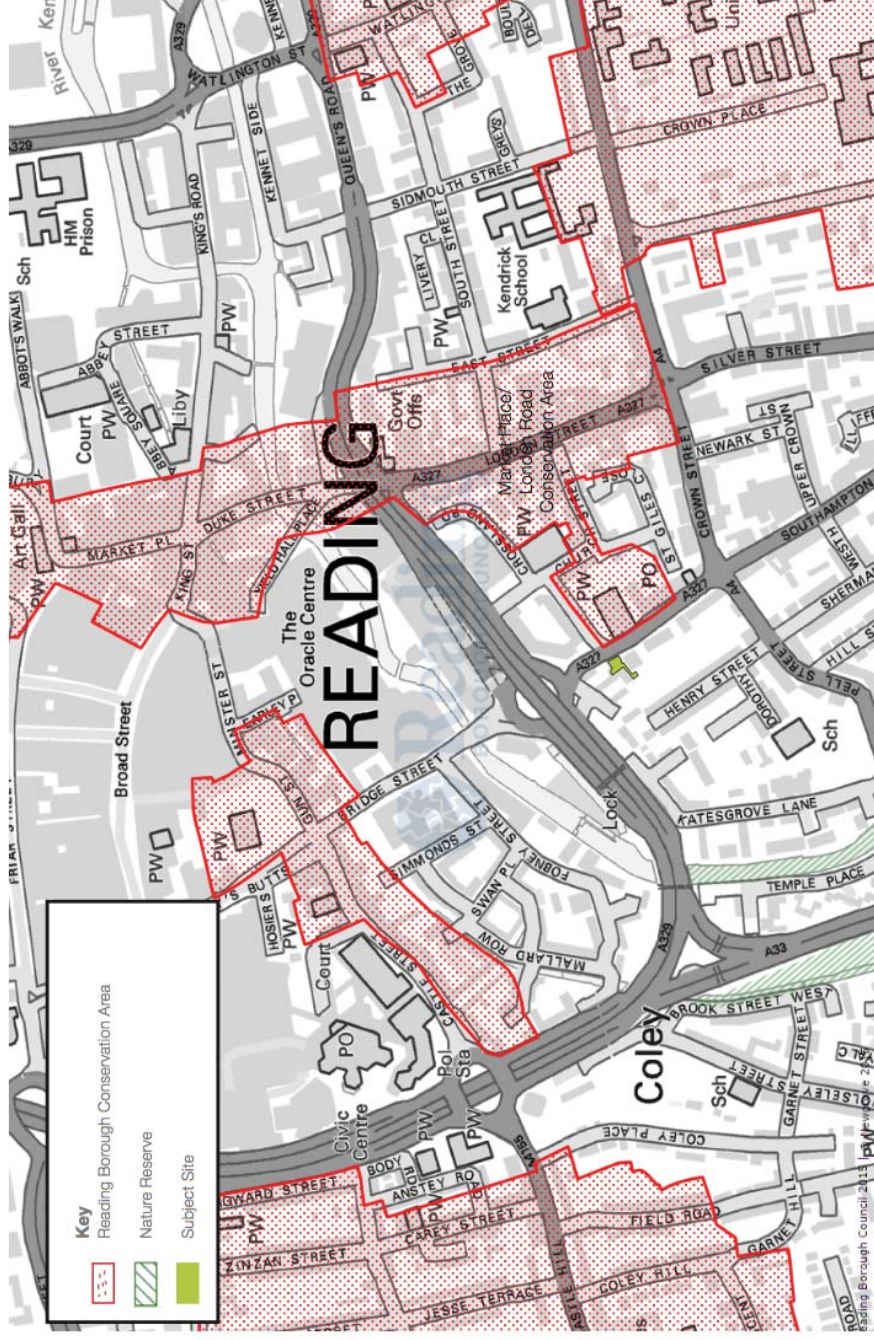


1.4 Conservation Area

The current site does not sit within a conservation area. However, the Market Place/London Road conservation area is located directly opposite the site. This conservation area incorporates St Giles church and its graveyard.



Map of Reading Town Centre Conservation Areas

1.5 Surrounding Area and Urban Context

Reading is located in the Thames Valley at the confluence of the River Thames and River Kennet and is a historically important town in Berkshire. The 19th century saw the coming of the Great Western Railway and the development of the town's brewing, baking and seed growing businesses. Today Reading is a major commercial centre having a net inward commuter flow with involvement in information technology and insurance. The borough has a population of 161,700 and a population density of 4,003 per square kilometre. Provision will be made for at least an additional 15,134 homes (averaging 658 homes per annum) in Reading Borough for the period 2013 to 2036.

Reading has a wide variety of architectural styles that range from the medieval to the 21st century. It has five Grade I listed buildings, 22 Grade II* and 853 Grade II buildings.

The site itself being positioned on the fringe of the town centre is also subject to a diversity of architectural styles. Towards the town centre and over the flyover, whilst yet clearly in sight, there is the 9 storey metal clad Oracle car park and the 5 storey brick façade offices which were both completed in the 1990's.

Meanwhile, on the southern side of the A329 flyover, the buildings tend to be of a smaller scale of 3 or 4 storeys, except for Premier Inn which steps up to 6 storeys. The building styles generally consist of 18th century Arts and craft with cogged eaves cornices and tiled roofs and late Georgian terraces using details such as grey brick headers with red brick dressings. St Giles church is a small medieval church rebuilt in Early English style retaining only the C13 aisle walls and Perpendicular west tower with an ashlar steeple and flint faced with stone dressings. There are also a few modern purpose built flat generally with brick façades in the area.



St Giles Church



Southampton Street residential terraces



Southampton Street opposite site



Southampton Street opposite site



Reading Town Centre view towards Oracle shopping centre



Reading Town Centre view towards site



View from site to Reading town centre

1.6 Materials

The proposals for the residential scheme will utilise the material palette of the local vernacular in order to create a sensitive scheme complementing the immediate buildings and the wider street-scapes. Inclusion of an appropriate palette of materials creates better architectural cohesion between this building and its surroundings. A material study of the surrounding buildings shows: -

The majority of buildings in the local area use red bricks, including the Grade II listed Arts and crafts building (No.26-28) as illustrated in Fig.1.5.1. The more modern structures towards the town centre tends to use a palette of yellow bricks. Within the Market Place/ London Road conservation area, grey bricks are used more decoratively, in particularly to create contrast with red bricks and other materials. Examples of the charismatic use of the red and grey brick can be found on the façade of the listed buildings along Church Street (opposite page).

St Giles church opposite the site is flint faced with stone dressing. The faceted flint gives the landmark a fine grain and texture produced by the various shades of grey.



View of residential surrounding brick work



View of opposite buildings brickwork



View towards Reading Town Centre material palette



View of adjacent building brickwork and palette

1.7 Listed Buildings

There are several listed buildings in and around Reading Town Centre, some of the closest ones and most influential for our scheme include:

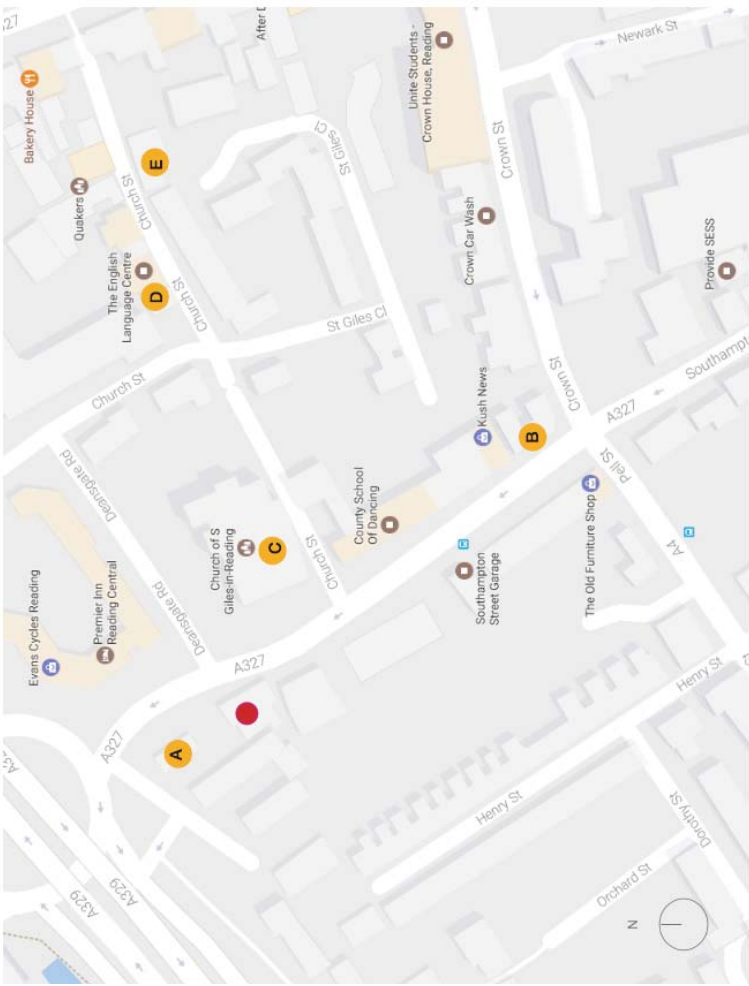
(A) 26-28 Southampton Street II 1813-1819 by Richard Billing senior. 3 storey and basement. Brick with moulded stucco cornice and blocking course, nipped slate roof. Symmetrical terrace with break to central house. Glazing bar sash windows (except 2nd floor of No 96, easements). . Steps to panelled door, recessed with arched radiating fanlight over, contemporary railings to steps.

(B) 63 Southampton Street II Including No 50 Crown Street. An early C18, small, 2½ storey house of grey brick headers with red brick quoins and dressings. Tiled roof with catside to rear with tall chimney. 1 gabled dormer. On 1st floor a tripartite casement window to left and panel to right. On ground floor a segmental-headed former door and flanking windows. Flanking red and grey brick set back rusticated quoin pilasters. Rounded corner extension to Crow Street (No 50) probably 1860s, possibly circa 1840. 3 windows with hipped tiled roof. 2 window extension to north. A good example of early C18 brickwork.

(C) St Giles Church II Church of England. The small mediaeval church was rebuilt 1872 by J P St Aubyn in Early English style retaining only the C13 aisle walls and Perpendicular west tower. Ashlar steeple 1873. Flint faced with stone dressings. Tiled roof. 3 bay aisled nave and slight transept. Y tracery lancet windows.

(D) 12 Church Street II Late C18/early C19. 3 storeys and basement. Red brick with grey brick headers and string. Brick block eaves course to hipped tiled roof. 1 range of glazing bar sash windows. 4 panel door with metal patterned fanlight. West wall rebuilt in modern tile hanging.

(E) 10 -11 Church Street II Late C18. 2½ storeys. Grey brick headers with red brick dressings and quoins. Plinth. Brick dentil cornice. Parapet. Mansard tile roof, hipped to right. 2 ranges of glazing bar sash windows with slightly cambered heads, blocked on ground floor. Central 6 panel door.



Map locating some listed buildings nearby the site



(26 - 28) Southampton Street (A)



63 Southampton Street (B)



Church of St Giles (C)



12 Church Street (D)



11 Church Street (E)

1.8 Transport Connections

Reading is served by both the Great Western Main Line railway and the M4 motorway. It is 75 miles (121 km) east of Bristol, 25 miles (40 km) south of Oxford, 42 miles (68 km) west of London, 17 miles (27 km) north of Basingstoke, 13 miles (21 km) south-west of Maidenhead and 20 miles (32 km) east of Newbury. The A33 (Pink) is the main route in to the town centre by car linking the motorway with the town centre.

Reading railway station is a major transport hub on the northern edge of the town centre, near the main retail and commercial areas. It is approximately 0.6 miles (14 min walk) away from the site. It is next to a bus interchange served by urban and rural services. Reading is the ninth-busiest station in the UK outside London, and the second busiest interchange station outside London, with over 3.8 million passengers changing trains at the station annually.



Reading Station

