

## READING METROPOLITAN, READING, BERKSHIRE

### HERITAGE RESPONSE

This note has been prepared to address the comments received from Historic England (HE; ref. P0163223, dated 5 June 2019), in response to a letter by RPS (dated 15 May 2019). It appears that despite the clarification of the methodology used in generating Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), townscape assessment and selection of representative viewpoints by RPS, HE continue to have concerns with regard to potential impacts upon the following designated heritage assets:

- Greyfriars Church;
- St Marys Church and the St Mary's Butts/ Castle Street Conservation Area;
- St Peters Conservation Area

The aim of this note is to respond to these questions and provide more detailed consideration of these designated heritage assets, taking into account additional information and commentary provided with regard to the selected viewpoints and ground model generated for selected viewpoints. It should be read in conjunction with RPS response (dated 13 June 2019) and the provided amended views (attached). Information previously submitted with the application, including the Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) (Cotswold Archaeology, December 2018), Heritage Rebuttal (Cotswold Archaeology, 5 June 2019), the response from RPS (dated 15 May 2019) and Chapter 6: Townscape and Visual Resources (TVRA) of the ES will not be repeated, but supplemented by this note.

It should be noted, as explained in the RPS response (dated 13 June 2019) that the townscape and visual assessment considered the consented Station Hill as part of the baseline and the effects of the proposed development were considered within this context.

#### Grade I Listed Greyfriars Church

With regard to the Grade I Listed Greyfriars Church (List Entry ref. 1321952), HE commented that viewpoint 8 (Figure 29 of Appendix 6.2 of the Environmental Statement), does not provide an accurate representation of the built development in the surroundings of the church and advised that a view from the top of the West Street would be more appropriate.

This additional view was excluded at the initial stage as the church is situated within Townscape Character Area 7, for which the ZTV indicated the proposed development would

not be visible. This assessment was taken into account during a scoping exercise considering whether designated heritage assets are likely to be affected and, as such, require more detailed assessment. It has been concluded that due to the intervening development, there would be no change to the setting of this asset and hence no harm to its heritage significance.

In response to HE comments, ground model view were prepared from the top end of West Street, incorporating the Grade I Listed Building as well as modern development along Friar Street, in close proximity to the asset. The generated model indicates that the proposed development would be largely invisible in these views, with only glimpses afforded without the Station Hill scheme. Taking into account the consented Station Hill development, which will result in complete screening of any development to the north-east of the church, it can be clearly demonstrated that the Reading Metropolitan development would not change the setting of this Listed Building, and its significance would not be harmed (no impact).

#### **Grade I Listed Church of St Mary and St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area**

Further comments from HE were provided in relation to potential effects upon the Grade I Listed Church of St Mary (List Entry ref. 1113573) and St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area within which this designated heritage asset is located. HE explained that they previously identified harm to views from the Conservation Area in comments upon the consented Station Hill scheme (ref 13/00462/OUT). Whilst HE admits Reading Metropolitan would sit further north than then consented scheme, they questioned the cumulative impacts of these two developments and seek additional views from the Conservation Area showing proposed and consented developments.

This additional view was excluded at the initial stage, because, as explained by RPS in their response, the ZTV indicated the proposed development would not be visible from this part of town including this Conservation Area. As such this was excluded from further consideration as part of the townscape and heritage settings assessment.

However, in response to HE comments, a ground model view was prepared from St Mary's Street/Castle Street junction, looking north towards Reading town centre. The generated model excludes (for clarity) the Listed Church as well as further built form south of Friar Street and as such any actual views from this point would incorporate the church, buildings and vegetation in the foreground to what is shown. Theoretically, the proposed development could be visible in the far distance (and in the context of modern development, including the extant Thames Tower), however, it would clearly sit beyond the consented Station Hill scheme. As

such the views from the Conservation Area, and the setting of the Grade I Listed church, would not be changed by the Reading Metropolitan scheme, with the significance of the assets unaffected by the proposals.

### St Peters Caversham Conservation Area

HE have further concerns with regard to potential impacts upon St Peters Conservation Area, including Grade II\* Listed Church of St Peter (List Entry ref. 1303560), indicating that the provided views (View 4 and 14) may suggest further visibility of the proposed development from within the Conservation Area, especially in easterly views along Church Road.

The proposed development will be partially perceptible in views from the churchyard, although this would be confined to the winter months and in such views, the development would be glimpsed as part of the wider townscape of existing and consented development. Such change within the views would not affect the appreciation of the Conservation Area. Whilst there will be views of the proposed development from Caversham Bridge, the Conservation Area Appraisal indicates that important views from the bridge are towards the north-west (i.e. towards the Church and Gardens), but not towards the south-east. Any change in these views would be perceived in the context of existing and permitted modern urban development and would not affect the important views of or from the Conservation Area in any way.

As part of the townscape assessment, further viewpoint from Caversham Court Gardens was investigated, but the more elevated views from the churchyard of St Peter's (view 14) were considered more representative. Views along Church Road were not considered in detail, and additional ground model not provided, as the street sits significantly below the elevated position of the churchyard (located at approximately 50m AOD, with ground falling to c. 40m AOD at Church Road opposite the gate to Caversham Gardens). Whilst the ZTV indicates parts of the taller buildings of the proposed development may be visible from the entrance to Caversham Court Gardens and other parts of Church Road, any such views would be partly screened by intervening buildings and vegetation. Views from within the Conservation Area towards the proposed development would be greatest from the churchyard, due to its elevated position. However, as demonstrated, such views would be still limited and glimpsed, when seen in relation to vegetation and other development. As such, due to the distance, enclosed character of the street and intervening built form and vegetation, views of the proposed development would be limited, and any glimpsed views would not be dominant, overly distracting nor would they affect the appreciation of character of Caversham in any way.

### **Conclusions**

It has been ascertained through ZTV and the ground models that the proposed development would not change the setting of Grade I Listed Greyfriars Church, the Church of St Mary and St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area due to screening afforded by existing and consented development. As such, there would be no harm to the significance of these heritage assets. Whilst views of the proposed development would be afforded from limited locations within St Peters Conservation Area in Caversham, these would be restricted and, again, would not affect the appreciation of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**Cotswold Archaeology**

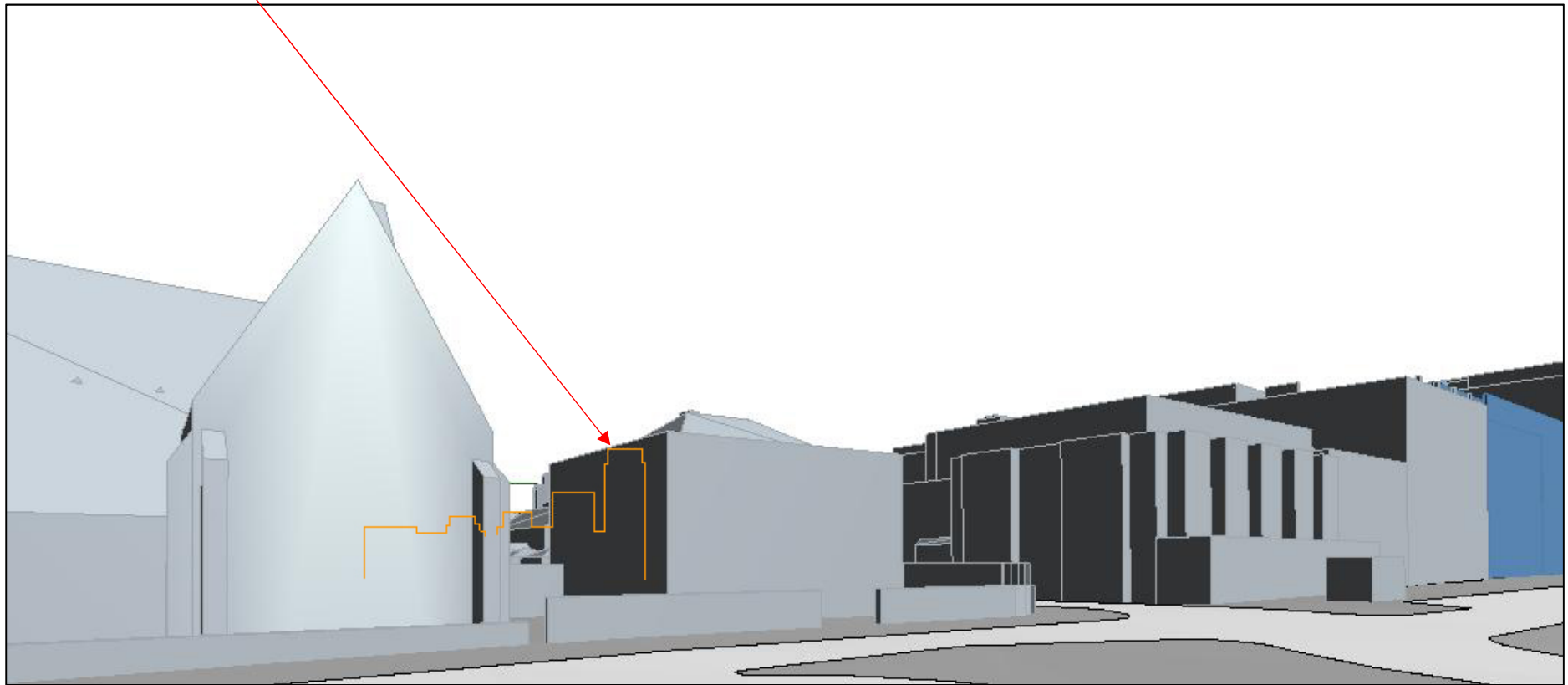
**14 June 2019**

1.0 Top end of West Street – Approximate, elevated Google Maps View



**1.1 Top end of West Street** – Approximate view from tpb/Point 2 model (excluding consented Station Hill) – trees etc. missing from view.

**Reading Metropolitan**

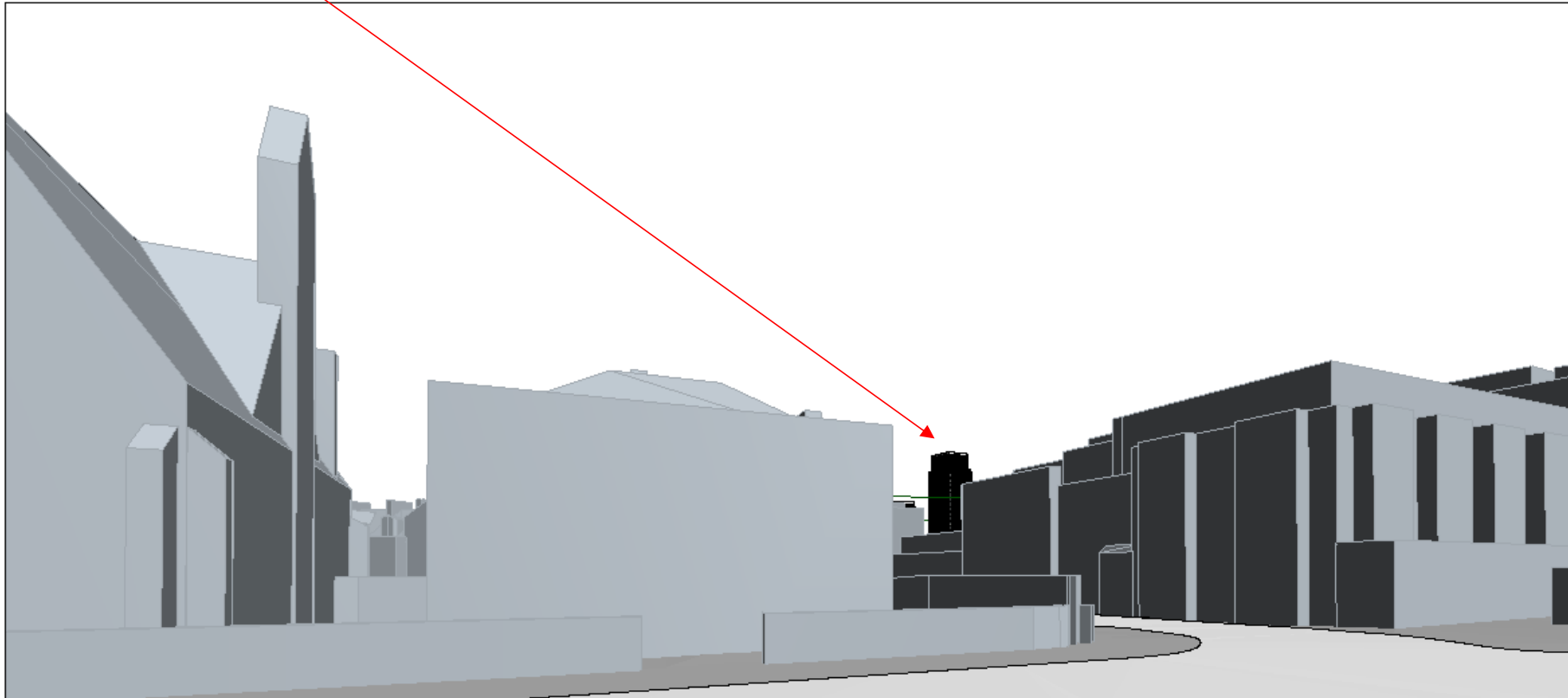


**1.2 Top end of West Street** – Approximate view from tpb/Point 2 model (including consented Station Hill) – trees etc. missing from view.

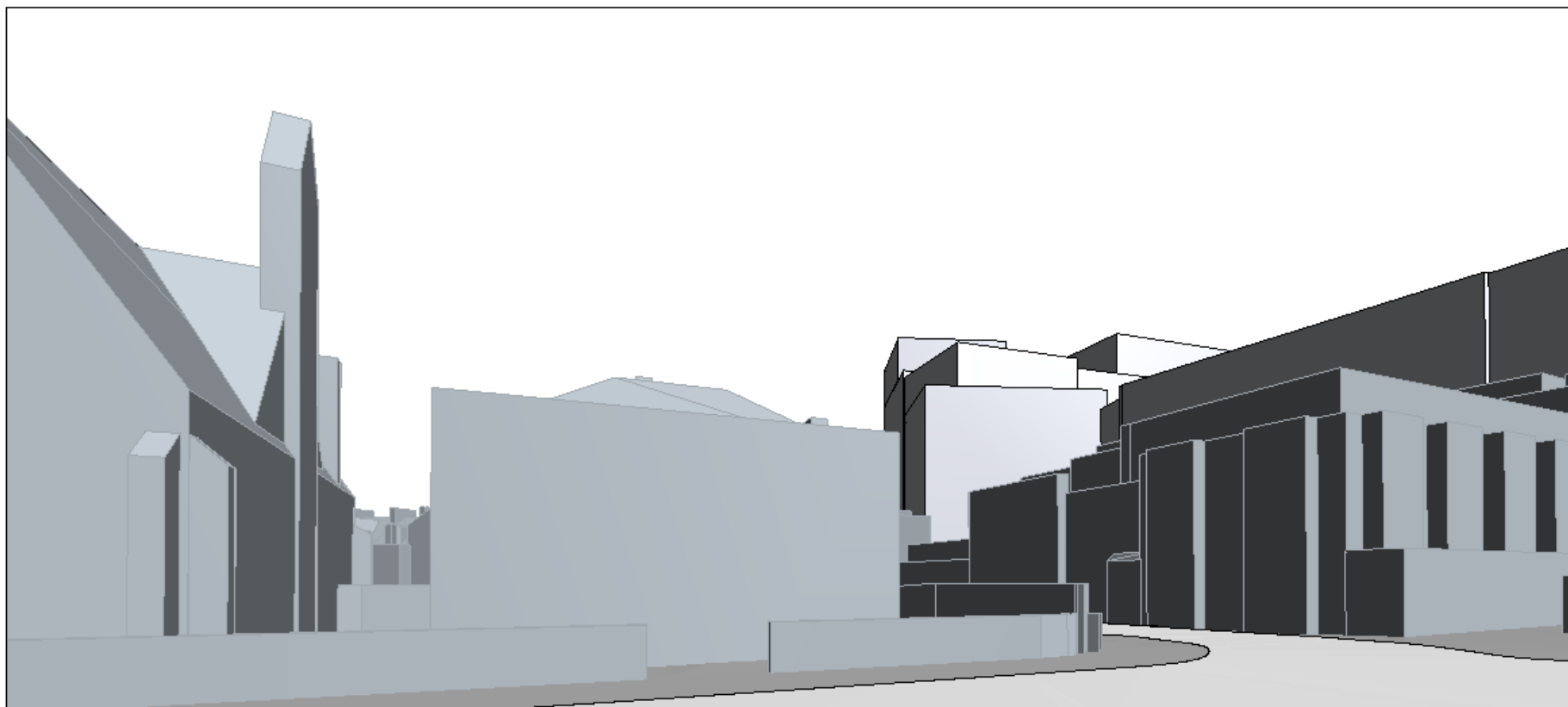


**1.3 Top end of West Street** – Approximate view from tpb/Point 2 model (excluding consented Station Hill) – trees etc. missing from view.

**Reading Metropolitan**



**1.4 Top end of West Street – Approximate view from tpb/Point 2 model (including consented Station Hill).**



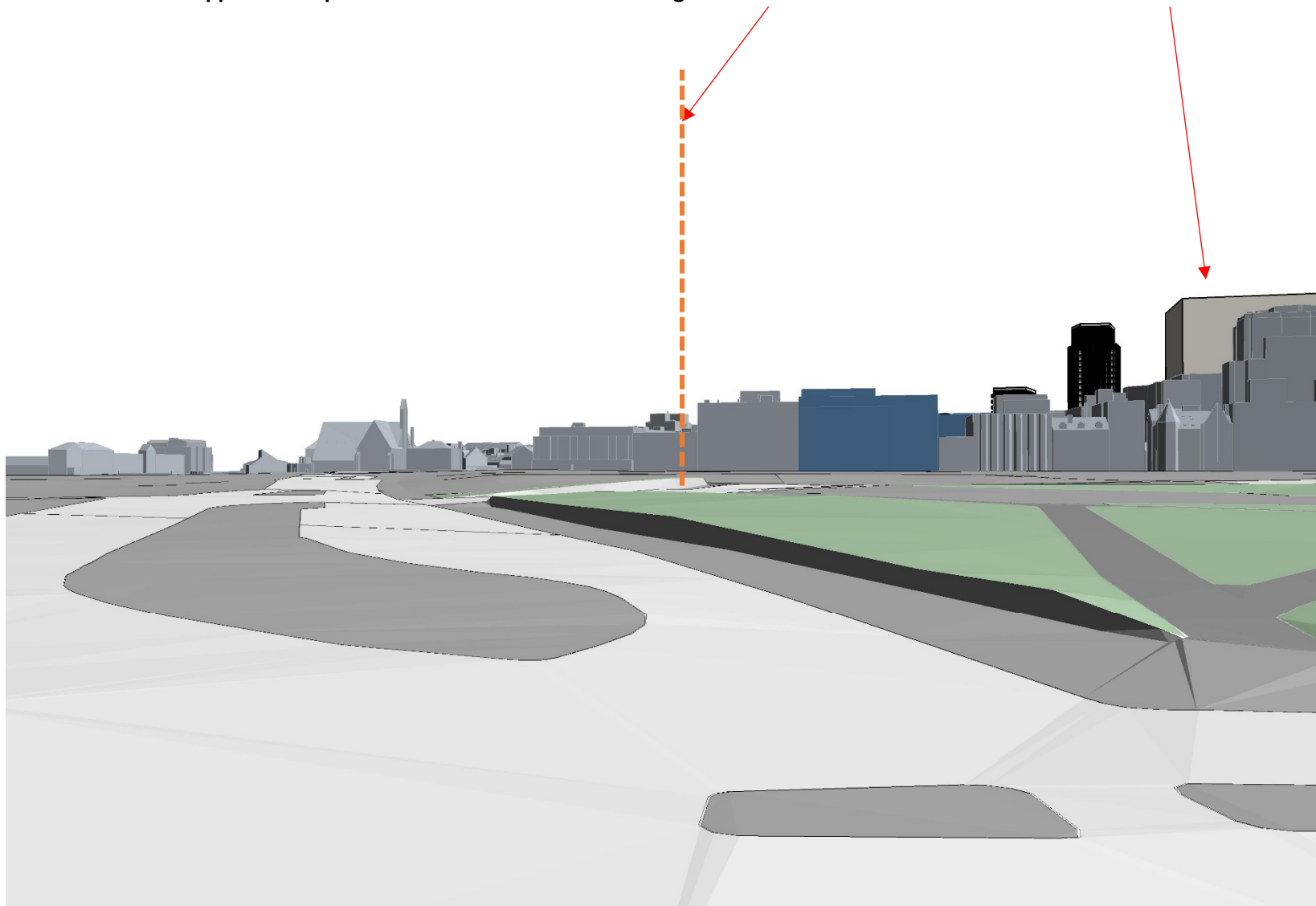
**2.0 St Mary's Butts** – View included with previous application.



**2.1 St Mary's Butts** – Approximate view from tpb/Point 2 model (excluding consented Station Hill). Note: this model does not include Reading Minster and all buildings south of Friar Street, which means that the majority of the town centre buildings are missing from this view.

The line shows the approximate position of the west front of Reading Minster

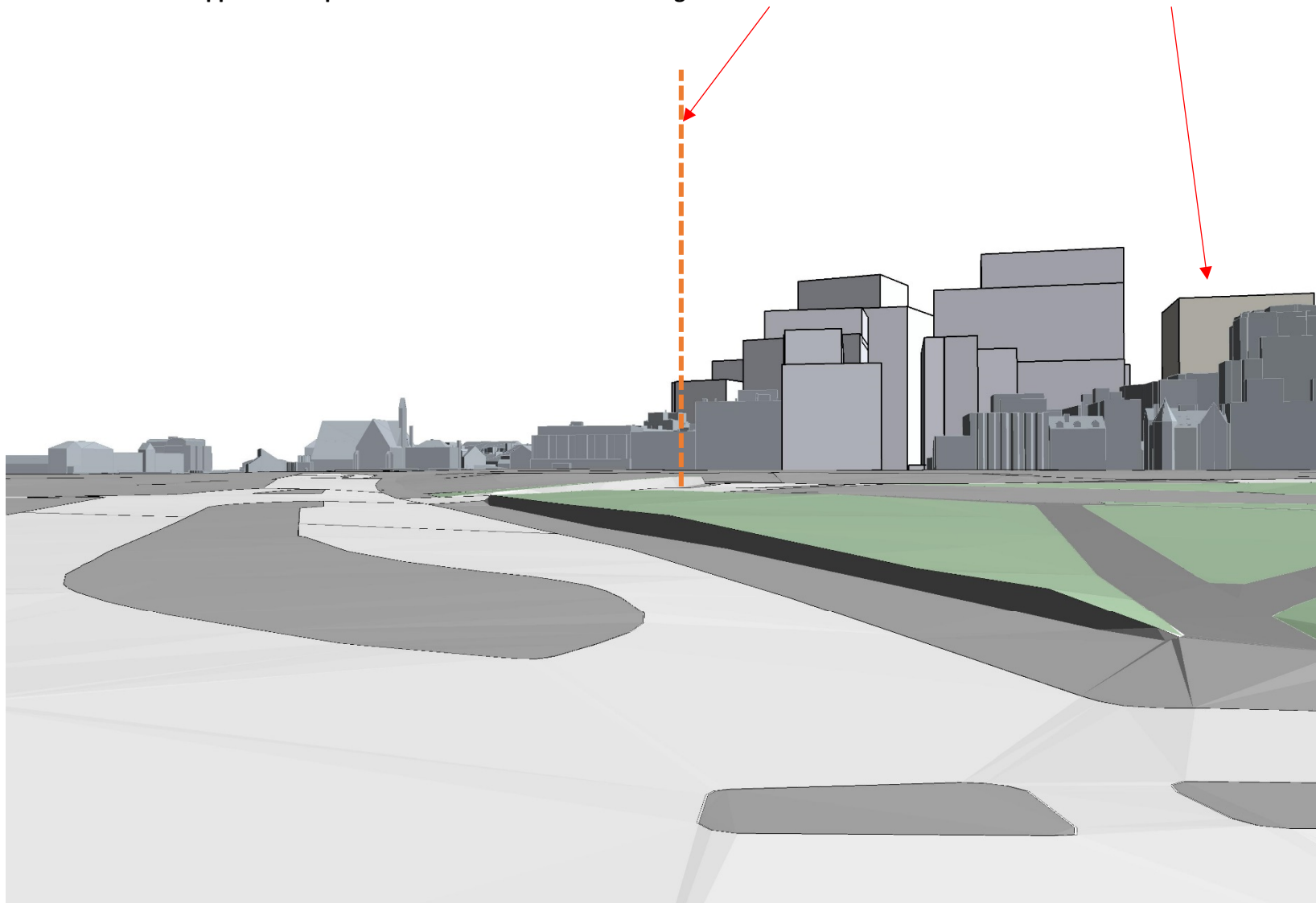
Thames Tower



**2.2 St Mary's Butts** – Approximate view from tpb/Point 2 model (including consented Station Hill). Note: this model does not include Reading Minster and all buildings south of Friar Street, which means that the majority of the town centre buildings are missing from this view.

The line shows the approximate position of the west front of Reading Minster

Thames Tower



**3.0 Entrance to Caversham Court Gardens – Approximate, elevated Google Maps view.**

