

5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT

The following assessment provides an accurate visual representation of the proposed building. The assessment includes a combination of verified massing wire-lines and renders produced by Preconstruct and unverified illustrative detailed renders produced by EAA - Emre Arolat Architecture.

The position of the local views included within this assessment which are identified on the map to the right, were discussed with the officers prior to submission of the planning application.

The location of the views have been chosen to provide an accurate representation of what the building will look like from key positions within the local area. A total of 9 view points have been selected two of which are shown fully rendered due to their townscape importance, a view north towards the site in front of the Polish church on Watlington Street and a view south at Kennet Side.

This views assessment forms part of a Heritage, Transport and Visual Impact assessment prepared by Montague Evans; refer to the Volume III Appendices for this document.

VIEW LOCATION PLAN

Application Site

1.

Queen's Road

2.

Forbury Road at King's Road

3.

St John's Road

4.

Watlington Street (1)

5.

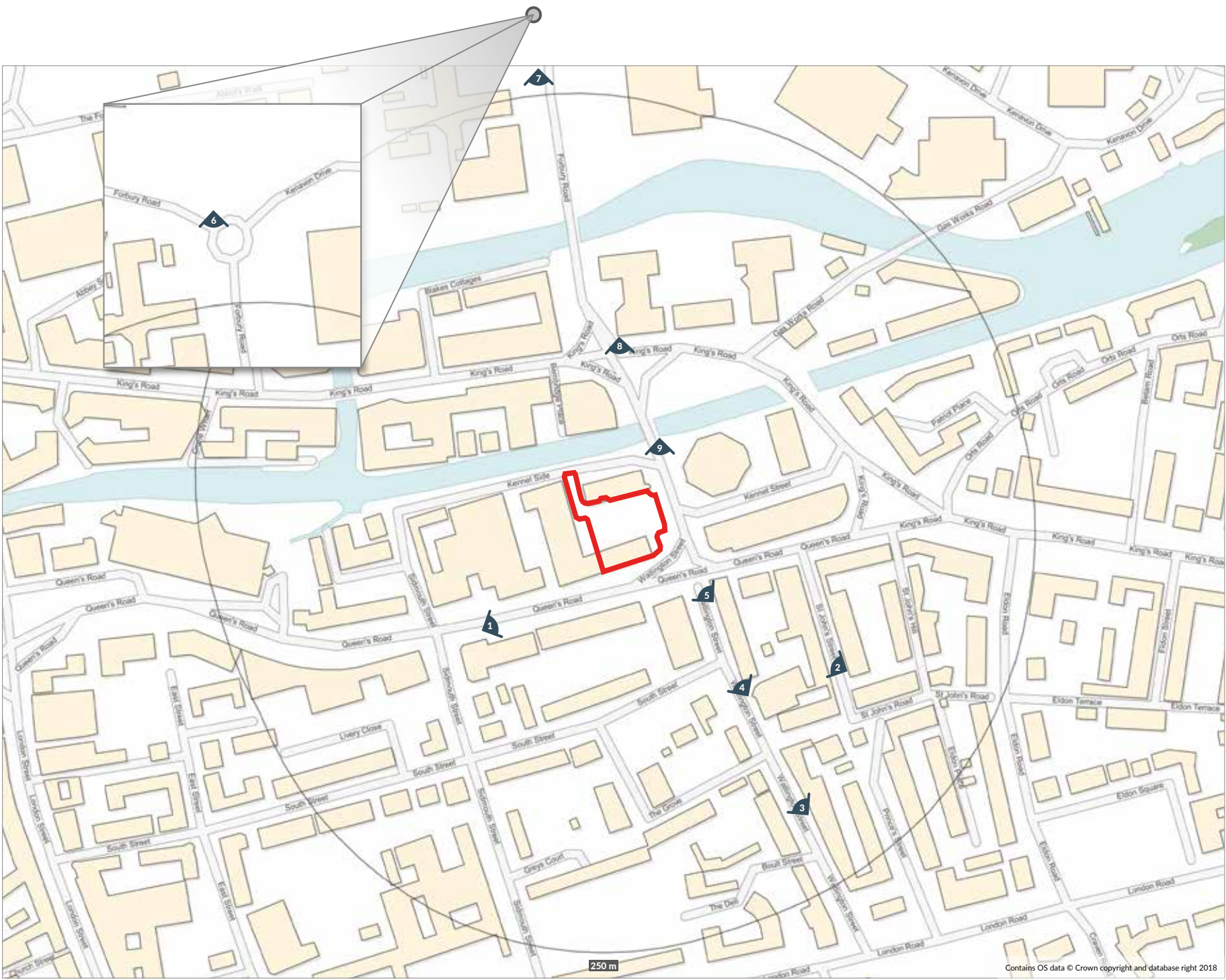
Watlington Street (2)

6.

Watlington Street (3)

7.

Watlington Street (4)



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: OUTLINE VIEW LOOKING EAST ON QUEENS ROAD



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: WIRE-LINE VIEW LOOKING SOUTH AT THE JUNCTION OF KINGS ROAD, FORBURY ROAD AND WATLINGTON STREET



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: OUTLINE VIEW LOOKING NORTH WEST AT ST. JOHNS STREET



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: WIRE-LINE VIEW LOOKING NORTH AT WATLINGTON STREET (LONG VIEW)



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: RENDERED VIEW LOOKING NORTH AT WATLINGTON STREET (SHORT VIEW)



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: WIRE-LINE VIEW LOOKING NORTH TOWARDS WATLINGTON STREET



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: RENDERED VIEW LOOKING WEST AT KENNET SIDE



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: WIRE-LINE VIEW LOOKING SOUTH AT FORBURY ROAD (MID WAY)



5.0 DESIGN PROPOSALS

5.10 VIEWS ASSESSMENT: WIRE-LINE VIEW LOOKING SOUTH AT FORBURY ROAD (ROUND-A-BOUT)



6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.1 LANDSCAPE DESIGN STATEMENT

Clarendon House sits at the south-east corner of Readings ring road and is a transition point between residential properties to the south and commercial and high rise residential towers to the north. The site is currently open to the busy junction of Watlington Street and Queens Road, exposing views of the car park and Grantley heights to passing traffic. The idea of closing the block and presenting a well-designed façade to the busy road, thus creating a quiet inner courtyard, is one that would improve both the quality of the street-scape and the amenity of the residential setting.

Central Reading currently suffers from a lack of green space and one of the key objectives is the creation of green pockets or corridors that enhance the amenity value. The proposed landscape for Reading Heights seeks to provide a green edge to the site through vertical planting elements and the potential enhancement of landscape at the south-east corner which lies outside the site boundary. It also proposes the creation of an inner courtyard garden that links the building entrance to Kennet Side and exploit the established pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre along the River Kennet.

Areas within the courtyard will further reduce the amount of surface water runoff from the site.

In addition to the landscape provided at ground level, green and brown roof areas at roof level will be provided in order to provide increased biodiversity and rainwater retention. Overall the scheme results in an increase of green spaces and a reduction in hard standing and the creation of rainwater attenuation areas within the courtyard will further reduce the amount of surface water runoff from the site.

The courtyard gardens seek to create an oasis of green that still accommodates the requirements of vehicle movement, refuse collections and cycle parking that is required for the development.

6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.2.1 SITE CONTEXT

WIDER CONTEXT AND CIRCULATION

The site, located at the junction of Watlington Street and Queens Road, is well connected to the town centre by car and by pedestrian and cycle routes. Whilst the majority of vehicles pass around the site in an anti-clockwise direction, the most prominent view of the development will be from cars travelling west along Queens Road. There are few green spaces in the inner town area and the only significant green space is the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins to the north. There are also numerous small pockets of green along the River Kennet that help to create a pleasant journey for pedestrians to the town centre.

Legend:

Cycle Route



Vehicular Circulation

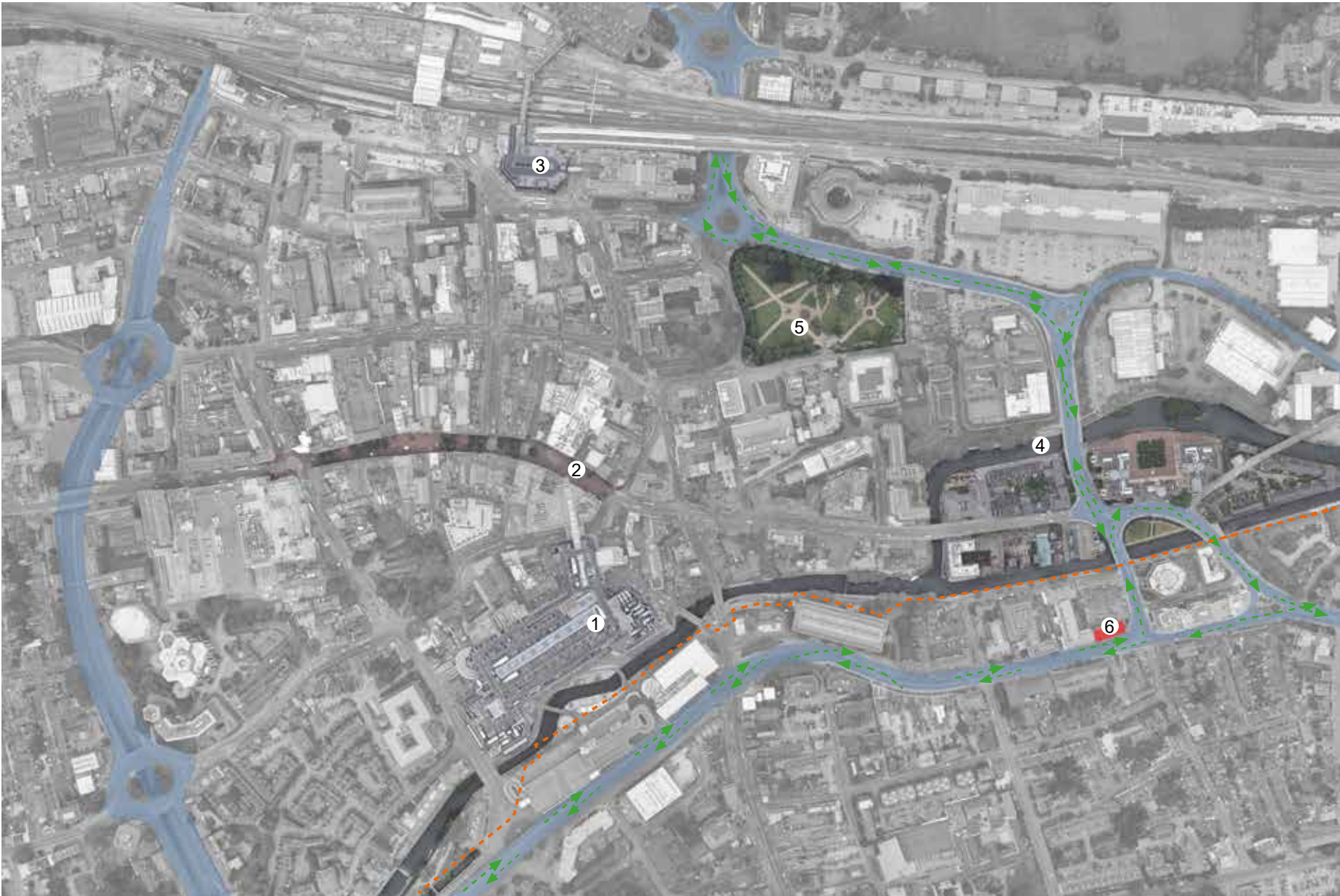


Ring Road



KEY TO SECTIONS

- 1. The Oracle
- 2. Broad Street
- 3. Reading Station
- 4. River Kennet
- 5. The Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins
- 6. Clarendon House



Public Transport Routes Map

6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.2.2 SITE CONTEXT

LOCAL CONTEXT

The site sits between the character of the Eldon Square Conservation area to the south and the character of the River Kennet corridor to the north. Local context views have therefore focussed on the views from and of these two areas. The narrow streets and brick homes along Watlington Street south are contrasted by the tall buildings and open spaces along the River Kennet corridor.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9

KEY TO SECTIONS

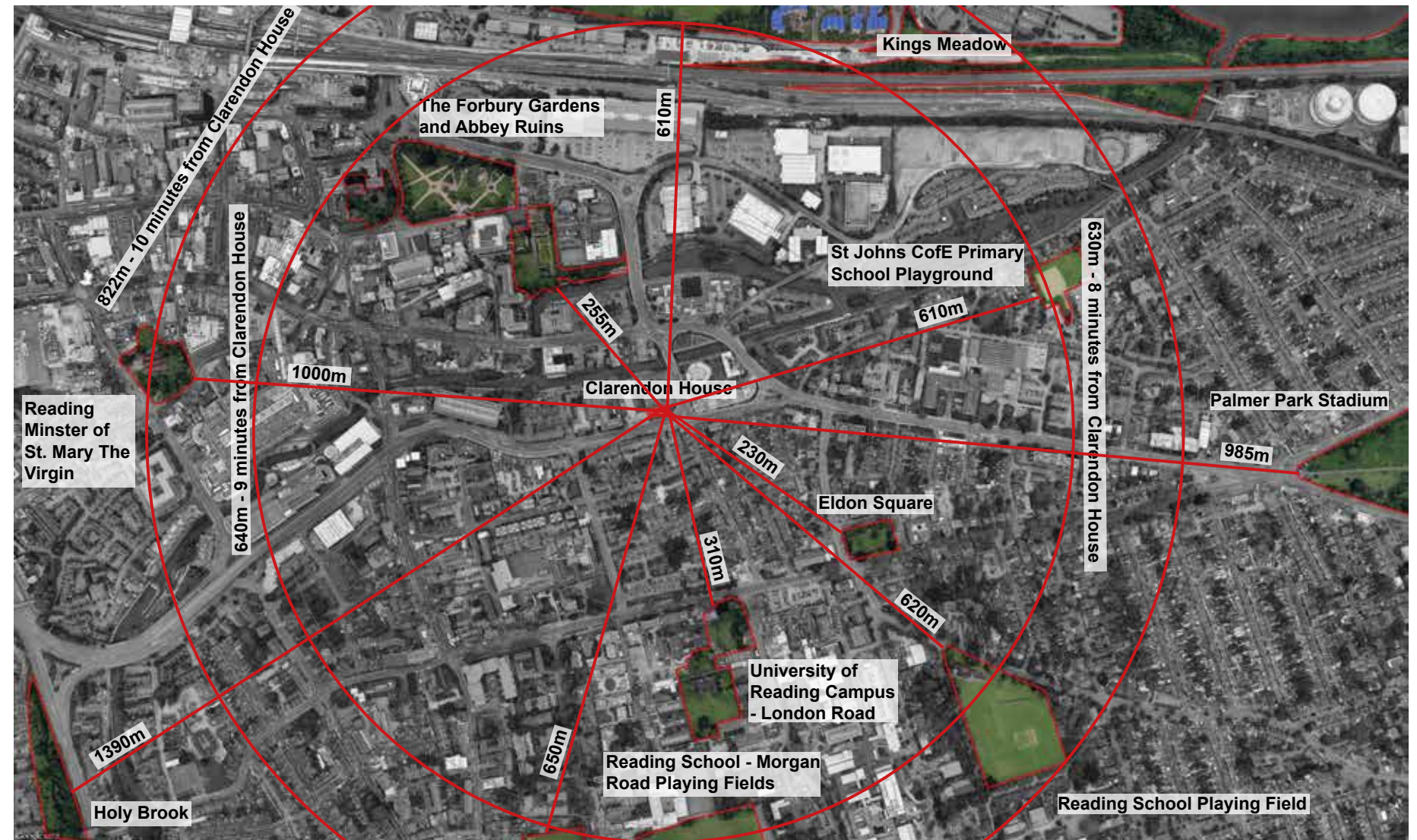
- 10. Prudential Reading
- 11. HM Revenue & Customs, Sapphire Plaza
- 12. Clarendon House
- 13. Wesley Church
- 14. Polish Roman Catholic Church

6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.2.3 SITE CONTEXT

GREEN SPACES

There are few green spaces in Reading town centre. The largest public open space is the Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins to the south east of the railway station. The nearest public open space is Eldon Square which is 230m to the south-east of Clarendon House. The nearest playing fields to the site are around 650m to the south of the site around the University of Reading London Road Campus, including those on Morgan Road, Kendrick Road and Erleigh Road. The nearest equipped play space is 1km away at Palmer Park. Due to the lack of green space in reading our design sacrifices car parking spaces in order to create a greater amenity value for residents and an improved green frontage to the development.



6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.2.4 SITE CONTEXT

CYCLE ROUTES

The site is well situated for cycle access, located on the junction of three main cycle corridors through Reading. The Town Centre Route provides car free access along the River Kennet to the Oracle Shopping Centre with routes continuing on to Reading Station via Broad Street. The South-East Reading and Wokingham route provide connection from the site to the south via Watlington Street and the East Reading and Woodley route provides links via Kings Road to the east. With the site being well situated for links to the town centre and railway stations, we have provided generous numbers of cycle parking on site including 50 covered spaces.

Legend:

-  East Reading & Woodley Traffic Free Cycle Route
-  On Road Cycle Route South-East Reading & Wokingham
-  Traffic Free Cycle Route
-  On Road Cycle Route Linking Route
-  Traffic Free Cycle Route
-  On Road Cycle Route Town Centre Route
-  Traffic Free Cycle Route
-  On Road Cycle Route
-  Site

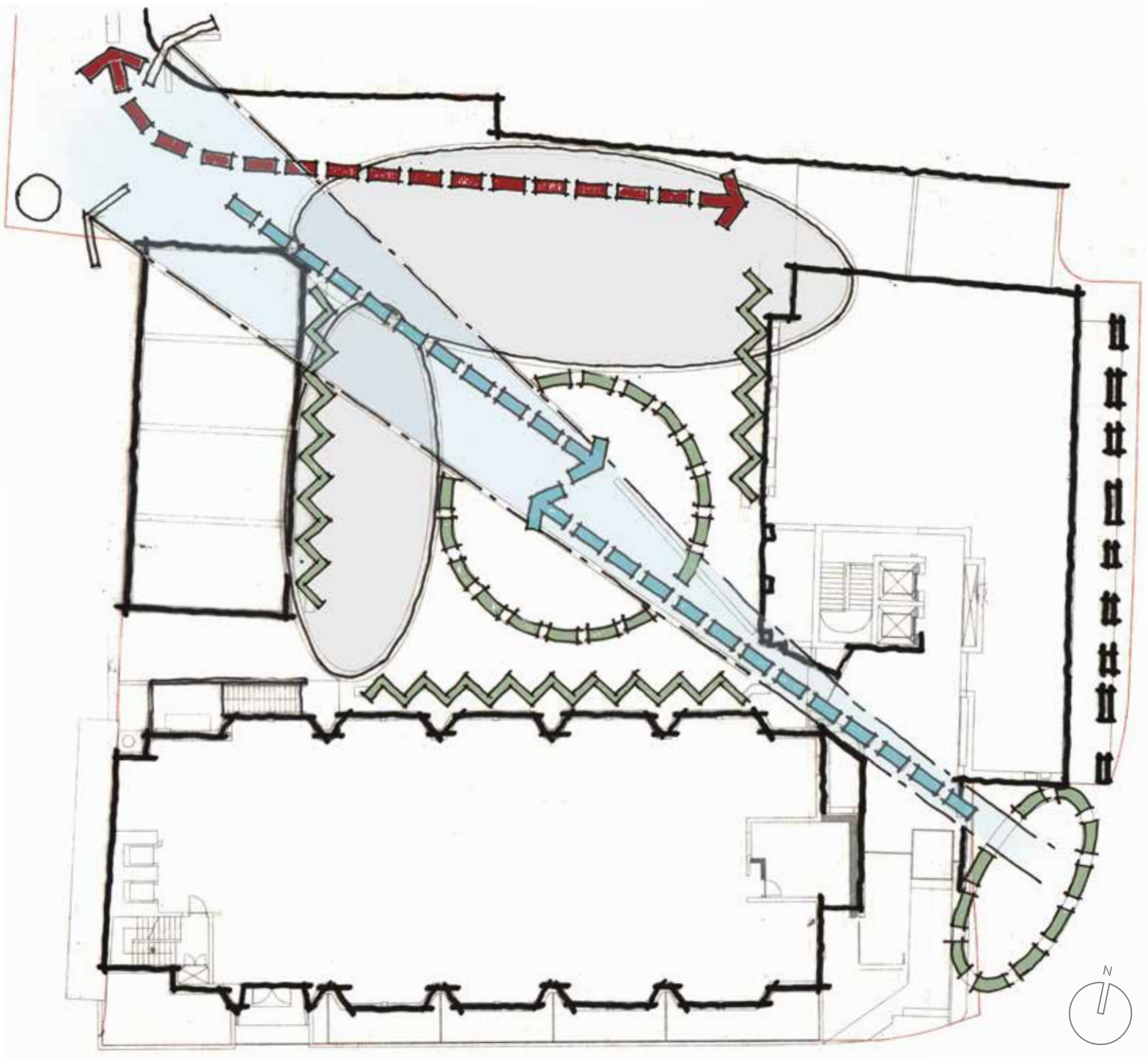
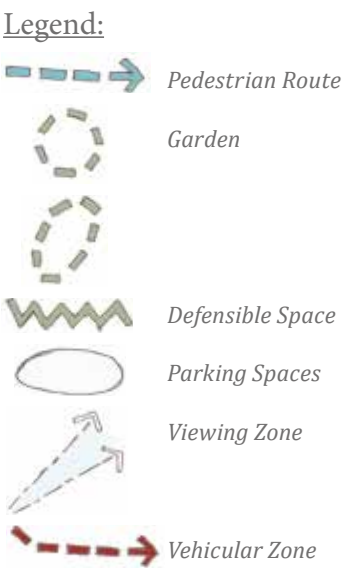


6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.3.1 LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

SPATIAL ARRANGEMENT

The central courtyard needs to accommodate parking, cycle storage, refuse collection, deliveries and defensible space for residents at ground floor. With so many competing uses the landscape could quite easily become an incoherent ensemble of and mix of materials and treatments. Our concept seeks to create a single coherent space in the centre that acts as an outdoor room, providing a harbour from competing uses at the courtyard's periphery. The dynamic of the space is based on a desire line from the building entrance and courtyard to Kennet Side and pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre. The concept also aims to provide a green face to the scheme on the Queens Road and Watlington Street frontages.

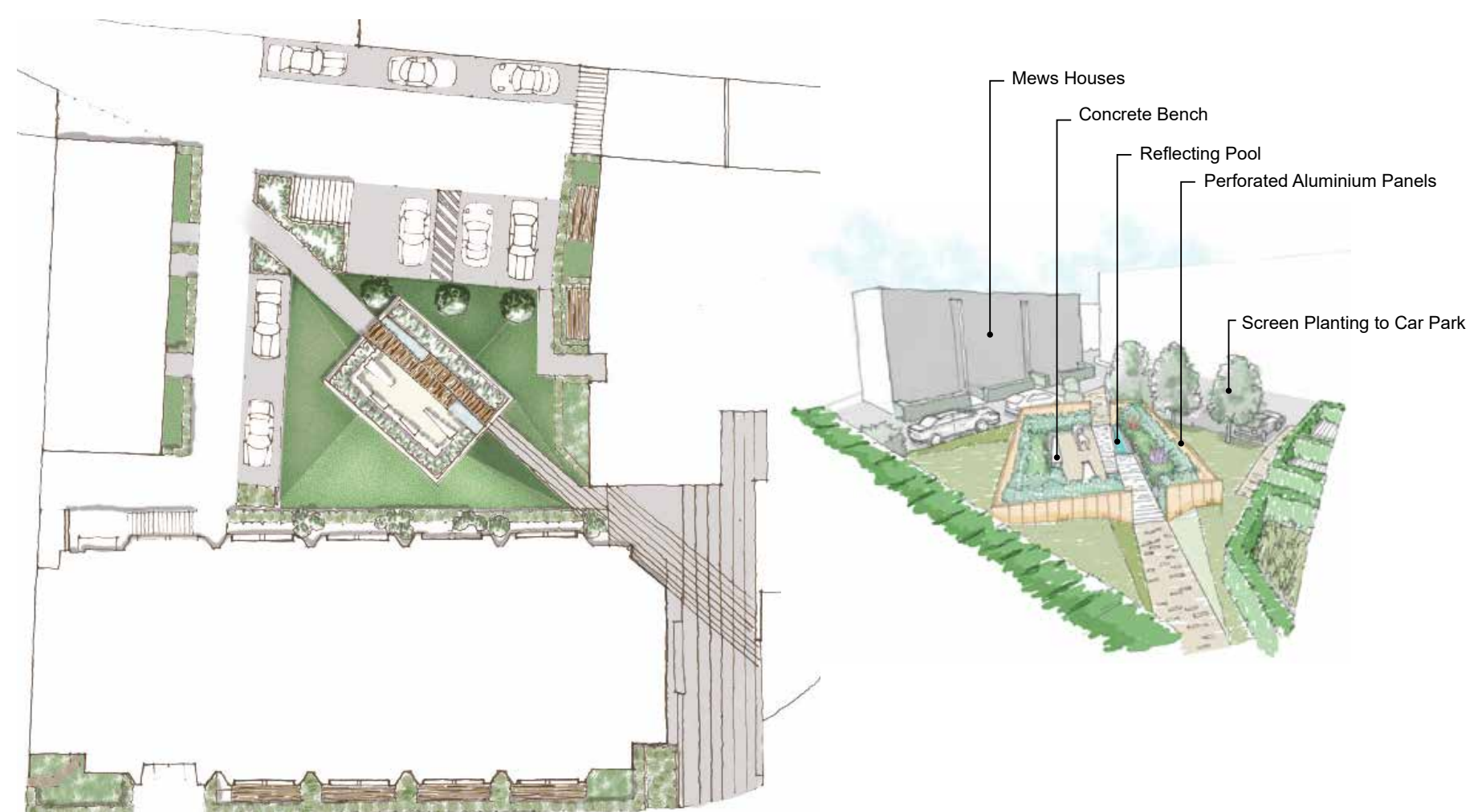


6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.3.2 LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

INITIAL CONCEPT

The central courtyard needs to accommodate parking, cycle storage, refuse collection, deliveries and defensible space for residents at ground floor. With so many competing uses the landscape could quite easily become an incoherent ensemble of and mix of materials and treatments. Our concept seeks to create a single coherent space in the centre that acts as an outdoor room, providing a harbour from competing uses at the courtyard's periphery. The dynamic of the space is based on a desire line from the building entrance and courtyard to Kennet Side and pedestrian and cycle routes to the town centre. The concept also aims to provide a green face to the scheme on the Queens Road and Watlington Street frontages.

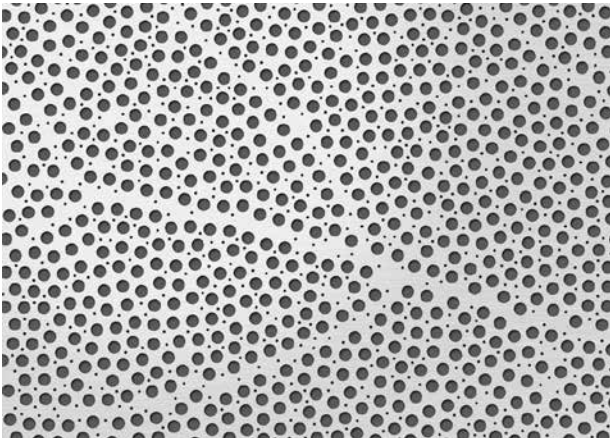
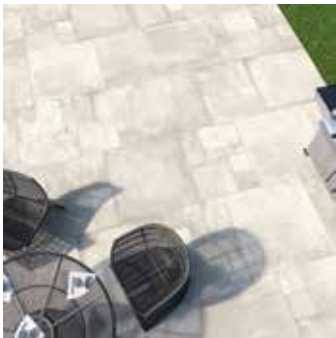


6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.3.3 LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

MOOD IMAGES

Light coloured finishes will be used in the central space in order to create a refined and minimalist garden. Materials such as porcelain, pre-cast concrete and composite decking would be used with accents in natural stone. We would propose to incorporate one or two sculptural features as accents into the space. Low level lighting would be provided to ensure that the space is safe to use at night whilst minimising light pollution to apartments.

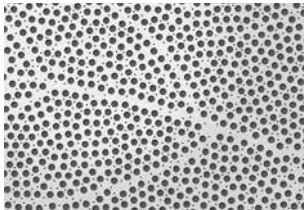


6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.4.1 LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

Overall parking provision is for eight cars, of which four relate to this application. The other four spaces will be brought forward separately through the current Permitted Development application, ref: 180722, which was submitted in April 2018. Two of the eight spaces are proposed to be allocated for disabled users. The location and sizing of spaces, however enables six of the eight spaces to meet DDA parking standards, providing further flexibility in this regard. It also incorporates a 1.5m defensible space in front of ground floor units with a hedge to provide screening. Space has been provided for 5 mature trees within the courtyard and hedges have been used to soften the perimeter adjoining Grantham Heights and the service entrance from Kennet Side. Significant planting of native shrubs and ground covers has been provided along the northern edge of Clarendon House and in shrub panting beds within the car park. Space has also been allocated in the courtyard for vehicle loading and tracking has been carried out to ensure that sufficient room has been provide for vehicle manoeuvring in the courtyard. Covered cycle parking has been accommodated in the north east corner of the courtyard, close to pedestrian access paths from the courtyard entrance. The location provides easy access through the car park to the Kennet Side cycle route.

A green buffer zone has been created at the main entrance and this has been combined with proposed landscape improvements in the south east corner of the site that lie outside of the red line boundary of the site. Planting of hedges and shrubs would be provided against the western wall of the bridge ramp in order to provide a green outlook for residents of ground floor apartments. Similarly a hedge of 1.5m height would be provided along the southern perimeter of Clarendon House in order to establish a buffer between the footpath and ground floor apartments. Planting of large columnar trees would be provided at the western end of Clarendon House to establish vertical scale and to soften the edge of the building.



6. Perforated aluminium panels



8. Planting approach - layers of white



4. Style of bench



2. Paving materials



Installation art

Legend:

1. Screen Planting to Car Park
2. Granite Block Paving
3. Reflecting Pool
4. Concrete Bench
5. Porcelain Paving
6. Perforated aluminium panels
7. Terraces
8. Planting



6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.4.3 VISUALISATION - COURTYARD



View into Central Courtyard

6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.5.1 MATERIALS PALETTE

MATERIALS PALETTE

The materials proposed on this scheme can be divided into two types. Utilitarian paving has been provided for service areas of the courtyard and includes porous block paving for vehicular areas and service zones. High quality materials such as natural stone and concrete flags have been proposed for entrance areas and for some private terraces. Materials such as composite timber decking have been provided for raised terraces along the southern façade of Clarendon House and gravel has been used as a low key material at the western end of Clarendon House for meter access.

Legend:

-  Composite Timber Decking, Brown
-  Block Paving, Gray
-  Block Paving, Silver-Gray
-  Porcelain Paving, Gray
-  Slab Paving, Buff
-  Reclaimed Granite Setts, Light Gray
-  Perforated aluminium panels, white powder coated
-  Granite Linear Paving, Silver/Mid-gray
-  Gravel Path

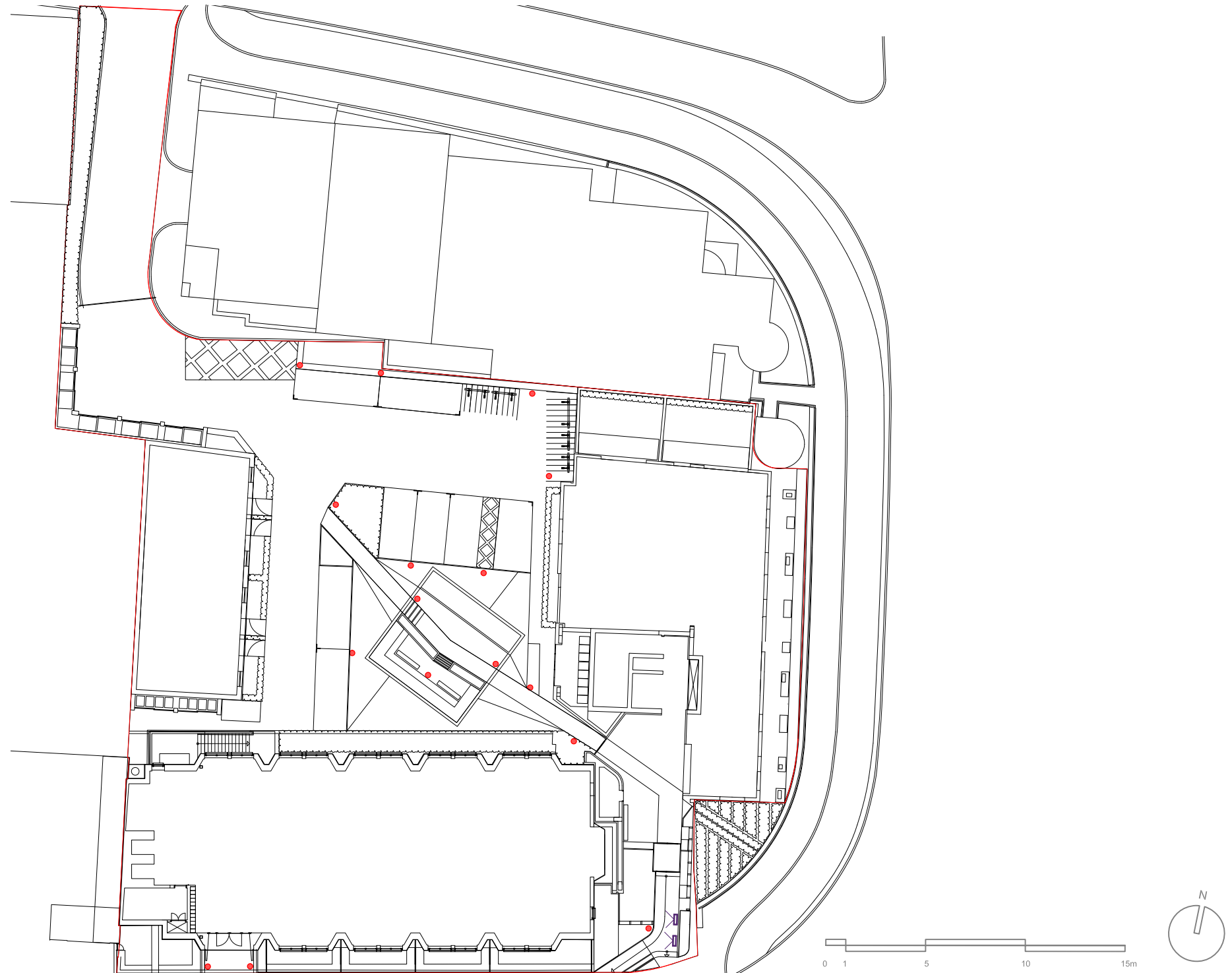
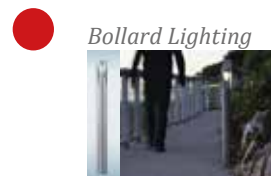


6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.5.2 MATERIALS PALETTE

LIGHTING PLAN

Low level lighting will be provided in order to light key routes and building entrances. On pathways, low bollard lighting will be provided with deflectors and lenses that direct light downwards to minimise light pollution. Lighting recessed into raised planters would be provided at the main entrance and this would similarly have internal lenses and deflectors to direct light downwards onto pathways. All lighting would comply with energy efficiency requirements and ensure sufficient lux levels on designated access routes.



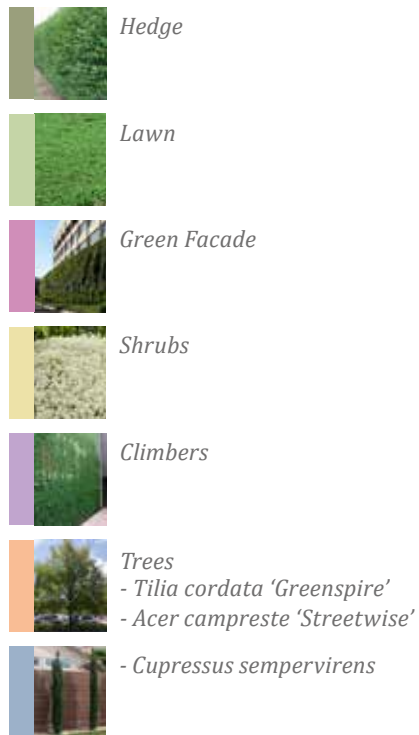
6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.6.1 PLANTING AND BIODIVERSITY

GROUND FLOOR PLANTING

Ground floor planting is designed to create a mixture of structural planting to define spaces and native shrub planting to improve the biodiversity credentials of the scheme. Ornamental planting is provided within the central courtyard space. Areas of lawn provide a clean contrast to the metal screen in the centre of the courtyard and trees would accentuate the linear geometry of the courtyard. Shrub planting would be mainly evergreen to provide year round interest, and shade tolerant species would be used on the north side of Clarendon House and beneath the colonnade on the western perimeter of the site.

Legend:



Note: Land in ownership of council.
Landscape shown for illustrative purposes.



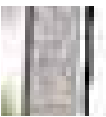
6. LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL

6.6.2 PLANTING AND BIODIVERSITY

ROOF LEVEL PLANTING

At the roof level we are proposing to incorporate two habitat typologies. A green roof typology would be provided on roofs which are overlooked by neighbouring residents. This would provide a combination of flowering succulent species such as sedums along with British native wildflower species that flower and set seed before dying down in late summer. This would then provide a combination of biodiversity, year-round green to the lower flat roof areas. The copper roof areas would be established as brown roof habitat zones, provide varying regimes of gravel and aggregate for burrowing insects as well as log piles for overwintering of beetles and invertebrates. The roof areas could also be used to accommodate habitat for bees and nesting boxes for birds and bats.

Legend:

-  Green Roof
-  Brown Roof
-  Containerised Plants
-  Proposed Gravel Ballast



7.0 ACCESS & SECURITY

7.1 INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Statutory and regulatory background

Access in its broadest form (walking, cycling, vehicular access and traffic and public transport) is addressed in sections 2.0 and 3.0 of this document. This part of the statement seeks to demonstrate how the design proposals take full account of Reading Borough Councils planning policies, specifically:

- › Central Area Action Plan (Adopted January 2009)
- › Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008)
- › Sites and Detailed Policies Document (Adopted October 2012)
- › Sustainable Design and Construction SBD (Adopted July 2011)
- › Reading Borough Local Plan (Draft 2017)

Access policy and protocol

The following national legislation and local planning and development policy requirements are also reflected in the design proposals:

- › The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). The developers may have ongoing obligations as Landlords, as outlined in the DDA.
- › British Standard 8300:2009 - Design of Buildings and their Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People.
- › Approved Document M of the Building Regulations 2004, Access to and use of buildings.
- › Lifetime Homes Standards as defined by Appendix 4 of the GLA SPG, Accessible London: Achieving an Inclusive Environment, April 2004.

The Mayor’s London Plan also seeks to ensure that all new housing is designed to Lifetime Homes standards, and that 10% of new homes are designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users.

- › Wheelchair Housing Standards (GLA). Reflects the standards of the Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (Habinteg 2006) that should be incorporated into dwelling designs from the outset.

Design philosophy

The Access Strategy is based on the social model of disability and the philosophy of inclusive design which maximises access, choice and opportunities for disabled people. Inclusive design is the process by which the needs of everybody are considered and embedded in the proposals for the design, development and subsequent management of the built environment from the outset. The key elements of inclusive design, which benefit everyone, are:

- a) Ease of use
- b) Freedom of choice and access to mainstream activities
- c) Embracing of diversity and difference
- d) Legibility and predictability
- e) High quality

Access has thus been considered in its broadest sense to reflect the needs of individuals with sensory, mobility and hidden impairments, learning disabilities, mental health needs, reduced or hypersensitivity to temperature, and limited reach and stature. Others, to whom the built environment can be disabling, including young families and elders, are also considered. This approach should facilitate an inclusive approach to access and ensure that opportunities for maximizing access to all areas of the site development are identified throughout the design process.

Process and maintenance of features

7.0 ACCESS & SECURITY

7.1 INCLUSIVE DESIGN

The development strives to maximise access for disabled people, the process of which will be recorded in the Access Statement as this document develops through the life of the project. There are no departures from the adopted performance indicators [Part M and BS 8300:2001] contained in the design proposals. To ensure the achievement of inclusive design the following actions have been adopted:

- › Design team members have signed up to inclusive design and understand the principles involved;
- › Design team members are well versed in equality issues and disability awareness;
- › Access has been an agenda item at design team meetings;

Access provisions

Approaches

1. The Royal Heights development will be approached from Queens Road, Watlington Street and Kennet Side. There will be six principal points of entry to the site, two being communal residential core entrances on Queens Road both with alternative access from the courtyard. There is a third communal core that is only accessible from the courtyard. Mews houses are also accessed via the courtyard with own front doors.

One of the buildings along Queens Road is Clarendon House which is accessed at grade, the other is located at the corner and is accessible via a gentle ramp accommodating a 300mm level change to the entrance.

2. Queens Road is sufficiently wide for wheelchair access and being served by bus routes. The approach from Kennet Side is quieter and again, has sufficiently wide pavements.

Public Transport

3. The site is well served by public transport. A number of bus routes stop close by as shown in Section 2.0.

Car parking

4. Due to the central sustainable location and being well served by public transport the proposed development has minimal parking provision. The streets around Royal Heights form part of a Controlled Parking Zone, and are restricted to permit holders. It is envisaged that residents of the development will not be entitled to residents permits for the CPZ.

5. A new servicing bay, with 8 car parking spaces are proposed within the courtyard. Four of the car parking spaces will be disabled spaces.

Mobility Scooter

8. Mobility scooters: Residents who use a mobility scooter and live in one of the wheelchair accessible dwellings will be able to store and charge their scooter in a specifically designed space within the home. The lifts to the private accommodation are of suitable dimensions for scooters.

Landscaping

9. The scheme includes a courtyard with informal play area, seating and plantings. The courtyard surface will offer level access paving with flush drainage gullies and grilles. Where level changes are required these will be greater than 1:21 sloping landscape.

12. Planting will take account of the needs of those with impairment mobility to ensure level access is maintained across terraces and approaches. The needs of visually impaired people have been considered by use of strong forms, planting that creates gentle noise e.g. the sweep and rustle of leaves, a variety of species will add texture and tone, as well as scent. Ground surfaces will also assist visually impaired people orientating around the site.

Accommodation Provision

13. The development has been planned from the outset to be inclusive and to meet the diverse needs of a wide range of users including those with impairments.

14. The project will provide a mix of affordable rented, intermediate and private sale housing that aims to incorporate all relevant accessible design standards. Accommodation comprises a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartment units located across all access cores.

15. All of the of the private sale and shared ownership accommodation is located in the new building Queens Road core which serves the tallest, 10 storey building. The taller building is accessed from an entrance hall prominently located on Queens Road with a secondary access from the courtyard. From here residents will take a single spacious lift to the upper storeys, with access to each unit either from an internal lobby. There is no access at ground level from the street. The lift will be managed with an enhanced maintenance plan and fast response service to ensure there is minimal impact on disabled residents.

16. All dwellings will meet Lifetime Homes Standards fully with level entrances, and 10% will be easily adaptable to wheelchair accessible housing. There are just a few examples where the shape of the units, dictated by site constraints, offers a less desirable layout, but even here Lifetime Homes Standards are met.

17. Suitable level parking will be easily reached from all dwellings; level entrance and terrace thresholds; wide entrance and internal doors, lobbies and corridors; wheelchair turning space in living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms; low window sills; direct route for future installation of a hoist from a master bedroom to a bathroom; wheelchair accessible bathrooms with side access to WC's and bath.

18. 10% of accommodation will be built to be 'easily adaptable' to wheelchair housing standards reflecting the design principles set out in the Habinteg guidance with regard to level access approach and spatial considerations for all rooms to ensure ease of circulation, provision of bathrooms; and the operation of such fittings as windows. Such accommodation is distributed in the main building in the apartments across all tenures.

Maintenance of features

On hand-over to end users the completed Access Statement will contain a record of features and facilities designed to maximise accessibility with sufficient information to ensure their proper use.

7.0 ACCESS & SECURITY

7.2 SAFER PLACES STATEMENT

Safer Places Statement

Throughout the design of this project consideration has been given to the issues of creating a safe, sustainable place that works well with the existing context. As the proposals developed the design team have met Reading Borough Council Design officer and the scheme overall is designed in accordance with principles of Secure by Design and Reading Borough Councils planning policies, specifically:-

- › Central Area Action Plan (Adopted January 2009)
- › Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008)
- › Sites and Detailed Policies Document (Adopted October 2012)
- › Sustainable Design and Construction SBD (Adopted July 2011)
- › Reading Borough Local Plan (Draft 2017)

1. Access & Movement

The location of the site both adjacent to Queens Road, Watlington Street, major bus routes and within walking distance to Reading train station mean that the proposals are, and always will be, covered by a large number of access routes. Safe access and movement has been a major factor in the design of public realm proposals for Royal Heights

The provision of safe and comfortable routes, accessible by all users are provided both in terms of generous, well-lit foot-ways surrounding the site, maximising pavement widths at ground level and linking to established routes around the site.

The existing routes are better defined by the new building that creates a strong active frontage along Watlington Street with public routes overlooked by private amenity spaces. Care is taken to ensure that potential hiding spots are avoided, especially closer to the building where covered entrances to residential cores are opened up and visible from a safe distance from Watlington Street and Queens Road. Small inset areas are avoid along all main elevations through a continuous green buffer zone minimising hiding places along the pavements.

The vehicle routes within the courtyard, including a new loading bay and bin stores are clearly defined by kerbs and changes of material; within the site all of the routes are pedestrian. Clear and separate entrances are provided to the two main communal entrances from the street. The entrance to the main communal lobbies is well lit and easily visible from the public pavement as well as from within the lobby. There are three entrances into separate cores, with a bin and secure bike store controlled by fob to ensure safe and secure access for all users.

2. Structure

This location offers various security challenges; the site is both a key north-south route into Reading and also on the edge of the Inner Distribution Road which means that a range of people will be attracted to the area throughout the day and night. This proposal aims to improve the clarity and structure of the area with the addition high quality new public realm as follows: To activate the corner of Queens Road and Watlington Street with entrances to communal cores.

Provide a high quality pavement zone that can accommodate signage and lighting to improve way finding around the local area. The direct relationship between the building and the pavement is such that it is overlooked by users of the building at all levels, at all hours.

The proposed communal lobby creates generous and naturally lit areas through a fully glazed entrance to the street and pavement. Glazing is maximised to ensure good visibility from all directions inside and outside the lobby. Post boxes are to be located in a secure lobby, which will be accessed by the postal service. Fob accessed secure cycle storage and bin stores are provided within the courtyard.

Local bin stores will be provided next to each access core. These will be managed and waste moved to larger bins and a collection area accessible from Kennet Side. The collection point bin stores will be managed and kept locked, to be unlocked at collection time only. Meters for flats will be accessed at the entrance level or remotely readable and security will be managed as part of a site-wide management plan. Service rooms will be accessible from corridors. Plant areas are located in Clarendon House in a secured basement area.

From the main ground floor entrance lobby, lift and stair access is gained to communal lobbies on each floor, each serving between 3 and 5 flats internally. Mews houses are accessed from a secure hard landscaping area in the courtyard, well lit and overlooked by the surrounding units.

Units facing the courtyard are separated from the communal space by defensive planting zone and an enclosure separating the habitable areas from the units. The courtyard is designed to be of a high quality open design allowing for unobstructed views from all sides.

3. Surveillance

As described above, this scheme has been designed to maximise natural surveillance and the feeling of natural surveillance. The building is carefully designed to ensure that there are active frontages to all sides from the residential units. In addition to the active ground floor, the flats at first floor level overlook this area by way of large Juliet balconies, winter gardens and recessed private balconies.

It should be noted that the acoustic protection accorded to the flats by the building envelope is high and mechanical ventilation is provided, due to the busy roads of Watlington Street and Queens Road; therefore although the flats provide overlooking of the surroundings they will not be constantly disturbed by noise. A CCTV system controlled from one central point will cover all the entrance points and will form part of the site-wide management plan.

Good lighting will further nurture a feeling of perceived ownership, civic duty and aid natural surveillance of public areas from the adjoining residential units and other potential observation points. Existing street lighting along Queens Road and Watlington Street will be complemented to achieve high uniform light levels, and will be designed to prevent glare to the residential units. Lighting will be designed to provide average levels of 30 Lux illuminance to entrance areas and 20 Lux to the shared courtyard and roof terrace. The courtyard lighting will be dimmable at night time. Local movement sensors will bring the light level back up to 100% when needed, which will allow significant energy savings whilst still providing a uniform level of illumination.

4. Ownership

It is the aim of this project to help the promotion of more community pride, not just in this immediate area but the whole of the local community. In this way the space has been designed with aspirations of a growing community of surrounding developments and aims to future proof the creation of coherent blocks and an active street-scape; a model that typically inspires a sense of pride and responsibility in local residents.

This project is entirely about reinforcing and improving the specific identity of the area through the use of high quality materials and detailing. It is hoped that the building will not only become a new landmark development, but also a desirable and enjoyable place to live. The project has a clear division of public and private space. The development creates one enclosed communal area of a high quality that is accessible by residents and provide safe and secure doorstep play. The courtyard has been designed to be open to the public but overlooked to form a communal character and feeling that it belongs to the residents.

5. Physical Protection

The building has been designed so that climbing to reach the upper floors will be difficult. As a part of the sustainability strategy for the building, night time ventilation is required and this is provided by mechanical venting. However an alternative manual venting option is provided via inward opening windows with restrictors.

7.0 ACCESS & SECURITY

7.2 SAFER PLACES STATEMENT

The residential main entrance door will be fitted with an audio/visual electronic entry system linked directly to each flat. The design of both the communal entrance door and the individual doors to the flats will be in accordance with the principles of secure by design. Another measure of physical protection used throughout the public realm is robustness. This is seen in the choice of surface materials, reducing the effect, and therefore likelihood of vandalism.

6. Activity

As this is a residential development the main activity is through the relationship between entrances and the street-scape. This activity is likely to be varying around work routines, however the layout maximises the visibility of the new public spaces from surrounding streets and the give the ‘eyes in the street’ the maximum possible range, reducing the opportunities for intimidation.

7. Management & Maintenance

The project has been designed with low maintenance requirements; a key part of this strategy is to create entrance areas and communal spaces that encourage ownership and identity so residents enjoy a sense of safety, dignity, pride and responsibility in their surroundings. This can be illustrated by the generous and ‘characteristic design of the residential entrances and also the landscape design of the courtyard and roof terraces. The provision of high quality landscape and creation of external rooms on the roof encourages multiple-occupancy and the opportunity for residents to meet in a non-invasive environment.

Management and maintenance in the public realm is crucial to creating a sense of safety and civic pride. In this way the use of robust, low maintenance materials in the courtyards and terraces, planting and furniture is proposed, using high quality natural material that will not appear ‘uncared for’ with age. Both the affordable rent, shared ownership and market sale tenures of the development as well as the communal landscaped areas will be managed and maintained by the facilities and maintenance teams.

A principal factor in the design and its selection of material is to create a robust space, to reduce the negative social effects associated with poorly maintained places, and to promote a sense of responsibility in all users. Maintenance access to the residential plant room is provided separately from the secure communal entrance lobby, the only maintenance access routinely required within the main secure communal areas are the cleaners and others who work directly for the housing association. A dedicated caretaker’s room has been provided in the basement of Clarendon house to ensure ease of access from within the development and passive monitoring of internal areas by the maintenance team.

8.0 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

8.1 CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Consultation Strategy

Ahead of the submission of this planning application, Reading Heights Ltd worked closely to engage with stakeholders and residents. The objective of this engagement was to present the emerging plans to key partners and understand their thoughts prior to the finalising of the proposals.

Initial Engagement

Engagement commenced with a series of one-to-one meetings with key Reading stakeholders, including:

- › Richard Bennett, Chairman of Reading Civic Society
- › Rev Brian Shenton, former Dean of Reading
- › Cllr Tony Page, Deputy Council Leader
- › Cllr Jeanette Skeats, Council Leader of the Opposition
- › Cllr Mohammed Ayub, Member of the Planning and Transport Committee
- › Nigel Horton Baker, Reading UK

At these meetings, which were attended by key members of the project team, the emerging proposals were presented and discussed, with feedback recorded.

Public Consultation

Following the programme of individual meetings, a public consultation event was arranged and held. This took place on Wednesday 18 April between 1.30pm and 7.30pm at the South Street Arts centre. To publicise the event, letters were sent to the 199 closest residents, the event was promoted through key Reading Face-book groups and a press release was issued.



A selection of images from the public consultation event held at the South Street Arts Centre.

8.0 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

8.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Royal Heights Reading

For further information please write to: amie@social-communications.co.uk

site location plan

aerial view showing the existing site area

strategic planning map

THE SITE TODAY

The development site is currently a disused urban car-park which blights the immediate surroundings and fails to contribute any value to the wider area.

Watlington Street is an important route into the Town Centre and deserves investment into high quality design that will make this part of Reading safe and enjoyable place to live and visit.

aerial view of the site area

aerial view of the site area

The maps above show how the site has changed over the past century, from the intimate well-defined street-scapes of the Victorian period to the current situation with large object buildings that fail to relate to their surroundings in terms of materials, landscape or creating activity.

THE VISION

We have a vision to create a vibrant, sustainable and well-designed addition to one of Reading's central neighbourhoods.

The Royal Heights will strengthen a unique local identity for the existing and new residents by completing the urban block and responding to Reading's character and heritage.

Our aim is to enhance the surrounding area with a new building, creating active frontages, enhancing the streetscape as well as creating high quality interior landscape.

view south along Watlington Street

Presentation Panels shown at the public consultation at the South Street Arts Centre

Royal Heights Reading

For further information please write to: amie@social-communications.co.uk

AN ENSEMBLE OF BUILDINGS

The proposals respond to Clarendon House, an existing building on the site by creating a series of overlapping new buildings that define the street and step back at the upper levels to create an 'ensemble of buildings' rather than a single development.

Breaking up the massing into separate buildings relates to the varied skyline of the Conservation and the quirky combinations of textures and styles.

sketch of the link building entrance

Clarendon House is a listed 1880's office building which has permitted development consent for conversion into a residential building.

The new Watlington Street building is an incorporation of the proportions and materiality of Clarendon House, with a well defined street edge and new high quality public realm.

A 'link building' steps back to enhance the public realm and 'opens up' the corner of the site. This part of the building is seen as a new special element in reading with its own special character.

A taller building grows out of the Watlington Street building set-back from the street to create a varied skyline and complete the ensemble of buildings.

HERITAGE RESPONSE

As with the old buildings within the heritage area, the proposed building appears differently from each direction creating an interesting and complex building.

The taller building creates a transition between the Conservation Area and the taller buildings of the Central Zone.

The building aims to create a sensitive dialogue with the two church spires of the Wesley Methodist Church and the Polish Roman Catholic Church along Watlington Street.

view south across the conservation area from the 5th floor roof terrace

Royal Heights Reading

For further information please write to: amie@social-communications.co.uk

WATLINGTON STREET

The Watlington Street Building is conceived as a 'sibling' of Clarendon House, which though isn't a building of architectural merit, has certain qualities. Such as; a robust and well ordered facade, solid brick construction, a facade that creates depth and relief.

The detailed expression of the proposed building is of a high quality, open and permeable, with large windows, double height expression at ground floor and deep inset balconies.

view of the Watlington Street building

LINK BUILDING

The Link Building is a linking element, connecting Clarendon House to the new building on Watlington Street. The link building forms the main entrance to the new building, and has been designed with materials that are complementary to those on either side.

The link building forms a roof extension on top of Clarendon House as well as a cut into the fifth floor of the Watlington Street Building.

view of the Link Building

TALLER BUILDING

The taller building is set back into the site, making it subordinate to the 5-storey buildings on the road. The taller building works as an accent and a subtle counterpoint to the two church spires within the Conservation Area.

This building grows out of the Watlington Street Building, borrowing from the material expression and character, whilst using different combinations of the same brick mix to create a variety of textures and qualities.

view of the Taller Building

sketch of the proposal looking south along Watlington Street

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Volume I - Design and Access Statement

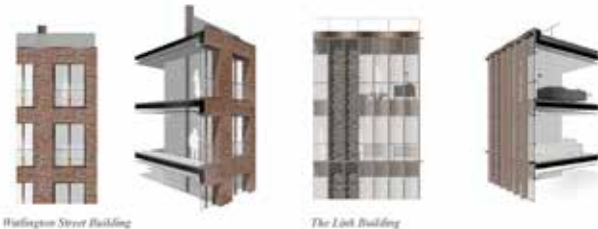
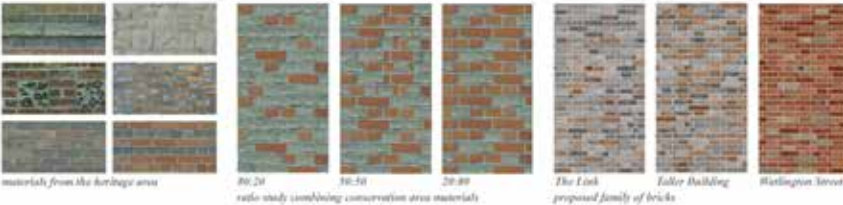


View in view of the Link Building next to Watlington Street

MATERIALITY

The proposals pay homage to the history of the area, borrowing materials from the Conservation Area and proposing a contemporary interpretation of traditional materials. The Conservation area is characterised by contrasting complementary materials used to create decorative façades and rich material textures.

The designs take the soft red brick from the Westley Church and the grey stone used throughout the Conservation area combining them in different proportions to create brick variety within the same family. Watlington Street is predominantly red, the Link Building predominantly grey and the taller building an equal combination of the two.



The above elevations and bay studies show the subtle combinations of materials proposed on the project. The Link Building uses a unique mix of bricks derived from the Watlington Street building.



view from the corner of Watlington Street and Queens Road



Sixth to Ninth Floor Plan



Fifth Floor Plan



Second to Fourth Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

HIGH QUALITY NEW HOUSING

The proposed development provides high quality units; with generous communal areas, private balconies, roof terraces and 70% dual aspect.

The proposals include 30% affordable housing on the lower levels including four mews houses with own front doors opening onto the communal courtyard.



Site Section looking north through the courtyard



view of the mews Houses within the communal courtyard



sketch view of the site looking north from the Conservation Area

A LANDSCAPE WITH SPECIAL CHARACTER



plan view of landscape proposals

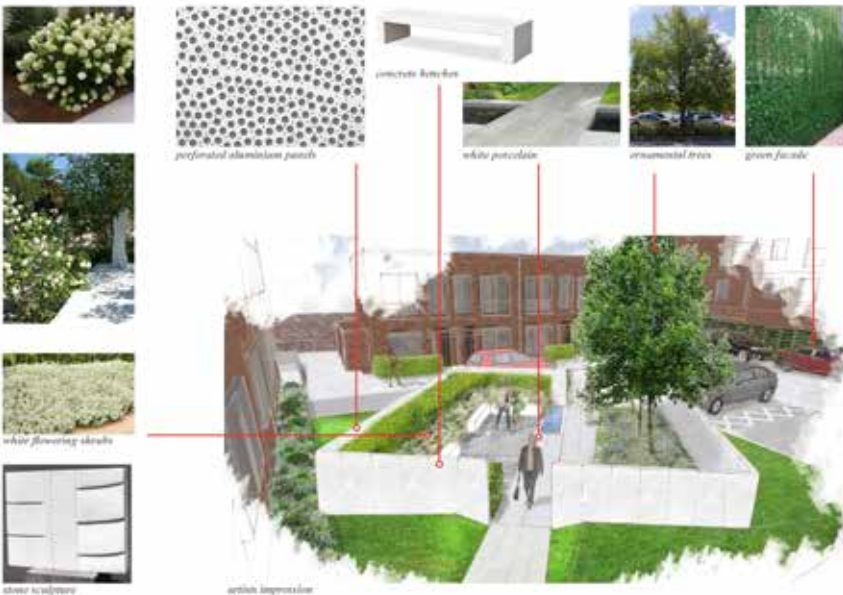


the biscuit tin

HUNTLEY AND PALMER CONCEPT

Huntley and Palmer became a worldwide success due to the invention of the biscuit tin that protected the fragile merchandise from becoming damaged during delivery.

The courtyard garden will, in a similar fashion, provide a protective screen from the noise and visual intrusion of vehicles that use the courtyard. The inner room is intended to be a moment on a journey between the building entrance and the River Kennet.



8.0 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

8.3 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

This press release was covered on page 4 of the 12 April version of the Reading Chronicle, and also reported by the Get Reading website. Together with this, the release was distributed to the stakeholders listed under the ‘Initial Engagement’ heading. The public consultation event was staffed by key members of the project team, including the project architect, town planner, landscape architect and developer. The proposals were displayed on six A1 boards, with feedback forms available for attendees to comment and an email address provided, to enable the returning of electronic feedback.

In total, 27 residents and stakeholders attended the public consultation event. The attendees were a mix of residents, Councillors, Civic Society members and representatives of the Wesley Church. All attendees confirmed they found out about the event either through receipt of a letter, through a post on social media, from the press release in the Reading Chronicle or by word of mouth.

Of the 27 attendees, 22 expressed support or interest in the scheme. Only five attendees expressed verbal opposition. This breaks down as:

- › 85% of attendees supportive or neutral
- › 15% of attendees opposed

Eight written feedback forms were received. Four of these forms expressed support for the scheme, whilst four opposed the scheme. Given the additional motivation which scheme opponents usually enjoy, these figures are unsurprising. Positive feedback at the consultation event focussed on:

1. The effort taken by the developer to consult residents
2. The lack of on-site car-parking
3. The sympathetic use of building materials
4. The percentage of social housing
5. The effort to provide open space

Stakeholders were notably impressed by the quality and sincerity of the level of engagement from the project team. Of particular note was the very positive reaction to the water feature and the mews homes in the courtyard.

Other feedback highlighted:

1. The height and design of the proposed building
2. Insufficient space provision
3. The proximity of the development to Grantley Heights and Queens Wharf
4. Concern that the development would block sunlight and impact of the ‘right to light’ of residents living in Grantley Heights.

Ongoing Consultation

Following the event, we have received six emails from local residents. These focussed on two matters:

- › Disruption caused by current work on site
- › Concerns regarding impact on light from the new development

All email feedback was acknowledged and individually responded to, with immediate action undertaken to mitigate the disruption caused by the current site works.

Consultation Outcomes

Following the process of engagement, the project team has reviewed all feedback and updated our proposals accordingly. This has involved:

- › Reducing the massing of the upper building by increasing the setback from Watlington Street
- › Exploring a brick materiality that relates to the Conservation Area and has a direct and sympathetic relationship to the Wesley Church
- › Remove glazed balconies and replace with metal railings more in keeping with the Conservation Area.
- › Further develop landscape proposals to enhance the wider public realm and maximise 'greening' of the development.

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