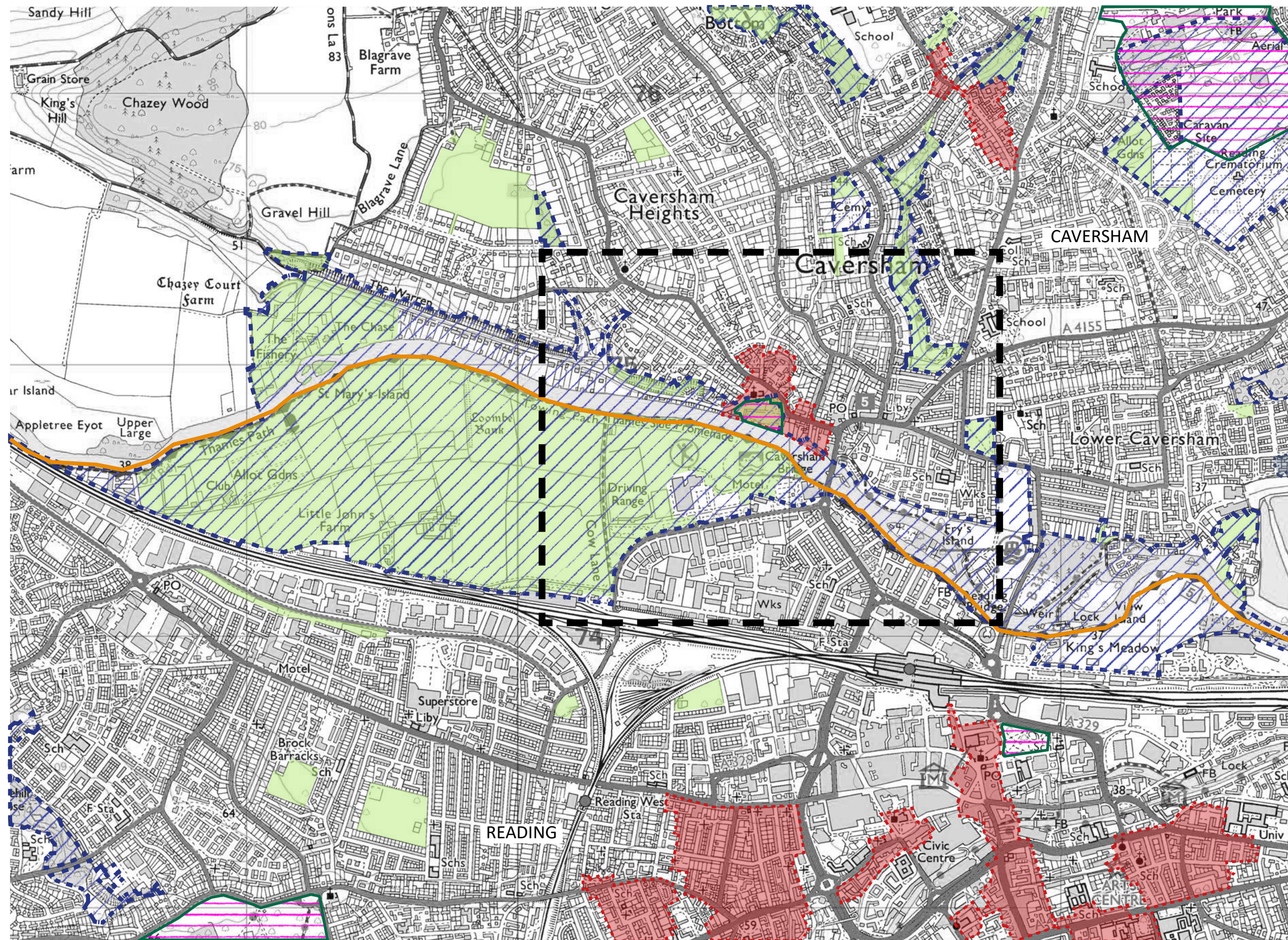
2c. Quantifying the Direction of the Significance of Effects

The 'effects' of change can be either **beneficial** (positive), **adverse** (negative) or **neutral** and is determined by weighting a combination of the following criteria:

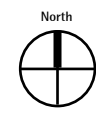
Beneficial Criteria (+)
- Fits well with scale of landform &/or pattern of an area/view - Increases attributes or enhances in contribution to an area/setting/view - Enhances balance of elements in an area/view or sense of tranquillity - Provides ability to include adequate or appropriate mitigation - Complements local/national planning policies or guidance to protect an area's character or a view
Adverse Criteria (-)
- Out of scale with landform &/or pattern of an area/view - Loss of attributes or deterioration in contribution to an area/setting/view - Disrupts balance of elements in an area/view or sense of tranquillity. - Lacks ability to include adequate or appropriate mitigation - Conflicts with local/national planning policies or guidance to protect an area's character or a view
Neutral
- Where there is no discernable change to an area's character or a view - Where there is no positive or negative affect on an area's character or a view

APPENDIX B:

Supporting Figures and Representative Views



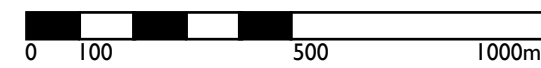
APAL FILE REFERENCE
2824-AS-01



- LEGEND**
- Study Area
 - Public and Strategic Open Space (Policy SA 16)
 - Major Landscape Feature (Policies CS37, SA17)
 - Conservation Areas (related to CS33, SDPD para 9.1.12-9.1.14)
 - Registered Parks and Gardens (England)
 - National Trails: Thames Path

Reading Borough Council Core Strategy (January 2008)

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright. Allen Pyke Associates Ltd. Licence No. AL100028972

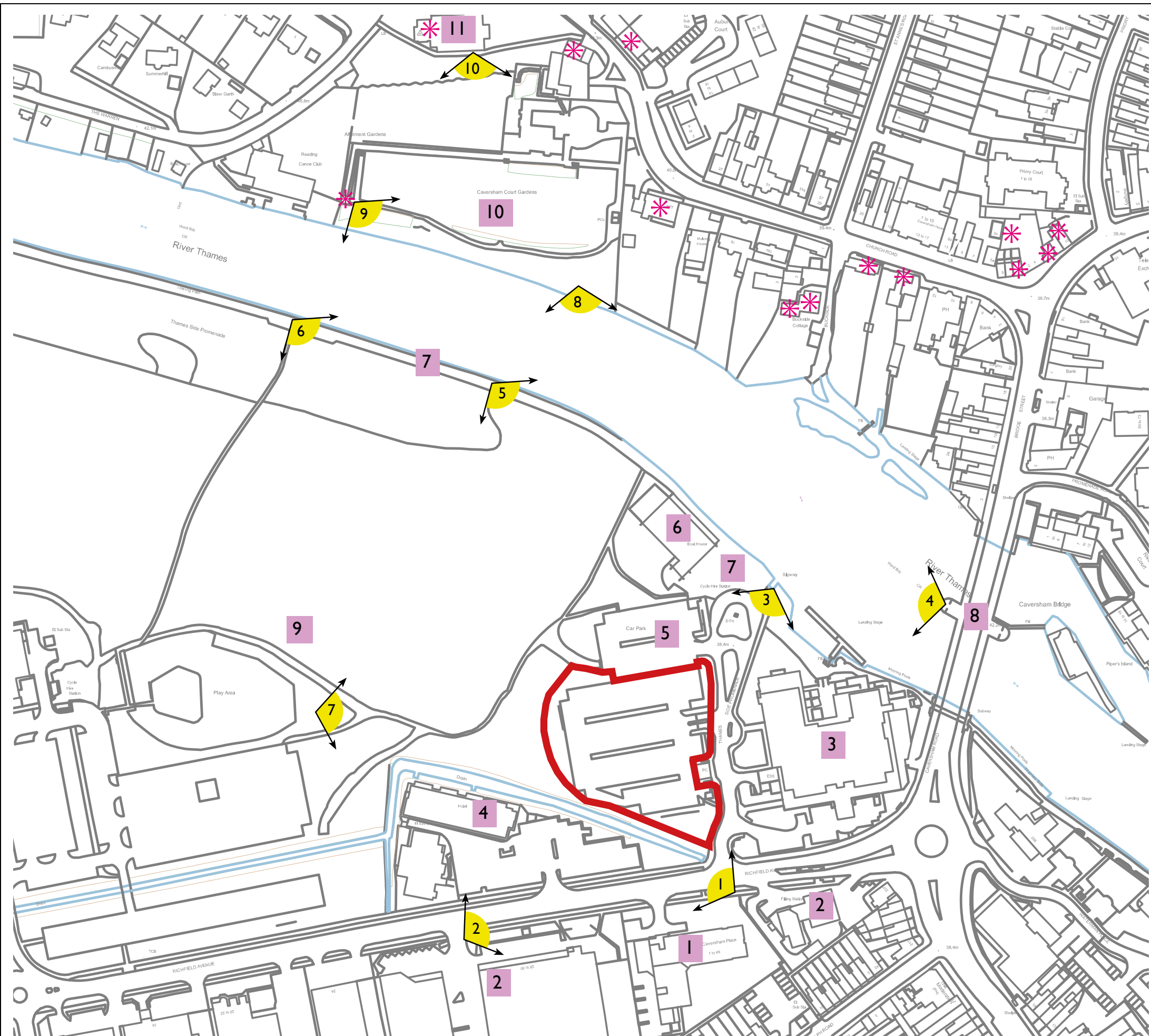


Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
-----	-------------	------	-------	---------

Drawing Status
PLANNING

The Factory, 2 Acre Road,
Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF
T 020 8549 3434
www.allenpyke.co.uk
KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE
A registered practise of the Landscape Institute

Client	BDH Hotels	Scale	NTS@A3
Project	Crowne Court Plaza	By/Ckd	CR/CR
Drawing Title	Site Context & Study Area	Date	20/11/18
Figure Number:	2824-AS-01	Revision	P1



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown Copyright. Allen Pyke Associates Ltd. Licence No. AL100028972

APAL FILE REFERENCE
2824-AS-02

North

LEGEND

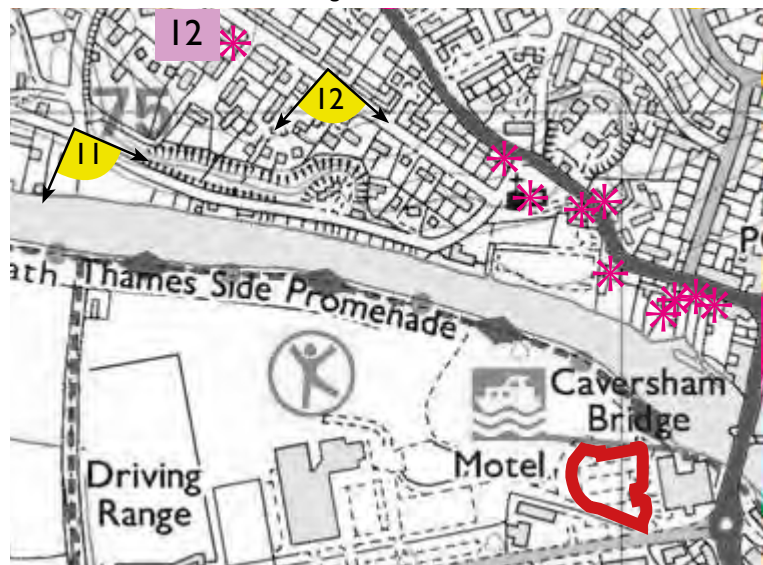
Site Boundary

Visual Receptor

Representative View

Listed Buildings

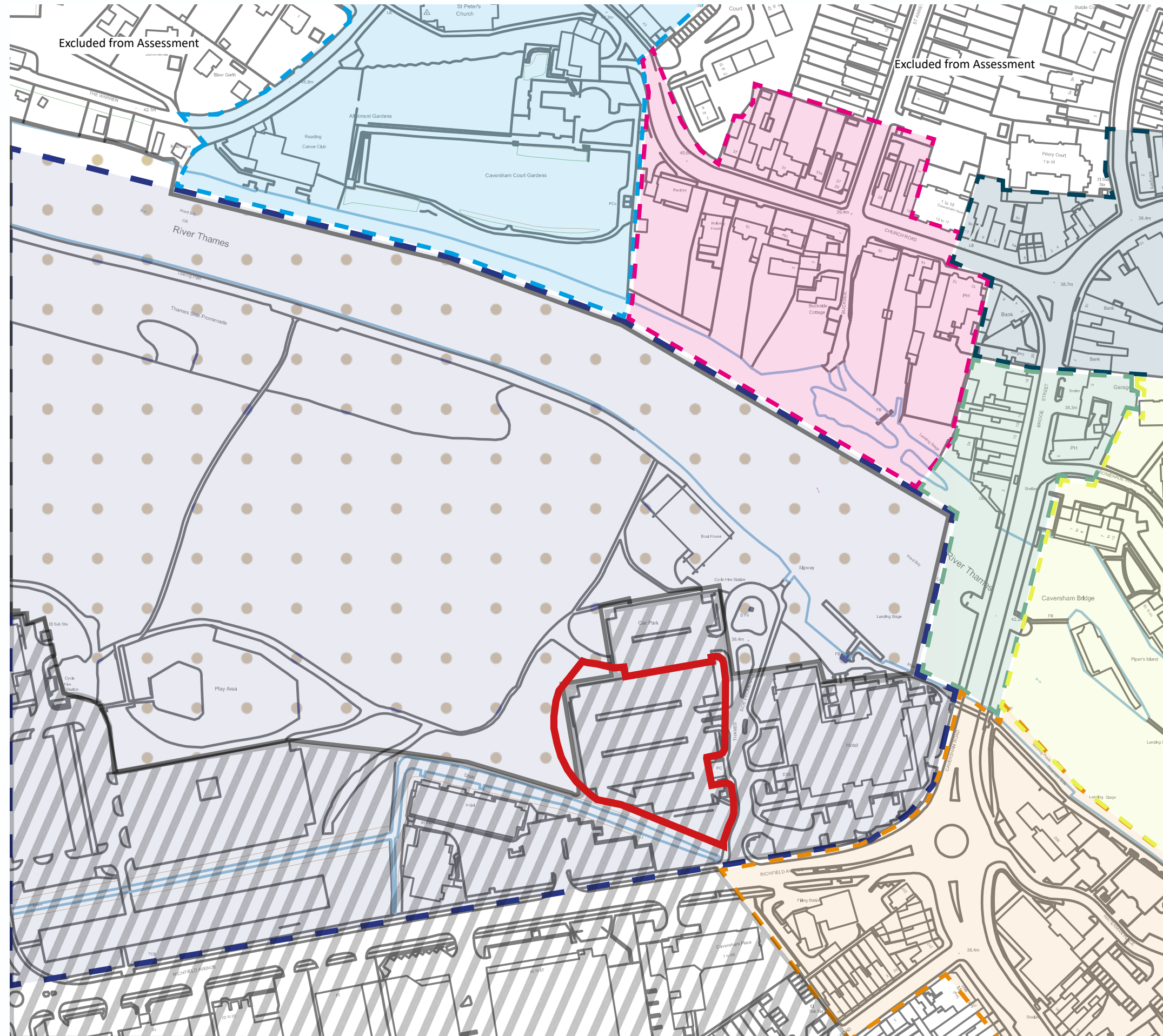
INSET: Views from Caversham Heights



VISUAL RECEPTORS:

- VR1: Residents at Caversham Place
- VR2: Motorists and visitors to mixed use at Richfield Avenue
- VR3: Visitors to Crowne Plaza
- VR4: Visitors to Premier Inn
- VR5: Users of Thameside Promenade Carpark
- VR6: Users of Reading Rowing Club
- VR7: Walkers and cyclists using Thameside Promenade and Thames Path
- VR8: Walkers and motorists at Caversham Bridge
- VR9: Users of Rivermead Park and Leisure Centre
- VR10: Visitors to Caversham Court Gardens
- VR11: Visitors to St Peters Church
- VR12: Residents at the Warren and Caversham Heights

A	Client name updated	31/01/19	CR	CR
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practise of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative viewpoints		Date 27/11/18		
Figure Number: 2824-AS-02		Revision P1		



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office ©Crown Copyright
Allen Pyke Associates Ltd
Licence No - AL100028972

APAL FILE REFERENCE
2824-AS-03

North

LEGEND

Site Boundary

Berkshire Landscape Assessment (2003)

B3: Reading Thames
Lower Valley Floor

St. Peter's Conservation Area (2018)

Caversham Court and
The Church

Church Road

The Junction Area

The Bridge Street Corridor

Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (2008)

Caversham Road

King's Meadow

Allen Pyke Assessment

Richfield Avenue

Rivermead Open Space

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practise of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Court Plaza		By/Ckd VV/CR		
Drawing Title Landscape and Townscape Character		Date 15/01/19		
Figure Number: 2824-AS-03		Revision P1		

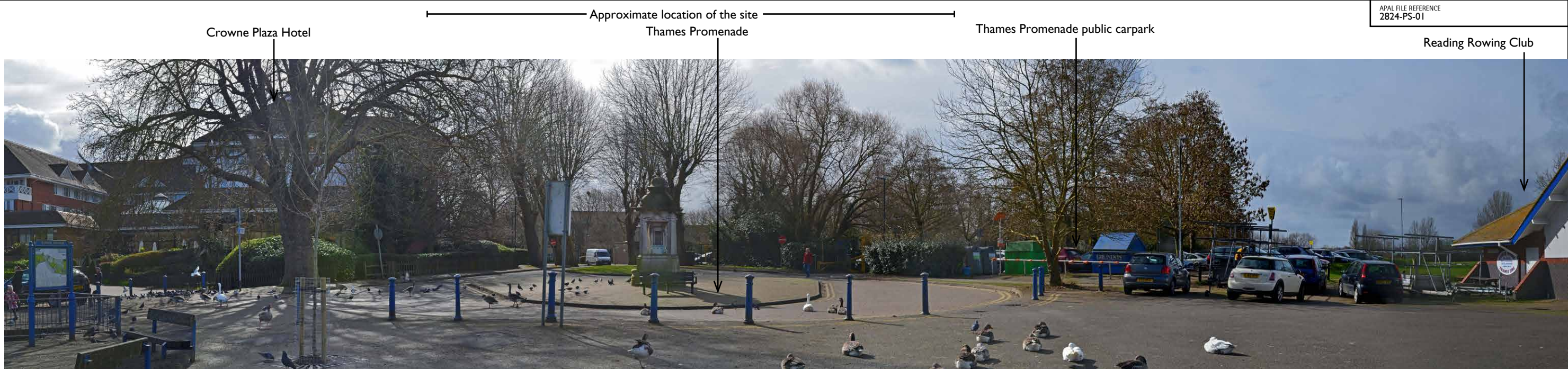


VIEW 1 - View from Richfield Avenue looking into the Crowne Plaza entrance

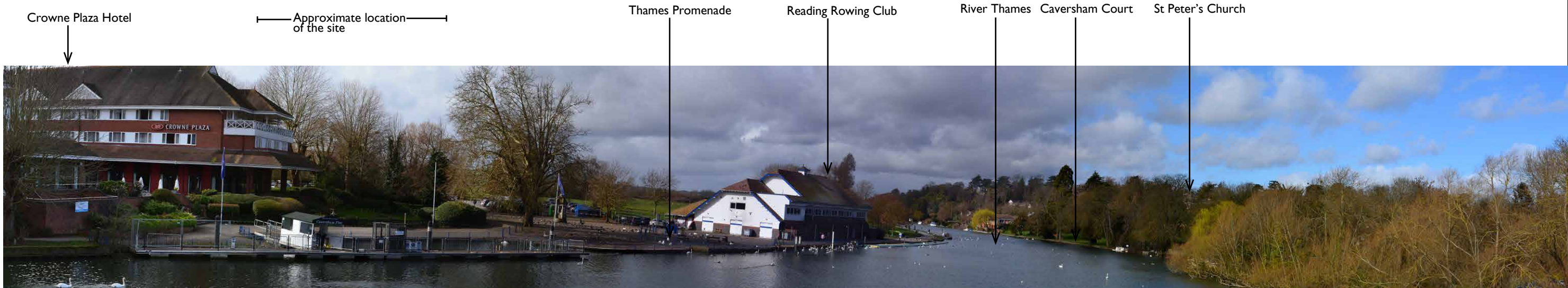


VIEW 2 - View from Richfield Avenue opposite the Premier Inn

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative Views - Photosheet: Views 1 & 2		Date 03/05/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-01.1		Revision P1		



VIEW 3- View from the Thames Promenade



VIEW 4 - View from Caversham Bridge

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative Views - Photosheet: Views 3 & 4		Date 03/05/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-01.2		Revision PI		



VIEW 5 -View from the Thames Promenade



VIEW 6 - View from Rivermead Park

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative Views - Photosheet: Views 5 & 6		Date 03/05/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-01.3		Revision PI		



VIEW 7 -View from play area at Rivermead Park



VIEW 8 - View from Caversham Court

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative Views - Photosheet: Views 7 & 8		Date 03/05/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-01.4		Revision PI		

Crowne Plaza Hotel

Approximate location of site.
Tall buldings at Reading Town
Centre visible beyond

Premier Inn.
Tall buldings at Reading Town
Centre visible beyond

Rivermead Park



VIEW 9 -View from Caversham Court from the top of the steps of the Listed Gazebo

Caversham Court

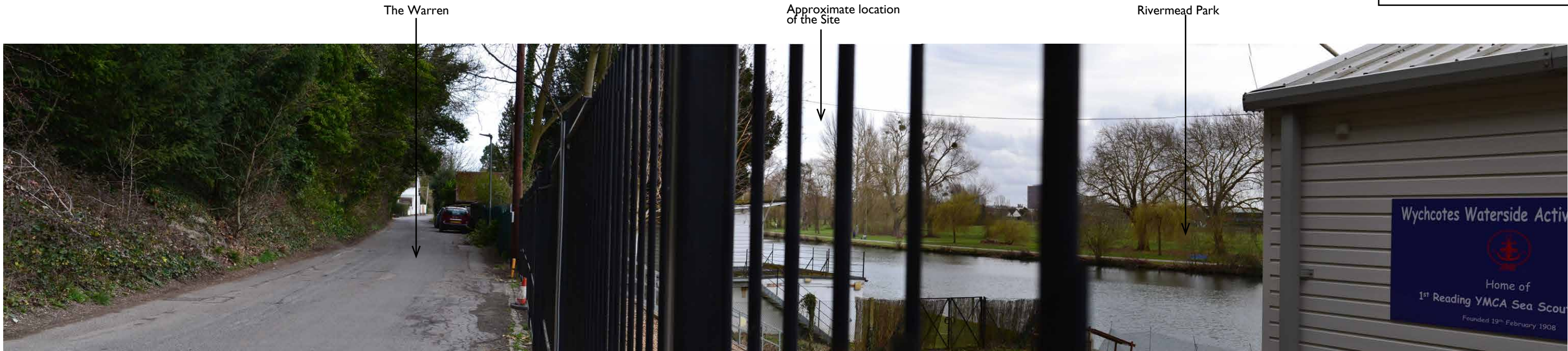
Approximate location of site.
Tall buldings at Reading Town
Centre visible beyond

Rivermead Park



VIEW 10 - View from the grounds of St Peter's Church

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative Views - Photosheet: Views 9 & 10		Date 03/05/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-01.5		Revision P1		



VIEW 11 -View from the Warren

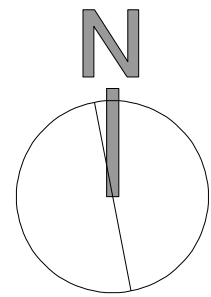


VIEW 12 - View from Warren Court

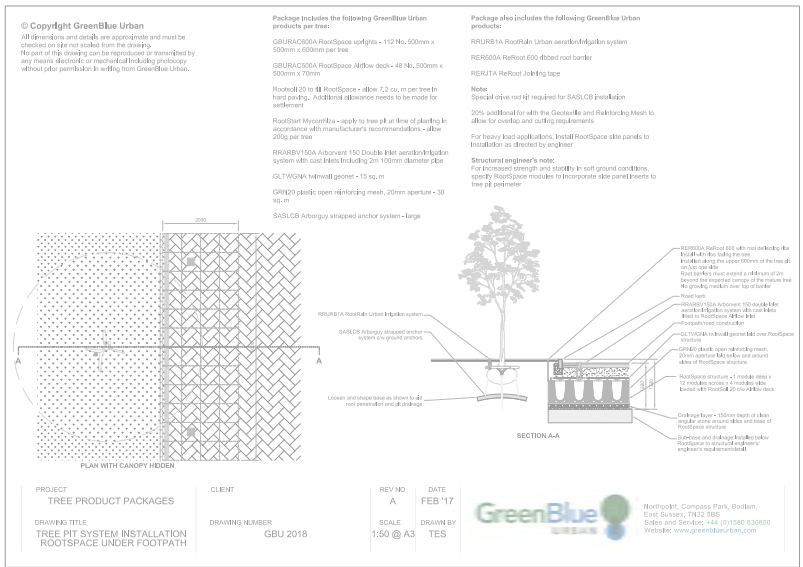
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Representative Views - Photosheet: Views 11 & 12		Date 03/05/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-01.6		Revision P1		

APPENDIX C:

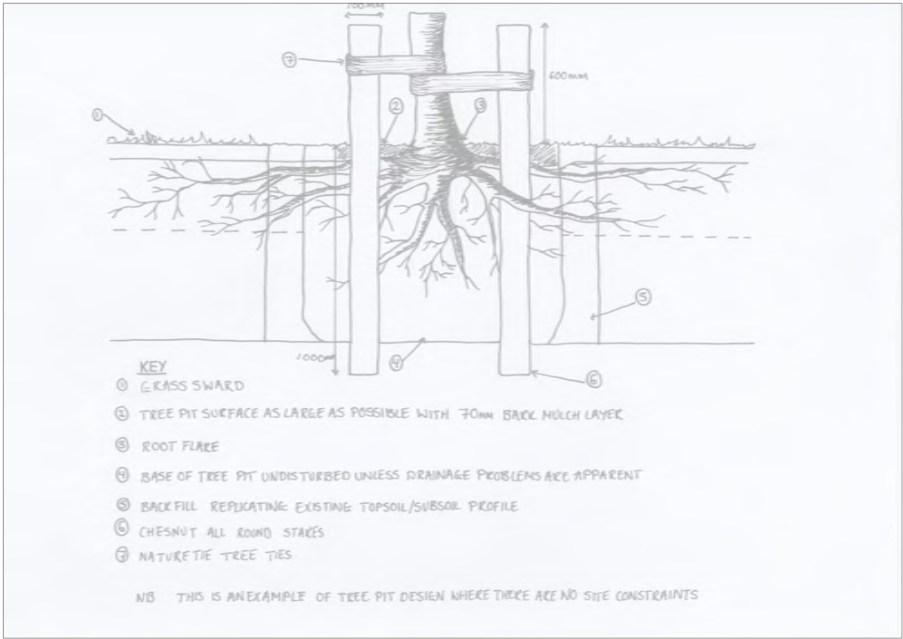
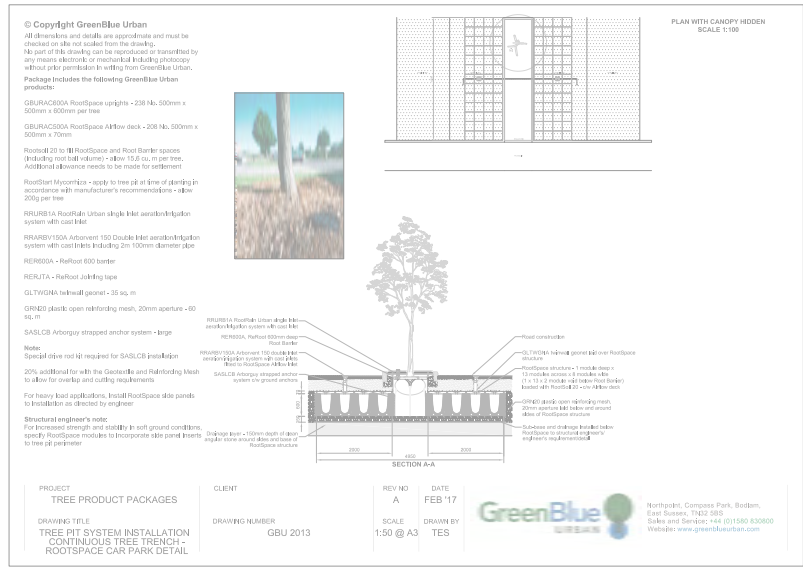
Landscape Proposals



Trees in this area planted using Green Blue Urban GBU 2018



Trees:		Trees to be from Barcham Trees or a UK tree supplier with equal Biosecurity rules	
AC	Acer campestre	20-25	150l
ALC	Alnus cordata	14-16	65l
ARH	Amelanchier 'Robin Hill'	14-16	65l
CC	Corylus columna	20-25	150l
QR	Quercus robur	12-14	65l
TD	Taxodium distichum	14-16	65l
OC	Ostrya carpinifolia	16-18	65l
PO	Platanus orientalis	30-35	350l
QC	Quercus palustris	18-20	250l
Shrubs & Conifers:			
IC	Ilex crenata- To be planted as 20-25 60cm long 20cm w hedge units -Double line to make 40cm width		
LF	Lonicera fragrantissima	1 per sq.m	40-60 5l
LP	Lonicera pileata 'Moss Green'	3 per sq.m	40-60 3l
SW	Sarcococca 'Winter Gem'	4 per sq.m	30-40 5l
TBF	Taxus baccata Fastigiata Aurea	200-250	35l
PL	Prunus lusitanica	125-150	10l
Planted as a triple row hedge with 500mm between the plants and 600mm between the rows- plants staggered cut back for site lines where necessary Indigenous Planting			
To be planted in the indicated area with 500mm between the plants To be planted in groups of 3 or 5 of the same species.			
25% Acer campestre 90-120cm 1+1 20% Cornus sanguineum 60-90 1+1 10% Corylus avellana 60-90cm 1+1 10% Salix alba 60-90 1+1 25% Salix alba 'Britzensis' 60-90 1+1 10% Viburnum opulus 60-90 1+1			
All above protected with rabbit guards.These guards to be biodegradeable cardboard 500 x 50mm obtainable from Ezee Tree (01858 575454) Each Guard should be supported by a 1m Eucalyptus cane from Ezee Tree			
		 Close cut grassed areas kept to between 25-50mm	
		 Longer grass areas- cut once a month from April-November height of cut 100mm	



We have not received a full services drawing so the Contractor must check for services when implementing any works detailed.

Frequency of visits
December/January/February/March – 1 visit each month.
April – November – 2 visits each month.
This schedule of visits may need to be altered if any period of extreme weather occurs such as drought, excessive rain or high wind.
Further maintenance years 2 – 5
Maintenance during this period should be as detailed for the establishment period with the following additional details:
• Fertiliser application
Years two,four: all trees to be given the following rate of Granulated sugar:
3 grammes per litre per square metre of crown spread
Years three,five: all planted areas to be fertilised with Sierrablen Flora granular fertiliser at 70g/square metre
Pruning of plants
All pruning should be carried out to maintain the natural shape and form of plants and pruning to 'box' shapes should be avoided.

Soft Landscape Maintenance Details for Crown Plaza,Reading
Establishment Period – 12 months from Practical Completion
To be carried out by the Landscape Contractor
and for a further four years minimum by the appointed maintenance team
Watering During periods of reduced rainfall all planting should be irrigated to maintain a moist and healthy root zone. This shall be carried out by hand from a bowser or by hose from permitted water points.
Weed Control All areas of planting must be kept weed free. Inspect mulches on each visit and maintain to a depth of 70mm thereby assisting water retention and suppressing weed growth. Herbicide use should be kept to a minimum particularly in areas of ground cover which should be weeded by hand. The use of Glyphosate for perennial weed may be considered. Any application should follow appropriate guidelines and great care exercised to ensure no spray drift.
Tree support Check for any sign of wind rocking, frost heave, settlement or human interference and ensure that trees remain stable and secure.
Pruning of shrubs Little pruning of shrubs should be required in the establishment period and after as follows.However any aberrant, uncharacteristic or reverted growth should be removed and all pathways, roadsides and sight lines kept clear.
Protection of planting Visits should be used to observe and where appropriate obstruct any desire paths that may appear or alternatively manage them in a constructive way. Also areas that show wear or erosion at the periphery should be restored and if required protected by temporary fencing.
Pests and Diseases On each visit inspect for any sign of disease, pest infestation or damage by vermin and take appropriate control measures if required.
Litter Any litter in planted areas to be removed on each visit.
Plant failures On each visit note should be taken of any dead or missing plants and these replaced before the end of the five year period.
Grass - close cut to be cut to between 25-50mm height on each visit.
All arisings from the operations above to be removed from site

Landscape Maintenance
It is the responsibility of the new buildings owners to ensure that the Landscape Maintenance is carried out as detailed in the following notes for a period of at least five years.
The following notes relate to the maintenance of the soft landscaping areas as it may be that maintenance of the hard surfacing may not be the responsibility of the Landscape Contractor. If this is the case the contractor responsible for the hard surface maintenance should be advised that the use of residual herbicide is not acceptable.
Hard surfaces can be kept weed free by mechanical means and,if necessary,the use of the herbicides detailed under weed control in the following notes.
During the five year period annual visits by the implementingLandscape Architect should be made to check that all maintenance works are being carried out properly and as detailed.

Reference Documents
British Standards Institution
BS 3936 : Specification for Nursery Stock.
BS 4428 : 1989 Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces)
BS 3882 : 2015 Specification for topsoil.
BS 8545 : 2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations
BS 5837 : 2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations
BS 3998: 2010 Tree work - Recommendations
All works to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the British Standards shown above.

The original of this drawing was produced in colour – a monochrome copy should not be relied upon.

Title Landscape Planting Plan

Scale 1-200 @ A1
Dwg No. SY19-185-LPP-19-01
Date 15.06.19⁹

Revision
Revision Date

SQUIRES YOUNG
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

info@squiresyoung.co.uk
01580 890160
www.squiresyoung.co.uk
Suite 1a, Hargreaves House,
90 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

APPENDIX D:

Massing Wirelines



VIEW I - Existing View



VIEW I - Proposed View (Originally Submitted Scheme)

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 471034, 174464, 38.60
- Eye height: 1.6m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

P2	Red line updated	11/06/19	WV	CR
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Massing Wireline View I (Originally Submitted Scheme)		Date 15/04/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-02.1		Revision P2		



VIEW 3 - Existing View



VIEW 3 - Proposed View (Originally Submitted Scheme)

NOTES:

Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:

- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 471037, 174630, 37.18
- Eye height: 1.65m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

P2	Red line updated	11/06/19	W	CR
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Massing Wireline View 3 (Originally Submitted Scheme)		Date 15/04/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-02.2		Revision P2		



VIEW 5 - Existing View



VIEW 5 - Proposed View (Originally Submitted Scheme)

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 470905, 174716, 37.37
- Eye height: 1.65m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

P2	Red line updated	11/06/19	VV	CR
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Massing Wireline View 5 (Originally Submitted Scheme)		Date 15/04/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-02.3		Revision P2		



VIEW 9 - Existing View



VIEW 9 - Proposed View (Originally Submitted Scheme)

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 470839, 174809, 39.40
- Eye height: 1.65m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

P2	Red line updated	11/06/19	W	CR
Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels			Scale NTS@A3	
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark			By/Ckd CR/CR	
Drawing Title Massing Wireline View 9 (Originally Submitted Scheme)			Date 15/04/19	
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-02.4			Revision P2	



VIEW I - Existing View



VIEW I - Proposed View

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 471034, 174464, 38.60
- Eye height: 1.6m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Massing Wirelines View I (Revised roof form)		Date 15/04/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-03.1		Revision P1		



VIEW 3 - Existing View



VIEW 3 - Proposed View

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

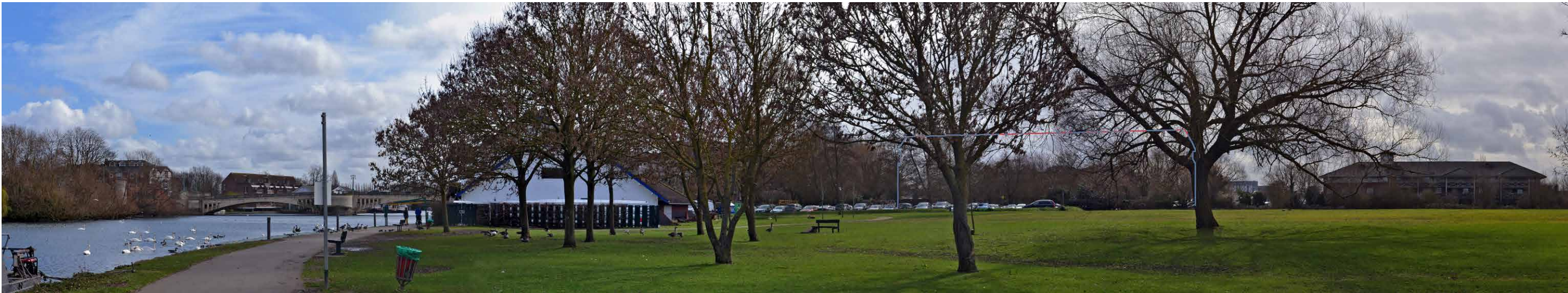
Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 471037, 174630, 37.18
- Eye height: 1.65m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute				
Client BDH Hotels			Scale NTS@A3	
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark			By/Ckd CR/CR	
Drawing Title Massing Wirelines View 3 (Revised roof form)			Date 15/04/19	
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-03.2			Revision P1	



VIEW 5 - Existing View



VIEW 5 - Proposed View

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 470905, 174716, 37.37
- Eye height: 1.65m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		Client BDH Hotels		
Scale NTS@A3		Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		
Drawing Title Massing Wirelines View 5 (Revised roof form)		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-03.3		Date 15/04/19		
		Revision PI		



VIEW 9 - Existing View



VIEW 9 - Proposed View

NOTES:
Photographic views were taken on site with a digital camera using the equivalent of a 50mm focal length lens on a standard 35mm SLR camera.

The individual photographic images were joined together digitally to produce a panorama. A minimum 50% overlap with adjacent images was allowed to reduce distortion.

Photograph details:
- Time / date: morning of 5th March 2019
- View Location: 470839, 174809, 39.40
- Eye height: 1.65m.

(Massing wireline prepared by Faulhaber Design Ltd.)

Rev	Description	Date	Drawn	Checked
Drawing Status PLANNING				
Allen Pyke		The Factory, 2 Acre Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 6EF T 020 8549 3434 www.allenpyke.co.uk KINGSTON UPON THAMES • CAMBRIDGE A registered practice of the Landscape Institute		
Client BDH Hotels		Scale NTS@A3		
Project Crowne Plaza Carpark		By/Ckd CR/CR		
Drawing Title Massing Wirelines View 9 (Revised roof form)		Date 15/04/19		
Drawing Number: 2824-PS-03.4		Revision PI		

APPENDIX D:

Key Extracts from Published Guidance

Introduction & Summary

Description

Opportunities

Key facts
and data

Landscape
change

Analysis



www.naturalengland.org.uk



Key characteristics

- The chalk plateau is incised by parallel branching valleys gently shelving to the south-east into the London Basin. The large chalk aquifer is abstracted for water to supply London and its surrounds and also supports flows of springs, chalk streams and the River Thames.
- There are several chalk streams. Features associated with a history of modification include historic mills, watercress beds, culverts and habitat enhancements.
- The north-west-facing escarpment is an abrupt relief feature beside low-lying vales, breached notably by the Thames at the Goring Gap. The escarpment lowers northwards, terminating as distinct hills. The Chiltern ridge offers panoramic views.
- Within the Chilterns, views are enclosed within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of way.
- A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys.
- The Chilterns are one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England. The area is particularly renowned for its extensive native beechwoods, several of which are designated as part of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Other distinctive features include rare box woods, 'hanging' woods on steep slopes and rare yew woods, including Hartslock Wood SAC.

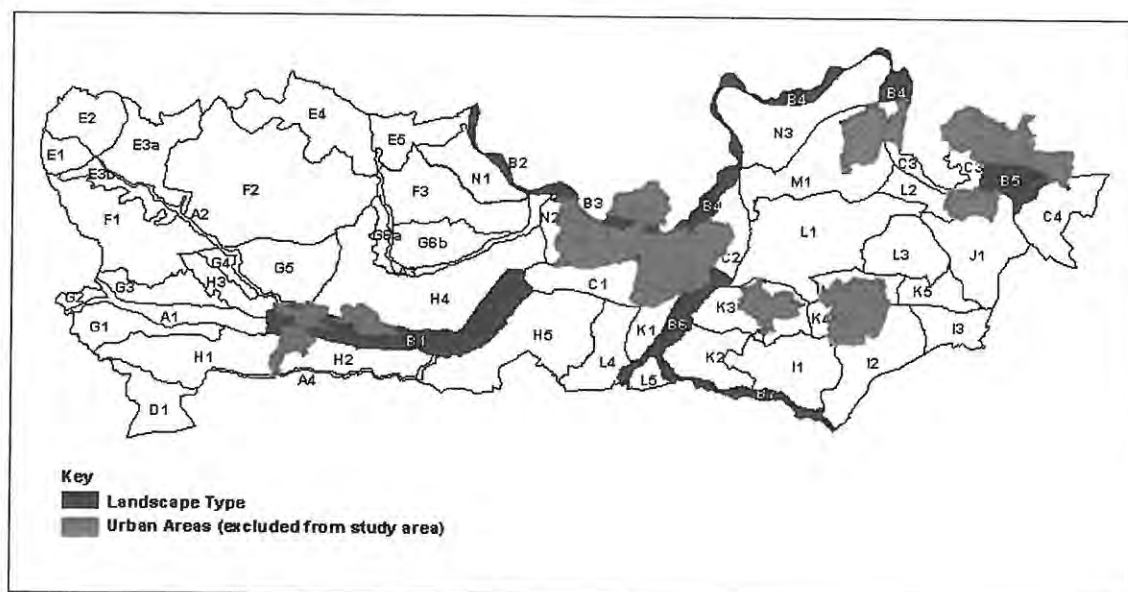


The River Thames offers a variety of recreation opportunities, particularly as it passes through towns fronting the river such as Marlow shown here.

Key characteristics continued

- Pre-18th-century fields defined by ancient, often sinuous hedged boundaries are scattered throughout, including co-axial fields. Parliamentary enclosure fields are limited. Large modern fields, usually with ancient boundaries, cover the better agricultural land, most notably in the north-east.
- Remnants of various historic land use types can combine rich and diverse habitats and archaeology. Many key places are publicly accessible, including Registered Parks and Gardens, historic downland and common land. Traditional flood plain landscapes and orchards are the most restricted in extent. Historic routeways, hedged boundaries and watercourses provide connectivity.
- Historic downland preserves prehistoric archaeology and supports high numbers of rare and scarce chalk grassland vascular plants, mosses and liverworts. Diversity is enhanced by a mosaic of chalk grassland, scrub and woodland, with Hartslock Wood SAC being one example.
- Species strongly associated with the Chilterns include the red kite, pasque flower, stag beetle, Chiltern gentian, shepherd's needle, chalkhill blue butterfly and native box. Aston Rowant SAC protects an internationally important juniper scrub population. Farmland birds and deer are a feature of the wider countryside.
- Nucleated settlements of medieval origin and land farmed since prehistory are found alongside watercourses and springs in the through-valleys and at the foot of the scarp. Elsewhere, dispersed farmsteads dating from the medieval period and mid-19th-century development around commons are characteristic of the plateau.
- The River Thames and its flood plain mark a distinctive area in the south. The river is a focus for settlement, abstraction and recreation.
- Major transport routes, including motorways, radiate from adjacent Greater London, associated with significant 20th-century development and extensive urban fringe areas.
- Brick and flint are the dominant traditional building materials, with Totternhoe Stone (clunch) being less common, but still a distinctive
- Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks.
- 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.

6. TYPE B: LOWER VALLEY FLOOR



Type B: Lower Valley Floor

- B1: Lower Kennet
- B2: Pangbourne Thames
- B3: Reading Thames
- B4: Hurley Thames
- B5: Eton Thames
- B6: Lower Loddon
- B7: Blackwater

Location and Boundaries

The *Lower Valley Floor* landscape type occupies defined and frequently interlinked corridors of land, encompassing the valley landscapes of the Rivers Thames, Kennet, Loddon and Blackwater. The *Lower Valley Floor* shares similarities with the *Upper Valley Floor* (A) and *Lower River with Open Water* (C), which together form a network of river landscapes within Berkshire. The landscape of the *Lower Valley Floor* is important in defining Berkshire's northern boundary. The boundary of this landscape type is defined by the perceived limit of the river floodplain as evidenced by topography and land use. Transportation corridors have characteristically been built at or near the flooding limit, resulting in differential land use on either side. These roads and rail lines have frequently been used to define boundaries.

TYPE B - Lower Valley Floor

Typical Characteristics of the Rural Landscape



DESCRIPTION

Landscape Character

- 6.1. The Rivers Thames, Loddon, Kennet, Pang and Blackwater cut through Berkshire within broad corridors of a distinctive flat and open lowland landscape. The valley floor comprises a periodically waterlogged alluvial floodplain, which supports a verdant mosaic of pastoral farmland, principally used for cattle grazing. Larger arable fields are located away from the immediate river corridor. The fields are frequently divided by gappy hedgerows and post-and-wire fences, although some areas still exhibit historic hedgerows patterns and there are remnant areas of traditionally managed unimproved pastureland that retain pollarded willows at the waterside. Many attractive wetland habitats are found within the *Lower Valley Floor* including wet meadow, reed bed and flooded gravel workings. These introduce a varied texture within the floodplain landscape and are of particular ecological importance, supporting nationally rare assemblages of flora and important wildfowl breeding sites. These include rare flora species such as Loddon Pondweed and Loddon Lilly.
- 6.2. Most rural sections of the valleys have a subtly wooded context, created by a dispersed patchwork of small deciduous farm woodlands, copses, and bankside trees on the valley floor. This quality is enhanced by the presence of woodland on the steep valley sides, from which the floodplain is clearly differentiated, and which create a sense of enclosure. Along the Thames valley at the northern boundary of the county, these valley sides comprise the dramatic chalk landscape of the Chilterns AONB, which has a strong influence on the character of this floodplain.
- 6.3. The rivers are the focus of the landscape and are wide and deep with pronounced large-scale meanders. These rivers are mostly navigable and some have adjoining navigation channels and infrastructure, including the Kennet and Avon Canal, and the locks and weirs of the River Thames, which include features of industrial archaeological interest. The rivers are extensively used for waterborne recreation and colourful boats and river barges are an important feature.
- 6.4. Most roads are located above the floodable level and there are railway lines in some valleys, such as the Thames and Kennet. There are numerous large settlements located in or around the river valleys including the urban centres of Newbury and Reading (not assessed). Within these urban areas the rivers have been engineered with characteristic hard banks and bridges. Elsewhere there is a more rural character with settlement limited to small villages and towns and generously spaced corridors of detached linear residential development. The riverside development, particularly adjacent to the Thames, includes numerous large exclusive detached residences, such as at Cookham. In addition, numerous parklands associated with valley side manors have extended down onto the valley floor.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

- **Flat and open broad lowland floodplain** enclosed within steep valley sides.
- **Wide, deep, meandering natural river corridors** of the Kennet, Thames, Enborne and Loddon.

- **Presence of navigation channels and associated infrastructure** including the Kennet and Avon Canal.
- **Pastoral farmland** including areas of unimproved permanent pasture along the river corridor.
- **Large regular arable fields** particularly away from the immediate river channel.
- **Deciduous wooded context** created by a variety of woodlands including small farm woodlands, copses, and riverbank trees.
- **Important wetland habitats** including wet meadows, reed-beds and flooded gravel workings.
- **Important transportation networks** often parallel to the river corridor.
- **Variety of settlement forms** including **urban towns** at important river confluences, small traditional towns and villages at fording points and large prestigious detached dwellings along the river corridor.
- Presence of **historic valley edge parks** that extend onto the valley floor.

Factors Contributing to Landscape Character

Physical Influences

- 6.5. The areas of *Lower Valley Floor* occupy broad valley landscapes, the floodplains of which are defined by extensive alluvial deposits that mask the influence of the underlying, predominantly chalk, strata. The alluvial deposits are not homogeneous and the soils within the valleys therefore range from those with clayey and peaty deposits displaying gley characteristics, such as within the Kennet and Loddon valleys, to the more freely-draining brown earths of the Thames valley. All of these soil types are affected by high groundwater levels and have a propensity for short-term waterlogging which restricts their agricultural use and has resulted in a predominantly pastoral landscape.
- 6.6. The landform of the *Lower Valley Floor* is predominantly flat or gently sloping and occurs at a low elevation relative to the surrounding landform (up to 70m AOD and as low as 20m AOD). It is defined by the surrounding valley sides which impart borrowed character upon the landscape - these vary from the gently rolling sides of the lowland clay landscape to the steeper and occasionally very dramatic valley sides of the chalk scarps, such as the Chilterns in the north of the county. The principal hydrological corridor is the River Thames, which flows in an easterly direction. The Thames is joined by the River Kennet in Earley and by the River Loddon near Wargrave, and these water courses follow a northeasterly and northerly course respectively. The rivers are fairly wide and deep and meander gently. They are fairly clear but more turbid than the rivers found within the *Upper Valley Floor (A)*. The Kennet valley also has a canal – the Kennet and Avon Canal – constructed in 1727 and opened in 1729. This follows a similar course to the River Kennet, although is straighter cutting across rather than following meanders in the river. Navigation of the canals and rivers has resulted in the presence of numerous locks, weirs and sizable bridges, which are distinctive features within the landscape.

Historic Environment

Historic Land Use

- 6.7. The *Lower Valley Floor* has a long history of human use and occupation. Important Mesolithic sites are known, although these have had no impact on the development of the present landscape. The river gravels of the Thames and Kennet were largely cleared of woodland by the Late Bronze Age, and their intensive use during the Iron Age and Roman period is indicated by field systems and trackways visible as cropmarks. Formalised land division may date from the Iron Age and Roman period and it is possible that Roman land units were preserved in Saxon estates, which became the basis of medieval manors and parishes. The Rivers Thames and Blackwater formed parts of the boundaries of the Saxon shire, part of the Kingdom of Wessex. The Domesday Book records numerous mills associated with settlements along the Kennet and Thames and there were later mills on the Loddon. The rivers provided both clean water for processing the raw materials and fast flowing streams, which powered the mills. Many of the valleys were originally part of the Royal Forest of Windsor and, following disafforestation, medieval deer parks were created, particularly in the Kennet and Thames valleys.
- 6.8. In the medieval period the landscape was characterised by open fields along the river gravels and common meadow on the alluvial floodplain, although drainage may have allowed some mixed farming on the floodplain. Extensive water meadows were created along the Kennet in the post-medieval period and remnants of these remain a distinctive feature of the landscape. These were subject to spring flooding regimes, which have influenced the modern ecology. Other traditional land uses include the coppicing of willow and hazel, with both withy and osier beds noted in some valleys. In the 19th century Parliamentary inclosure of the floodplain of the Thames, Kennet and Loddon rivers led to the creation of a regular grid-like pattern of large rectangular fields. The less regular field arrangements in the Blackwater valley suggest earlier enclosure. In places such as Streatley and Remenham, boundary removal in the 20th century has subsequently created very large and open fields.
- 6.9. Additionally, the floodplains provided early channels of transportation and communication, for example a road to Bristol (now followed by the route of the A4) ran along the Kennet valley as early as 1360. The rivers, too, have been a route of trade and communication since prehistory a function continuing with the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1729 and the Berkshire and Hampshire Railway in 1847. Later noteworthy uses of the land include for military operations, as evidenced by the numerous pillboxes and other WW2 artefacts within the Kennet, Loddon, Blackwater and Thames.

Settlement Evolution

- 6.10. Settlement in the river valleys became established during the 6th and 7th centuries and, by the 10th century, urban centres were developing at Cookham (which is recorded as having a market) on the Thames, and Thatcham and Aldermaston on the Kennet. The Domesday Book in 1086 records many other settlements on the valley floor of both rivers, Newbury being created around that date, and Wargrave by the early 13th century. Newbury expanded at the expense of Thatcham and Aldermaston due to the wool and cloth trades in the medieval and post-medieval periods. Similarly Cookham and Wargrave declined as Reading developed. There

were fewer settlements along the Blackwater valley and these did not develop into towns and the valley consequently retains a more remote character. Settlements, such as Earley and Woodley also grew up on the River Loddon, with the historic crossing point of the Loddon Bridge within the town of Earley. In the medieval period rural settlement, outside the urban centres, appears to have moved away from the valley floor onto higher ground.

- 6.11. Most of the larger urban settlements in Berkshire have their origins in the lower river valleys, although have expanded out subsequently or their character has changed as a result of more recent developments. These include Reading, which developed due to the increasing trade along the Kennet valley and the influences of Reading Abbey, and the Domesday settlement of Ellintone located at the main bridging point of the Thames between London/Bristol, which developed into the modern town of Maidenhead (classified as C3 due to subsequent land use influences).

Historic Designations

Designation	Summary
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	
Cock Marsh (SM 12072)	Group of at least 4 barrows and a possible ring ditch.
Bisham Abbey (SAM 19021) (Grade I)	The Knights Templars built a preceptory here during the reign of Stephen (1135-54) it was occupied until the dissolution of the order in 1307. An Augustinian priory was founded in 1337 (on the site of the Knights Templars preceptory) and was occupied until the dissolution of 1536.
Hurley Priory (SAM 19020 (PREV SAM 63))	A Benedictine monastery was founded here in 1086 as a cell of Westminster. It remained in Benedictine hands until 1535 when it passed into secular hands.
Beaumont's Castle (SM 12018.)	Beaumont's manor held by Despenser family from c13. Licence for crenellation of house granted in 1339. Manor dismembered 1420. Water-filled moat encloses wooded area. No surface indication of manor house.
St Bartholomew's Church (SAM 154.)	Ruined church, Arborfield. Possibly dating from 13th century. Has a 19th century brick addition. Was superseded by the present church in 1863.
Moat-Sheepbridge Court (SM 12020)	Moat, utilising diverted river water to form a strong defensive site.
Sonning Cursus (SAM 178)	Two widely-spaced parallel linears visible as positive cropmarks.
(SAM 182)	Regularly formed enclosure with centrally placed simple gap entrance on NE side. Linear feature cutting across NE quarter of enclosure, Linear feature running roughly parallel to NE edge of enclosure
Litten chapel (SAM 68)	
St John the Baptist church (SAM 186)	Remains of St John the Baptist church at Upton Green Farm
Medieval field system (SAM 190)	Medieval field system W of Woolhampton
Aldermaston lock, (SAM 192)	Aldermaston lock, Kennet and Avon Canal
Monkey Marsh Lock, Avon (SAM 193)	Monkey Marsh Lock, Kennet and Avon Canal
Cropmarks-Charfield with trackway and Ring Ditch, Starveacre Field (SAM 176).	Linear and curvilinear features forming irregular enclosures, also ring features, and dotted areas; Irregular/rectilinear enclosure, double ditched linear of irregular appearance and flat bottomed ditch (field 22) of bell barrow or urn field. Evidence for later periods of activity

Cropmarks-Straighthanger Fd (SAM 178)	Complex comprising of 2 annular features, three rectangular/square features, a trackway and a setting of parallel lines.
Cropmarks W of Milestone Av (SAM 179)	Complex of two enclosures and associated linear features.
English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens	
The Deanery, Sonning (Grade II*) (B4)	An early C20 house by Edwin Lutyens surrounded by a contemporary formal and informal garden by Lutyens with planting plans by Gertrude Jekyll.
Eton College – Provost's, Fellows' And Luxmoore's Gardens (Grade II)	C15 and later school courts, gardens and park incorporating playing fields.
Swallowfield*(Grade II)	C17 and later country house with gardens and pleasure grounds, surrounded by a landscape park laid out in the C18
Park Place and Temple Combe (Grade II*)	C19 house surrounded by C18 and C19 gardens and pleasure grounds and landscape park with work in the mid to late C19 by Robert Marnock. Temple Combe developed during the late C18 lies enclosed within the Park Place Estate.
English Heritage Register of Battlefields	
Newbury Battlefield (predominantly in Character Area H1)	Large battlefield associated with first Civil War Battle of Newbury 1643.

*Also falls within Landscape Type L

Current Rural Land Use

- 6.12. Today the floodplain is dominated by a predominantly pastoral landscape of grazed fields and meadows divided by post and wire fences with some areas of more traditional enclosure provided by pollarded willows or hedgerows. Away from the immediate river corridor, there are also some large, flat, regular arable fields used for cereal production. In some areas hobby farming occurs which has led to fragmentation of the landscape. Woodland is a further important land use, although there is evidence that woodland management is declining. In some areas roadside poplar avenues punctuate the landscape. Mineral extraction has occurred in some parts of this landscape type, but to a lesser extent than landscape type C. This remains a rural landscape providing the context for areas of settlement.
- 6.13. The high quality 'natural' landscape of the *Lower River Valley* type, and its proximity and accessibility to the urban centres means that it is consequently valued for recreation as indicated by the presence of a significant number of caravan and camping sites. Horse racing is a significant land use in this area (e.g. Windsor race course). There are also numerous paddocks. Many river corridors (particularly associated with the canals) include towpaths, which provide access for cyclists and pedestrians and the Thames Path National Trail runs alongside the Thames. Where the river is sufficiently large and well-defined, such as on the north border along the Thames, it is used for watersports including sailing and canoeing and the Thames is famed for the Henley Regatta. The Kennet and Avon Canal is also popular for canal boating.

Settlement and Building Character

- 6.14. In the rural areas settlement has continued to consist mainly of dispersed farmsteads located on the edges of the valleys. The river corridors continue to be a focus for settlement with large centres of population at Newbury at the confluence of the upper River Kennet and River Lambourn; Reading, where the Rivers Thames and

Kennet converge; and Maidenhead and Windsor on the Thames. Smaller nucleated towns and villages are located at regular intervals along the valleys, many of which retain elements of a traditional vernacular character including Cookham and Sonning. Overall, however, there is a considerable diversity of building styles and ages within this landscape type, ranging from large 17th century and Victorian residences to twentieth century housing, including a large number of 1930's developments (mock Tudor) and more recent residential estates. Consequently, there is no sense of an overriding local vernacular. There are also concentrations of industrial areas within the valley floodplain adjacent to the urban settlements.

- 6.15. Reading (excluded from the study) is the largest settlement in the area and has expanded away from the confluence of the Rivers Thames and Kennet and now straddles the Thames river valley, localised areas of chalk and a more lowland clay landscape. It is dominated by residential estates and large commercial buildings connected by a dense urban road network. However, there are areas of more open and natural landscape retained at the fringe of the settled area and within the urban fabric as parkland (sometimes originating in historic parkland) including the grounds of large institutions such as The University of Reading. Outside of the urban areas fringe land uses dominate including golf courses. However, there are a few woodland areas retained in the landscape and these are important in providing a more natural setting and wooded context for the town.

Nature Conservation

- 6.16. The *Lower Valley Floor* includes many important natural habitats, reflected in the high number of designated nature conservation sites. Of particular importance to the character of the landscape are the wetland vegetation communities along the riparian corridors and the adjacent floodplain - including wet meadows and reed beds. These habitats support nationally rare species such as Loddon Lilly and the snakeshead fritillary. The wetlands are also important for wildfowl - breeding habitats include the large inland reedbeds, such as those found at Thatcham, and waterbodies created by human activity, such as flooded gravel workings. In addition, there are also important woodland habitats including numerous ancient woodlands. The woodland is found in small copses and blocks as well as lines of willow and alder scrub fringing the immediate river corridor. Together, these tree and woodland features impart a pleasant wooded context for the more open floodplain.

Nature Conservation Designations

Designation	Summary
Sites of Special Scientific Interest which are also candidate Special Areas of Conservation	
Thatcham Reed Bed (BI)	One of the largest inland reed bed complexes in southern England supporting important breeding warbler populations
Kennet & Lambourn Floodplain 0.27ha (A1, A2 and BI)	Floodplain, marsh and fen. Major stronghold for nationally rare Desmoulin's whorl snail. Includes areas of unimproved pasture and marsh.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	
Aldermaston Gravel Pits (23.41 ha.) (BI)	Mature flooded gravel workings surrounded by dense fringing vegetation, trees and scrub supporting important breeding bird communities.

River Kennet (B1)	Important lowland river demonstrating transition from chalk to clay river. Species-rich (most diverse lowland river in the country).
Woolhampton Reed Bed (B1)	Dense reed bed with tall fen vegetation and carr woodland notable for nesting passerine bird populations and diversity/rarity of insects.
Cock Marsh (B4 and N3)	Small area of wet alluvial grassland transitioning to calcareous grassland and clays in N3
Stanford End Mill and River Loddon (B6)	Traditionally managed waterlogged hay meadows and river important for fritillary and Loddon pondweed of which Loddon is the national stronghold. Also fishery and Desmoulin's whorl snail.
Blackwater Valley (B7)	Unimproved alluvial meadows, swamp and wet valley alderwood supporting rich plant communities including ancient grassland species.

Character Area Descriptions

- 6.17. There are seven potential subdivisions within the *Lower Valley Floor* landscape type. These character areas retain the general characteristics of the generic landscape type but vary in character locally. The following descriptions highlight these distinctions in landscape character.

B1. Lower Kennet

- 6.18. The *Kennet Lower Valley Floor* is centred on the wide valley floodplain of the River Kennet stretching from Newbury in the west to near Theale in the east, beyond which intrusive industrial activity has permanently and irreversibly changed the character of the landscape. The Kennet valley is principally an agricultural valley with wide pastoral fields flanking the immediate riverbanks, plus large open arable fields of Parliamentary origin supporting cereal crops. Newbury racecourse, located on a flat area of river floodplain, east of Newbury, is also a feature of this area. In addition there are extensive natural areas forming important wetland habitats, frequently designated as SSSIs. Many of these have their origins in the extensive commonly-owned water meadows which existed along the Kennet floodplain in the post-medieval period and adjoining areas managed for the coppicing of willow, such as the withy and osier beds at Woolhampton. Other important wildlife sites include flooded gravel extraction pits such as the SSSI at Aldermaston Gravel Pits, which is a haven for wildfowl. Mineral extraction is also taking place elsewhere, at a smaller scale than in Type C.
- 6.19. The Kennet is an important transportation corridor, being a route of communication and trade from prehistory. The opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1729 halved the distance for traffic between Reading and Newbury elevating the importance of this route. Later in 1847, the Berkshire and Hampshire Railway was opened, roughly following the alignment of the river. There was a road to Bristol running along the Kennet valley as early as 1360, later called the Kings Road, the Reading to Newbury section being made a turnpike in 1728. This route is now followed by the A4 and, in part, defines the northern boundary of this area. Characteristic but over-mature poplar avenues – associated with a Roads Beautifying Association scheme of the 1930's - line the road in parts. Despite the concentration of routeways settlement is surprisingly sparse. Newbury-Thatcham (excluded from the study) is an important centre where traditional and more modern urban

development and industrial areas extend into the area and influence the character in parts. Elsewhere, settlements are limited to nucleated clusters around former mills and small edge-of-floodplain settlements such as Aldermaston and Woolhampton.

B2. Pangbourne Thames

- 6.20. The Pangbourne reach of the River Thames is located between Streatley and Pangbourne to the west of Reading and this character area extends beyond the Berkshire border into Oxfordshire. Here, the broad floodplain has a more remote and rural character compared to other areas of this landscape type. It also feels more enclosed due to 'borrowed' character from the adjoining steep enclosing bluffs of the Chilterns to the north/east and the wooded dipslope and chalk downland to the south/west, which together form the dramatic geological feature known as the Goring Gap. The floodplain is dominated by permanent pasture, although there are some areas of more open character such as around Streatley. There are also some intact meadowland – including Pangbourne Meadow – part of which is owned by the National Trust. Some positive river restoration measures have been undertaken by the Environment Agency in the area. In the east the floodplain is dominated by open water which will increase when current quarrying is completed. Transportation corridors such as a railway are important features and the Thames is popular for boating. Medium sized settlements are located at the important bridging points of Streatley-Goring and Pangbourne-Whitchurch. There is also a scattering of small farmsteads throughout the floodplain.

B3. Reading Thames

- 6.21. The majority of this character area is within the settled areas of Reading and Earley (therefore not assessed in this study). In this area the Thames includes a number of Eyots (Islands) that create a distinctive river character. The landscape in the non-urban area comprises urban fringe uses such as business parks, a sewage farm, a leisure centre and transportation corridors (road and railway). However, there are many public footpaths providing opportunities for access.

B4. Hurley Thames

- 6.22. The Hurley reach of the Thames is a long meandering corridor of land that stretches from near Sonning to Hurley and Cookham, including (on the Buckinghamshire side of the character area) the more well-known towns of Henley-on-Thames and Marlow. The landscape in this area shares many similarities with B2 on account of the enclosing scarp/dipslopes of the valley sides. There is considerable recreational use of the landscape, with numerous recreation nodes including the Thames Path (National Trail), and numerous marinas/locks for example at Hurley and Henley, which provide a base for boating activities (including the famous Henley Regatta). The presence of a large number of prestigious, detached residences, some of high architectural quality, creates a distinct ambience and sense of 'exclusivity'. Of particular note are the impressive mansions directly overlooking the river characterised by long gardens sloping down to the banks where there is often a small dock for harbouring boats. Many of these originate from the 18th century country homes of Londoners, although there are many more modern buildings of varying design.

- 6.23. The landscape is in many places well wooded creating an attractive setting to the river and the associated recreational activities. However, despite this the rural context shows some signs of decline with areas of large arable fields, enclosed by gappy hawthorn monoculture hedgerows or post and wire fences, for example at Remenham. Nevertheless, some important intact wetland habitats remain including Cock Marsh near Cookham Dean, an important chalk wet grassland, owned by the National Trust.

B5. Eton Thames

- 6.24. The Eton reach of the Thames is a short section of floodplain located between the reservoirs at Wraysbury and the village of Eton Wick. This part of the Thames river corridor is also sandwiched between the urban areas of Slough and Windsor (excluded from specific consideration in this study). Much of the area is settled and it is the nature of the settlement within and adjoining this character areas that gives the landscape its distinctive character. Eton, with its famous public school, is the principal settlement and the buildings of Eton College dominate the townscape. Additionally, from the town centre there are landmark views to Windsor Castle across the Thames. Around Eton some of the floodplain has been given over to recreational use and, in particular, the green playing fields of Eton School are a feature, as is the Windsor racecourse. Also in this vicinity is the newly-constructed Thames Flood Alleviation Channel. Outside the settled area the landscape shows signs of degradation with intrusive features such as the M4 cutting through the area and adversely affecting the visual quality and rural character. The remaining arable farmland appears to be marginal, with some areas no longer in active management, and decline of associated features such as hedgerows.

B6. Lower Loddon

- 6.25. The Loddon stretches from Stanford End in the south of the county to Winnersh near Reading. It is joined near Sheepbridge by the River Blackwater (Broadwater reach). The floodplain of the Loddon is wide and flat but poorly defined because, unlike most other landscapes of this type, it is surrounded by lowland clay landscapes and consequently lacks the distinctive demarcation offered by, for example, the dramatic chalk scarp around Pangbourne.
- 6.26. The landscape of the Loddon is characteristic of its type with a high proportion of grazed pastoral floodplain, generally within small fields with intact hedgerow boundaries, with numerous small deciduous copses, many of which are of ancient origin. The valley floor is crossed by a network of small drainage channels. The *Loddon Lower Valley Floor* is more intimate and less accessible than other areas of this landscape type, and the linear transportation corridors that are a feature of many valleys are absent. It is, however, locally affected by the presence of the M4 motorway that crosses through the north of the area. Furthermore, the extensive, bridle/footpath network does not follow the river corridor, which enhances the sense of inaccessibility. The west side of the Loddon is considerably settled with the suburban area of Woodley and Earley and Winnersh with its characteristic business park floodplain development. Elsewhere settlement is restricted to nucleated clusters of settlement, including a number of hotels, associated with bridging points. A visually intrusive line of pylons dissects the valley from north to south. There is a also significant area of parkland in the Loddon valley at Swallowfield and there are a

number of high quality conservation habitats including Stanford Mill End wet meadow, an SSSI, which is a traditionally managed wet hay meadow, supporting the snake-head fritillary.

B7. Blackwater

- 6.27. The Blackwater occupies a band of landscape in the south of the county adjoining the county border. It is a quiet and pleasant landscape centred on a medium sized river, forming a somewhat forgotten rural backwater. The landscape includes pastoral fields and has a well-wooded quality comprising small fringing copses of trees, including ancient woodland. The valley is crossed by roads, and includes fording points inaccessible by motor vehicles. There are, in addition small roads running parallel with the watercourse, that define the valley floodplain. It is predominantly open water at the east end and a concentration of recreational uses are associated with a number of restored gravel workings around Trilakes Country Park/Yately Lakes providing for both passive and active pursuits. There are also accessible areas of traditionally managed wet meadowlands containing ancient grassland species, as at Shepherds Meadow within the Blackwater Valley SSSI.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of Landscape Type

Features of Key Significance

- Sense of **openness**.
- Quality of **views** to the river and to the valley sides.
- **Diverse wetland** habitat mosaic.
- **Wooded framework** created by small-scale copses and characteristic bankside trees such as willow and poplar avenues.
- Areas of 'traditional' unimproved **pastoral farmland** with pollarded willow and hedgerows.
- High **architectural quality** and **rural ambience** of the smaller river towns and villages and impact of large urban settlements such as Reading.
- Presence of **historic parkland** landscapes.

Strength of Landscape Character

- 6.28. This landscape type has a strong character with fundamental and easily-recognisable characteristics such as the pastoral floodplain and river corridor which create a strong sense of identity and suffuse the geographically distinct areas of the lowland river floodplain with a sufficient degree of uniformity to ensure each is independently recognisable as being of that particular type. Other factors such as the presence of ecologically-valuable habitats also reinforce the strong sense of character within the valleys although in some limited areas the traditional landscape has been affected by a more urban character. Note that some areas of the river valleys are within the urban areas which have not been assessed. The character of these areas is different to that related to the more rural areas of the valleys.

Landscape Condition

- 6.29. Whilst the strength of character is strong it is apparent that many of the features that contribute to character, particularly at a fine grain, are deteriorating as a result of past and ongoing forces for change in the landscape. Consequently landscape condition is declining. As a result, although many of these features, such as pollarded willows and hedgerows, are still present (to a greater or lesser extent) in some areas, their number and condition is gradually deteriorating - such that without active steps to redress the balance in time they will cease to be characteristic of the landscape and will continue to be replaced by features of arguably inferior quality (visually and ecologically) such as the replacement of hedgerows with post and wire fences.

Key Issues

- Declining viability of livestock grazing and the consequent impact upon the pastoral floodplain landscape.
- Changing agricultural practice, including an increase in hobby farms leading to changing management priorities and corresponding loss of traditional features such as rows of pollards and hedgerows.
- Potential further amalgamation and deterioration in character of arable fields as a result of changes in farming practice, including the visual impact of set aside land.
- In the past a decline in water quality and damage to the aquatic and riparian habitat as a result of nutrient enrichment due to agricultural run-off and leakage from water vessels etc. has been noted. More recently water quality has improved.
- Decline in traditional woodland management.
- Pressure for commuter housing, potentially resulting in the encroachment of suburban estate housing development onto the floodplain, outward urban sprawl from settlements and infill between large detached riverside houses.
- Increased flooding, notable particularly in autumn 2000, in areas where development has occurred on the floodplain. This may result in pressures for further flood control measures – which may be unsympathetic within the landscape.
- Demand for additional masts and poles within the floodplains or on the surrounding valley sides impinging on open 'natural' views.
- Potential pressure for additional gravel extraction works extending from landscape type C.
- Proliferation of pony paddocks leading to fragmentation and deterioration in the intactness of the character of the landscape.
- Increasing recreational and visitor pressure including, potentially, demand for more intrusive forms of water recreation.
- Continued management of the historic parkland resource.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The overall strategy for the *Lower Valley Floor* is to **conserve and restore** landscape character. This entails conservation of the open farmed character of the floodplain and its small woodland copses; seeking to restore and enhance the traditional pattern of the pastoral landscape; actively managing and seeking opportunities for the re-creation and restoration of wetland habitats of ecological importance and conservation and enhancement of the visual and recreational qualities of the river and canal landscape.

Guidelines

6.30. Broad objectives to realise the aims of the strategy include:

Landscape Management

- Conserve and seek to restore and extend the geographical area of important wetland habitats that occur along the floodplain, particularly areas of wet meadow, reed bed and marginal vegetation. The connection of small, fragmented areas of habitat should be a priority.
- Conserve a soft and un-engineered river profile and ensure high quality urban design and detailing of engineered sections within settled areas.
- Encourage conservation and restoration of permanent pasture, particularly along watercourses and encourage ecologically-beneficial management of both pasture and arable land including minimising use of fertilisers, etc.
- Promote active management of remaining features of the agricultural landscape and continue to promote the agri-environment management, under schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and local produce initiatives, to facilitate reinstatement of lost or declining features, such as pollarded willow and hedgerows.
- Manage set-aside land, paddocks and hobby farms to enhance the visual quality of the landscape, for example through restoration of boundary hedgerows to enhance wildlife value.
- Manage recreational pressure to avoid damage to important landscape or ecological characteristics or perceptual qualities.
- Conserve the balance and nature of existing woodlands and consider possibilities for small-scale woodland creation in areas where they could enhance landscape character and quality.
- Carefully consider cumulative effect of aggregate extraction and promote locally appropriate restoration schemes.
- Continue to undertake active management, and where appropriate restoration of the historic parks and gardens.

Managing Future Change

- 6.31. With regard to any future change, the aim should be to maintain the semi-natural character of the landscape and avoid changes that would affect the rural ambience of the floodplain. In addition to the features of key significance outlined earlier, main attributes to be considered with regard to any future change are:
- Characteristic settlement pattern comprising a series of discrete towns and villages plus dispersed detached dwellings along the river corridor.
 - Open and undeveloped context of the floodplain landscape.
 - Views along and from the floodplain, particularly to the adjoining valley sides.
 - Natural river form and un-engineered riverbank profile with adjoining wetland habitats and bankside vegetation.
 - Predominantly rural context of the valleys, in which mineral extraction works, such as those located in the adjoining areas of landscape type C, are largely absent.

Character Area Evaluation

- 6.32. The individual character areas have the following particular requirements:

B1. Lower Kennet

- 6.33. Overall the strength of character of this landscape is good. However, in common with other areas of this type there are threats to the condition of the landscape and the strategy for the landscape is therefore to conserve and restore landscape character of the rural areas. In particular there are opportunities for the repair and restoration of a pastoral character within large arable dominated fields, especially those close to the watercourse, and restoration of poplar avenues along the A4. The importance and sensitivity of nature conservation habitats within the character area, suggest that the restoration, linkage and management of wetland habitats should be a priority.

B2. Pangbourne Thames

- 6.34. This landscape retains a strong sense of character, although it shows evidence of declining condition. The overall strategy should be to conserve and restore the existing character. Key objectives for this landscape are restoration of the traditional small-scale pastoral landscape and ongoing management of the Pangbourne Meadows and adjacent areas. It will also be particularly important to consider and manage the impact of any land use changes affecting the dramatic scarp valley faces of the Chilterns upon this character area, particularly any encroachment by intrusive linear elements such as telecommunications masts. Further important considerations are the general need to conserve the rural even 'remote' quality of the landscape and manage the potential impacts of recreational use.

B3. Reading Thames

- 6.35. The majority of this character area is within the urban area of Reading (therefore not assessed in this study). The area is visually and physically intruded by urban fringe uses, creating a landscape of poor-moderate character and declining condition. This valley landscape is readily accessible to the urban population, and it is suggested that the overall strategy should be to conserve and restore and, where possible, enhance the landscape for the benefit of recreational uses.

B4. Hurley Thames

- 6.36. Overall the strength of character is good and the condition, although showing some decline is generally intact. The strategy should be to conserve the existing character and restore those aspects of landscape that have become weakened or fragmented and to prevent further deterioration. In particular it will be essential to manage visitors to prevent erosion and damage to fragile ecological habitats and to limit further encroachment of buildings along the river corridor, which should retain a predominantly soft and natural riverbank.

B5. Eton Thames

- 6.37. The strength of character is moderate and the condition is in decline suggesting the need to conserve and enhance the landscape structure. In particular, there are enhancement opportunities presented by the Thames flood relief scheme (e.g. for recreation and wetland habitat creation). In addition, the impact of the motorway should be managed, possibly through selective woodland screening. Consideration should also be paid to the potential alternative uses and opportunities presented by marginal agricultural landscapes, for example potential woodland creation. Consideration should be given to achieving positive integration of the adjoining urban landscapes of Windsor and, particularly, Slough into the river corridor landscape.

B6. Lower Loddon

- 6.38. Overall, the landscape has a strong character and its condition is good. The strategy is to conserve the Loddon landscape and, in particular, its character as an intact, rural landscape. Where any traditional elements such as pasture and riparian woodlands are under threat they should be restored and managed. There are opportunities to improve the recreational opportunities within this landscape, for example, creation of additional footpaths with access to the river and integration of areas of intrusive development, for example through appropriate woodland planting.

B7. Blackwater

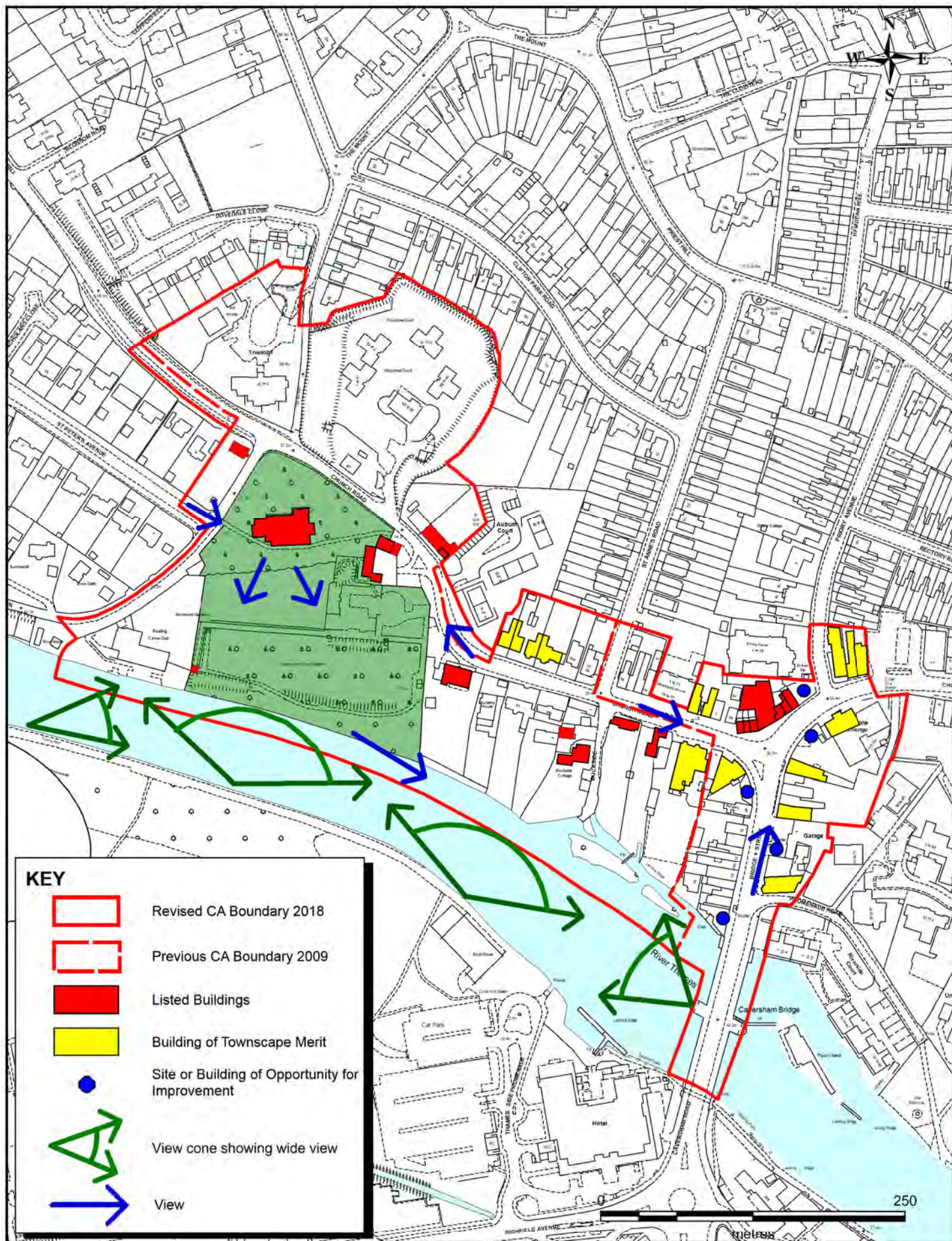
- 6.39. The Blackwater has strong character and is of good condition and therefore the priority is to conserve the existing resource and its particular quality as a quiet rural landscape. This will necessitate careful management of visitor pressure. The maintenance of an open rural floodplain and the absence or screening of development will be important to retain its special perceptual quality of remoteness.

St Peters Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal



November 2018



Title: St Peters Conservation Area
Map 3 - Features of Conservation Area

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Date: 15/06/2018

Scale at A4: 1:3000

Ref: M:\D\CD\Envir\Plan & Tran\Conserv\St_Peters_Proposed_Conservation_Area_2018



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

4.2 Views into the area

From the south, St Peters church on its heavily-wooded ridge is a key landmark, glimpsed among the trees in views from the bridge and the Thames promenade, as well as from the east and west along the river. The view of Caversham Court Gardens is also particularly important from across the river, as are the spacious and wooded gardens of houses on the south side of Church Road.

In summary, as shown on Map 3, important views into the area are:

- From Caversham Bridge looking north west across the Conservation Area to the green escarpment beyond.
- From the Thames Promenade to the south of the river looking across the Conservation Area to the escarpment beyond.

4.3 Views within the area

St Peters church is also prominent when viewed from Church Road and St Peters Hill. The double bend as the road ascends the slope means that the church and the gates and remaining buildings of Caversham Court close westward views within the area, supplemented by the Rectory, by the timber-framed buildings tucked into the hillside on the north side of the road, and by the massive backdrop of trees. While views into Caversham Court from the road are limited by its boundary walls, the reverse views looking down from St Peters churchyard are also attractive. The redeveloped site of Treetops, at No 2 St Peters Hill, also continues to dominate views towards the top of St Peters Hill, especially views from the south and east within the Conservation Area.

Views eastwards into the main shopping street are also important, punctuated by the large magnolia at the foot of Priory Avenue.

The view west down Church Street is stopped by the former Lloyds Bank building on axis with the street. Views eastwards into the main shopping street are also important, punctuated by the large magnolia at the foot of Priory Avenue. Views when passing over the bridge into Caversham are important, both east and west along the river and ahead into Bridge Street, where a significant group of listed buildings closes the view and makes Caversham's historic origins as a bridgehead village clearly legible. Except for some well-detailed bank premises, the buildings lining Bridge Street are not distinguished, but their spatial form is important in defining the linear character of this corridor. The former hotel abutting the west side of the bridge, though insensitively altered, creates an important portico to the area as a whole.

In summary as shown on Map 3, important views within the area are:

- View of St Peters Church from Church Road and St Peters Hill.
- Views south from St Peters Churchyard across Caversham Court and the Thames.
- View west down Church Street stopped by the former Lloyds Bank building on axis with the street.
- Views eastwards into Church Road punctuated by the large magnolia at corner of Priory Avenue.
- View north from Caversham Bridge and Bridge Street towards the group of listed buildings on Church Street.

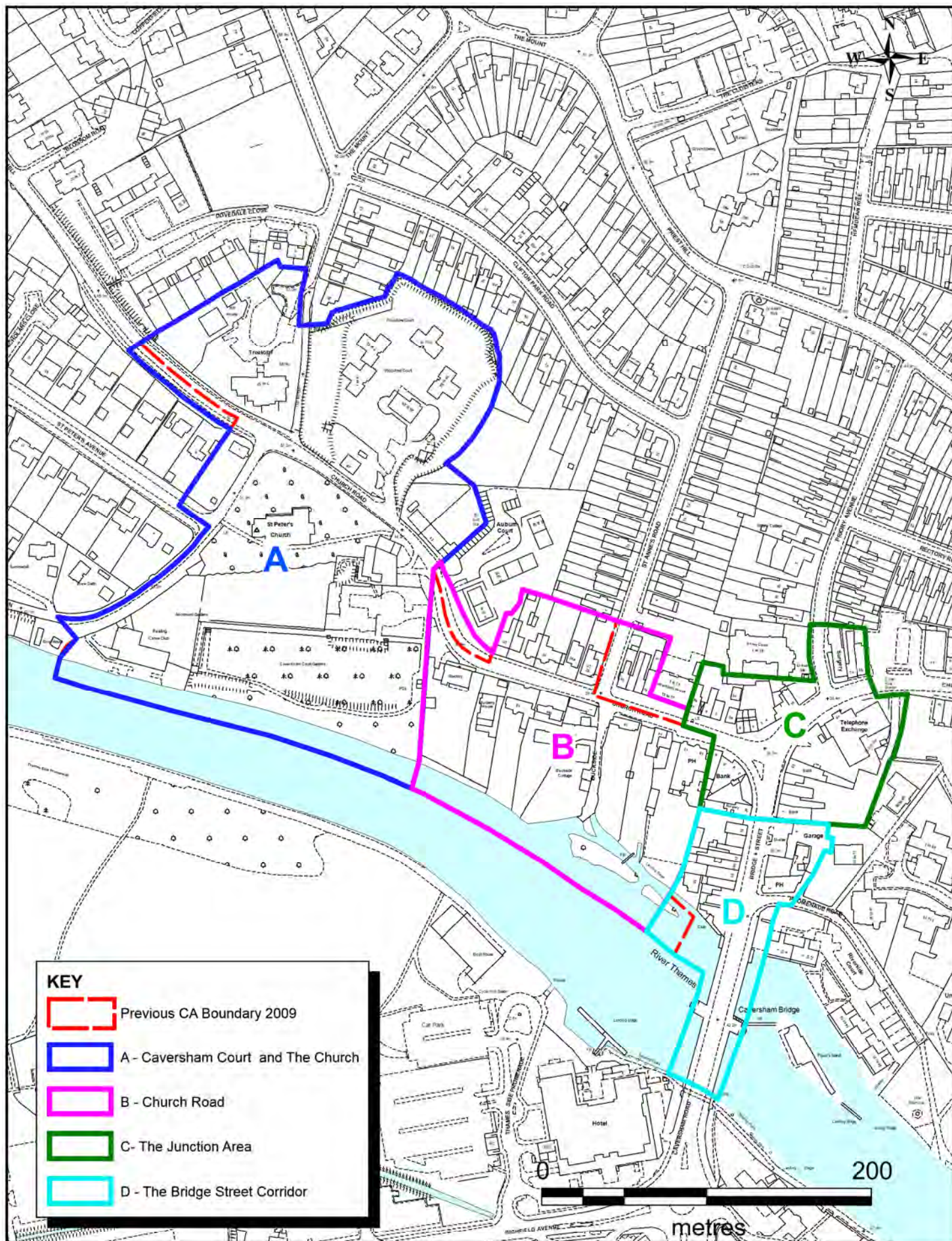
4.4 Views out of the area

Only the churchyard and Caversham Court Gardens have significant views out of the area, across and along the River Thames. The gazebo in the Gardens was built to take advantage of such views. Although the Thames-side Promenade is an attractive walk on the opposite side of the River, the buildings in this view are unattractive. The new swimming pool adjacent to Rivermead Leisure Centre is visible from Caversham Court Gardens, and it will be important that sufficient tree planting takes place to screen the building as much as possible. Immediately to the west of Caversham Court the Reading Canoe Club building blocks off views to and from that direction, and is detrimental to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Elsewhere, views out of the Conservation Area are very limited, apart from a few glimpses of the river from Buckside and Bucks Eyot, and the view south along Bridge Street, which is closed by the rising arch of the road as it crosses the bridge.



*View towards the Conservation Area from
Caversham Bridge*



Title: St Peters Conservation Area
Map 5 - Character Areas Designation

Produced by GIS & Mapping Services

Date: 15/06/2018

Scale at A4: 1:3000

Ref: MI\DCD\Envir\Plan & Tran\Conserv\St_Peters_Proposed_Conservation_Area_2018





Reading Tall Building Strategy

Appendix 1: Townscape and Visual Assessment

Entec

Creating the environment for business

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Townscape Assessment	5
2.1	Method	5
2.1.1	Desk study	5
2.1.2	Site Walkover	5
2.1.3	Character Areas	5
2.2	Character Areas	8
3.	Views and visual experience	35
3.1	Methodology	35
3.1.1	Assessment of existing visual envelope	35
3.1.2	Identification of key views	35
3.2	Key Views	36
3.2.1	Views within central Reading	36
3.2.2	Views into central Reading	53
4.	Conclusions	82
4.1	Townscape	82
4.2	Visual	82
4.3	Taking the assessment forward	82

FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Townscape Character Areas

Figure 2.2 Townscape Capacity for tall buildings

Figure 3.1 Mid range views into central Reading

Figure 3.2 Long range views into central Reading

1. INTRODUCTION



As proposed in the CABA document 'Guidance on Tall Buildings'¹ a townscape character assessment and a visual analysis of the Central Reading Area has been undertaken.

The purpose of the townscape assessment is to understand how the urban fabric has developed and how the central reading area differs in terms of architectural style, density of development, building height, building block size, architectural style and building materials. Differences in all of these factors result in varying townscape character and different capacities for the inclusion of tall buildings. It is essential to gain a clear understanding of the existing townscape character and how it is created to ensure that further development does not destroy any areas of valued townscape or areas with a strong, intact character.

A visual assessment has been undertaken in order to understand how the natural topography and built form combine to create the visual context of Reading. Views of certain townscape features are integral to the understanding of townscape character, and have a strong influence over the creation of a distinctive sense of place. It is essential that these views are identified in order that any future tall buildings do not block the view and result in a degraded townscape character. Conversely it is important to assess existing views and determine which locations may benefit from the inclusion of tall structures.

¹'Guidance on tall Buildings,' CABA and English Heritage, July 2007

2. TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT



2.1 Method

A study area of the Reading Central Area as defined in the Reading Central Area Action Plan was defined.

The assessment has been guided by:

- Guidelines for landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA);
- Landscape Character Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland, 2002; and
- Guidance for Tall Buildings (CABE).

The GLVIA in particular are widely regarded by the landscape profession as the 'industry standard'. In considering the quality and value of the local townscape, reference has also been made to common urban design assessment principles in order to provide a judgement on the current integrity and vitality of the urban fabric and spaces. The DETR and CABE publication "By Design" sets out a number of urban design objectives that can be used in analysing the performance of an area in terms of urban design.

2.1.1 Desk study

The following sources were consulted to gain information on the existing townscape and visual resource.

- Magic web site (www.magic.gov.uk) to gain information on landscape and townscape designations;
- Aerial Photography;
- Conservation Area Statements;
- 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey mapping of Reading.

2.1.2 Site Walkover

In addition to the desk based assessment, a site visit was

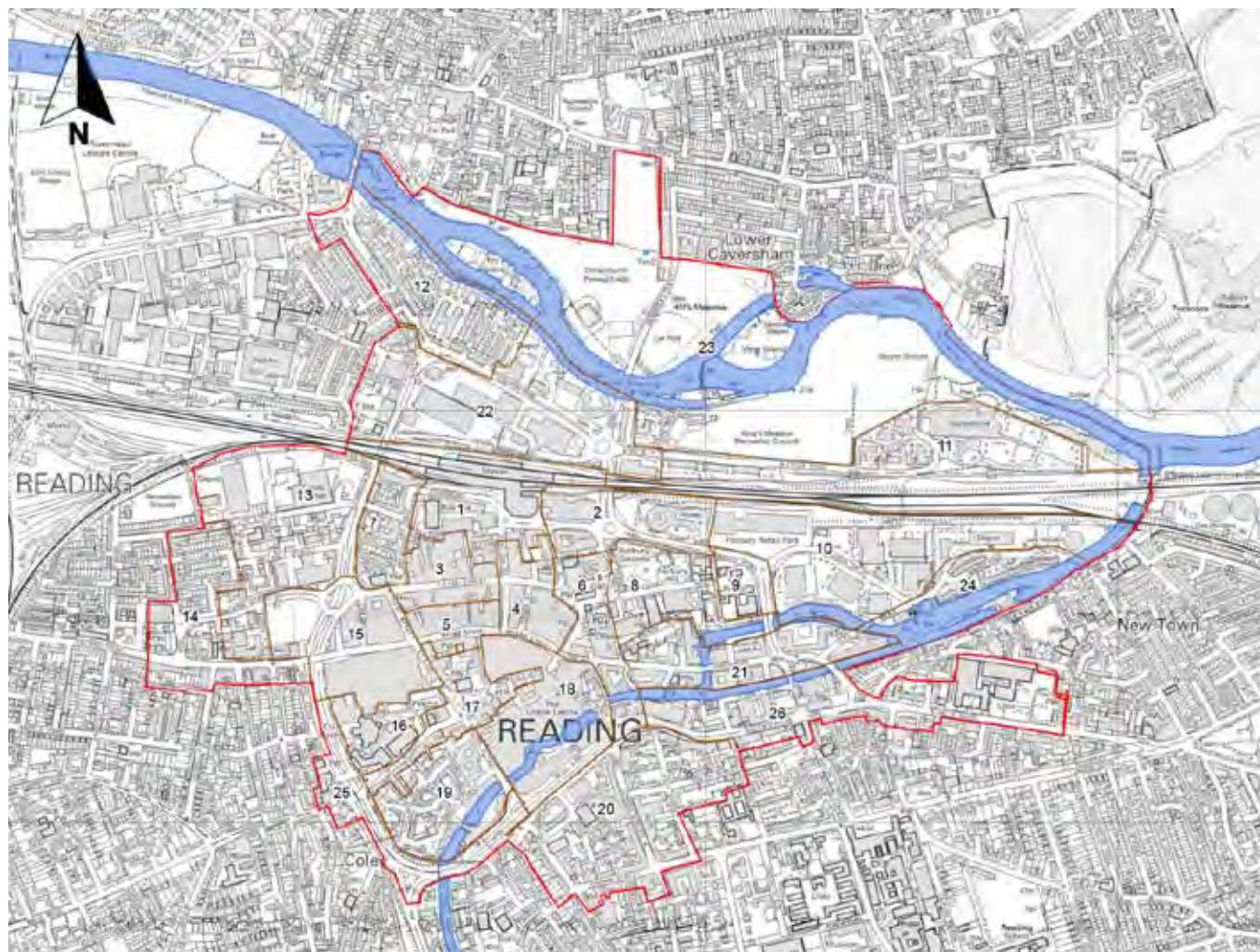
undertaken during August and September 2007. The Reading central area was visited with comprehensive notes and photographs being taken.

2.1.3 Character Areas

Following the desk and site based assessment twenty six character areas have been defined. The geographical extent of each character area is shown on Figure 2.1. The character areas have been defined due to similarities in the following criteria:

- Architectural style
- Urban grain and townscape scale
- Presence of townscape designations;
- Townscape condition; and
- Key views.

Descriptions of each of the townscape character area are given within this chapter. Each of the character areas has been attributed a sensitivity to the development of tall buildings. As stated in the main body of the 'Reading Tall Buildings Strategy' document, buildings over 10 storeys are considered tall. The sensitivity of the townscape resource and its respective components has been determined by reference to the baseline assessment of the existing townscape and is classified as high, medium or low. The manner in which these considerations are evaluated to derive a sensitivity category is set out in Table 2.1. The evaluation of criteria and thresholds is primarily based upon professional judgement or by reference to national and local designations.



1. Station Hill
2. Reading station east
3. Friar Street
4. Station Road
5. Broad Street
6. St. Lawrence and Market Place
7. Reading Station West
8. Forbury Gardens
9. Reading Prison
10. Forbury Retail Park
11. Napier Road
12. Caversham Road
13. Cattle Market and Chatham Place
14. Oxford Road and surroundings
15. Cheapside
16. The Civic Centre
17. St Mary's and Castle Street
18. The Oracle
19. Mallard Row to Fobney Street
20. London Street
21. Forbury South
22. Vastern Road
23. King's Meadow
24. Kennet Walk
25. IDR
26. King's Road

© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Reading Borough Council. Account No.100019672. 2007

Figure 2.1 Townscape Character Areas



Table 2.1 Townscape character sensitivity

Townscape features	Sensitivity
Designated townscapes (conservation areas) and non-designated townscapes in good condition and a high degree of uniformity with strong, positive character and/or valued features. A low rise skyline where any taller structures are historic structures and a focal point of the view. A fine grained, small scale townscape where large, tall block sizes would be uncharacteristic. A low rise skyline (either designated or non designated) where the inclusion of a tall or very tall building would be an overbearing and uncharacteristic addition to the skyline in terms of height and block size.	High
Non-designated townscapes with less defined character in reasonable condition with some valued features, but exhibiting signs of erosion or dilution of character as a result of some intrusive elements. A non designated area of townscape with a low rise, cohesive roofline which includes occasional taller structures which detract from the existing townscape character. An unexceptional townscape which forms the setting of a designated area of townscape. An area where sensitive re-design of certain parts of the townscape could complement the overall character.	Medium
Non-designated townscapes with poorly defined character in poor condition/repair which may have occasional valued features but also many detractive elements. There would be higher scope for landscape change in the form of development, mitigation and/or enhancement. An unexceptional townscape which does not form the setting of a designated area of townscape. An area where tall or very tall buildings are a key characteristic feature.	Low



Character Area 12: Caversham Road

Land Use	Residential
Historical significance	Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840
Architectural style	Two storey, red brick, terraced housing
Urban grain and townscape scale	The low rise, terraced housing creates a small scale townscape.
Townscape condition	The buildings are in good condition. The consistent architectural style create a strong townscape character.
Key views within the character area	View from Caversham Bridge westwards
Key views into the character area	From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.
Landmark structures and existing tall buildings	There re no landmarks structures within the character area.
Tall buildings planning applications	-
Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings	High: There is a low capacity for the development of buildings of this scale due to the low rise, small scale residential character which predominates. Taller buildings would dilute the townscape pattern and would be uncharacteristic. The area is also inappropriate in terms of market demand and transport connections.



Character Area 23: King's Meadow

Land Use	Sports ground and river meadows
Historical significance	-
Architectural style	N/A
Urban grain and townscape scale	The large expanse of open meadows creates a large townscape scale.
Townscape condition	The meadows are a well maintained recreational resource and contribute positively to the townscape character.
Key views within the character area	The open views across the meadows to the wooded skyline created by bankside vegetation, has been identified as a key view.
Key views into the character area	From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.
Landmark structures and existing tall buildings	-
Tall buildings planning applications	-
Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings	High: The majority of the site is protected open space and therefore inappropriate as a location for tall buildings.



3. VIEWS AND VISUAL EXPERIENCE

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Assessment of existing visual envelope

A desk study of topography, built form and woodland blocks was undertaken to define a preliminary visual envelope and study area. Field studies were then undertaken to verify the visual envelope. The field study involved an assessment on foot of the central Reading area, and assessment by car of the wider Reading borough.

3.1.2 Identification of key views

In addition to identifying the visual envelope, key views were identified. Key views include the following:

- Views within central Reading of designated townscapes or townscape features which are integral to the creation of character;
- Views within central Reading which, by virtue of the townscape pattern and topography are of a pleasing composition e.g. well framed, panoramic or are focused by a large scale, distinctive feature;
- Views of central Reading from the wider Reading Borough, which are tunnelled along roads or river valleys;
- Panoramic views of Central Reading from the wider Reading Borough;
- Attractive, rural views where the absence of large scale built form is a characteristic feature.

The key views have been described and assessed under two headings. These are 'views within the city centre' and 'views into central Reading'. In the case of the short range views within central

Reading a description is given of the composition of the view which covers the main components and the characteristics of the foreground, middle ground and background. Descriptions of the view are given below in Section 3.2.

Each of the key views has been attributed a sensitivity judgement. This is a judgement of the sensitivity of the view to the addition of a tall building. The criteria for making the sensitivity judgement are given below in Table 3.1.

In identifying the sensitivity of each view, and highlighting the key characteristics of each view, information is provided as to whether an additional tall building would be an appropriate addition. There is a general presumption that all views judged to have a high sensitivity would not be suited to the addition of a tall building. The location of each high sensitivity view has been taken into consideration when defining the 'preferred tall building locations' (see main text). However, a decision regarding the appropriateness of each tall building proposal should be made on a case by case basis. Information given below on the key components of each view, and the character of the view should be used when making decision as to whether the tall building in question would have an adverse impact.



Table 3.1: Visual sensitivity

Visual Characteristics	Sensitivity judgement
Rural view with no/little built form Townscape with a strong and intact historic character	High
Suburban style view with no tall buildings Urban view which is not to or from a designated townscape but is a well composed view of a good quality townscape Tall buildings could be introduced assuming they respect and respond to the existing surroundings A view which includes townscape designations as a background feature and poor quality features in the foreground detract from the view.	Medium
View of townscape features which are of a poor quality and have a weak character. A view which could be enhanced by the addition of a tall buildings to add focus and definition.	Low

3.2 Key Views

3.2.1 Views within central Reading

The location of each of the key views identified within central Reading and the view experienced are detailed below.

3.2.2 Views into central Reading



Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright. Entec UK Ltd. AL100001776.

Figure 3.1: Mid range views into central Reading

 Viewpoint location



Viewpoint 6: From Caversham Bridge

The banks of the River Thames as viewed from Caversham Bridge are developed, largely with low rise residential and leisure usage. Exceptions include Thames Tower and Western Tower which are visible in the background of the view. None of the buildings visible in this view are of a high quality; the combination of late 20th century architectural styles creates an uninteresting and indifferent character. The view has a medium/low sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings on the skyline. Although the skyline is currently dominated by low rise development, the inclusion of a tall building would add focus to the view and provide an opportunity to add character and focus.



Viewpoint 7: From the Thames Path west of Reading

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.



Viewpoint 28: View towards Reading and Caversham Bridge from Caversham Gardens

Open views to the southern banks of the Kennet are facilitated by the flat, open river course. Individual trees set within the river meadow land use, on the southern banks of the Kennet combine to create a wooded skyline which is infrequently punctuated by built form. Built form includes the Rivermead Leisure Centre and Caversham Bridge. The wooded skyline and river meadow land use creates a tranquil, undisturbed character. The view has a high sensitivity to change.