
29 to 35 STATION ROAD, READING

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT
[NOVEMBER 2015]

WCEC ARCHITECTS

DESIGN TEAM

Titan Properties

Residential Developers

Wcec Group

Architects

Planning Consultants

Andmore Planning

BWB Consulting Ltd

Structural & Mechanical & Electrical Engineers

Crosby TP

Transport Consultants

REC

Air Quality Assessment

KP Acoustics

Noise and Vibration Assessment

Fabric Building Physics

Daylight/Sunlight Assessment

Eco First Consult

Energy Statement/BREEAM Pre Assessment

Bridgeway

Ecological Consultants

Douglas Birt Consulting

Viability Assessment

CgMs

Archaeological Consultant

Hydrock

Utilities Assessment

RWDI

Wind Consultants

Nabarro

Lawyers

Curtain & Co

Public Affairs Consultant

Water Environment

SUDS

GTech Surveys

TV Reception Survey

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INTRODUCTION





Sketch concept design

Document Purpose

This Design & Access Statement prepared on behalf of Titan Property Developments is to be read in conjunction with the complete suite of documents relating to the full planning application submitted for the construction of 29 – 35 Station Road. It is important to note that 29 to 35 Station Road will connect and sit adjacent to Garrard House, which is also subject to redevelopment. This includes an approval for the conversion to residential apartments with façade improvements. A further planning application has been submitted

This Design & Access Statement explains how the design has been developed in response to the site's opportunities and constraints to create a high quality new proposal for the site.

Aims

This Design & Access Statement aims to establish:

- **Analysis** – An understanding of the surrounding context.
- **Process** – How the physical characteristics of the scheme have been informed.
- **Use** – What the building is going to be used for.
- **Amount** – How much will be built on the site.
- **Layout** – How the building will be arranged on the site, the relationship between the building and the spaces around them.
- **Scale** – How big the building will be (the height, width and length).
- **Landscaping** – How external balcony and communal spaces will be treated to enhance and protect the character of the place.
- **Appearance** – What the building and spaces may look like.



Sketch of Reading town centre (Illustrated Maps from Allies and Morrison's Station Hill D&A)



Sketch Station Hill Re-development (Image from Allies and Morrison's Station Hill D&A)

Wider Vision

The objective of this development is to remove and replace the existing Norwich Union House, in this central area of Reading, with a mixed use proposal which will attract companies and professionals alike looking for new premises and homes in this prominent urban location.

Union Tower will work in conjunction with the already approved Station Hill development, Thames tower development and Garrard House and together will offer a substantial catalyst for further regeneration of the area.

The aim is to deliver a scheme of architectural quality which follows Reading Council's vision for the regeneration of this major area of the town, as set out in the Planning Policy; Reading Station Area Framework (RSAF).

Key Objectives

The key objectives for planning the site include:

- **Replace the existing building and create a building that maximises the space available.** *The existing Norwich Union House is to be demolished. Being replaced by the 29 to 35 Station Road proposal.*
- **Deliver a scheme of architectural quality appropriate for its high profile location.** *To encourage quality design for the building and private amenity space.*
- **Provide residential apartments that are both high quality and affordable**
- **To provide clear and legible design parameters for the site that ensure the development connects well to the areas of the town adjacent to it.**
- **Further to the above the proposal must connect and integrate with the Station Hill regeneration and Garrard House proposals adjacent.**
- **Provide an active Ground Floor with defined entrances, particularly along Station Road and Garrard Street.**
- **Generally follow the existing site topography.**
- **To integrate with the adjoining public transport interchanges.**
- **To add/expand on Reading town centres redevelopment in a positive way, aiming to act as a catalyst for future development.**



WELL CONNECTED ACCESSIBLE PROPOSAL

There are few developments in Reading that can offer such excellent transport connections to the surrounding towns and cities. With Reading Station in close proximity to the site, Paddington Station in London is accessible within 25minutes.



WITH DISTINCT CHARACTER

The new Station Road development will provide sought after commercial and residential space of distinct character.



WITHIN AN AREA TO LIVE, WORK & PLAY

This will be a highly collaborative effort, calling for delicate and imaginative management from a large team to create this exciting proposal. Acting as an extension to the neighbouring Station Hill redevelopment, residents can live within the heart of this vibrant area of Reading.

iv

OF ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY

The high quality design, detailing and selection of materials upgrades and enlivens the area and revitalises the existing Garrard House building.

v

A SUSTAINABLE PROPOSAL

The scheme achieves a BREEAM rating of 'very good'. The nature and locality of the development, with generous cycle storage and excellent public transport links encourages an environmentally conscious lifestyle.

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INTEGRATION WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE

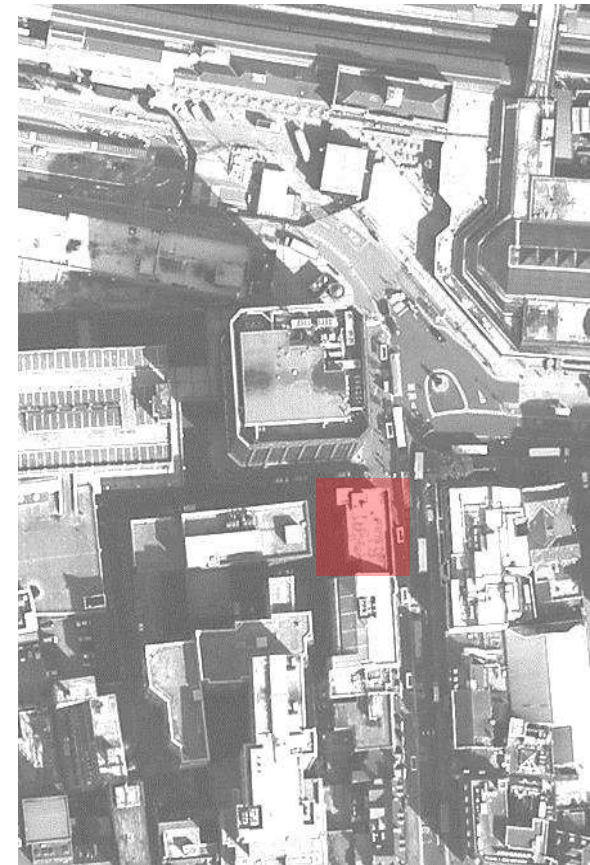
The scale and verticality of the scheme compliments the surrounding developments, particularly Station Hill and Thames Tower, adding further visual interest to the area.

01

CONTEXTUAL & URBAN ANALYSIS



Google Earth Aerial view



Aerial view of site

General

29-35 Station Road is located within Reading, Berkshire. The site is well located and a few minutes walk along Queen Victoria Street to the south, leading directly to the heart of Reading's retail centre and amenities.

Station road runs North to South, connecting the train Station to Reading Town Centre. It is within the historic core of Reading and only a couple of minutes walk from Reading Railway Station.

The nearby Forbury Gardens contains the ruins of Reading Abbey, which dates back to circa 1121, and provides an important amenity space for office workers in this part of the town.

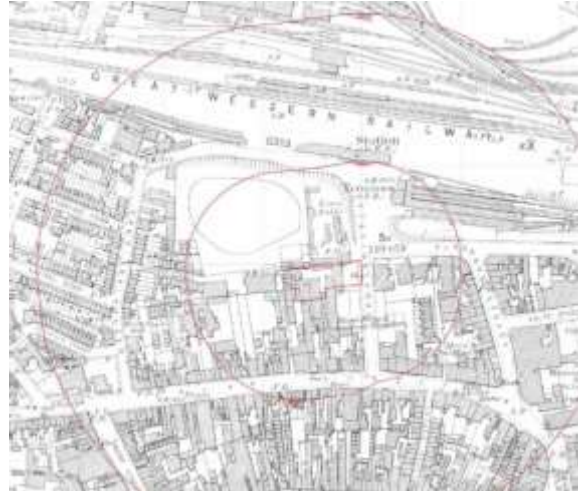
Reading is a key commercial centre within the Thames Valley; a wide variety of businesses are located here and despite its close proximity to London, has a net inward commuter flow.

Topography

Reading is located in a river valley at the confluence of the River Thames and the River Kennet. The valley sides rise steeply to Maple Durham and the Chiltern Hills. The central area of Reading is fairly consistent in terms of topography. The topography does drop towards the River Thames and the River Kennet, but the change in topography is not marked.



Historical Map 1879



Historical Map 1900



Historical Map 1931



Historical Map 1888 - 29 to 35 Station Road and Garrard House



Great Western House (Google Earth)



13 & 15 Station Road (Google Earth)

Reading History

Reading was established as a settlement during Saxon and Medieval times, located around land now occupied by the current town centre. Prior to the construction of the railway, areas to the north were low-lying water meadows.

Modern Reading grew largely in response to the development of the Great Western Railway (GWR) during the nineteenth century which increased the speed and ease of travel between London and Bristol, and which required service and maintenance facilities along its length, particularly at Reading and Swindon. Engineered by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the railway opened in 1840 and at that time, had only one platform serving the town to the south side.

Conservation Area & Listed Buildings

The site sits outside the conservation area in Reading, although there needs to be careful consideration when designing as the site neighbours three listed buildings:

- 1) Great Western House/Malmaison – Grade II listed
- 2) 13 & 15 Station Road – Grade II listed

The former Great Western Hotel was built in 1844 in an Italianate style. The building rises to five storeys with a stucco finish and as refurbished in 2006. It is now operated as Malmaison Hotel.

The site is also in close proximity to Forbury Gardens and Abbey ruins, designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



Existing Land Use

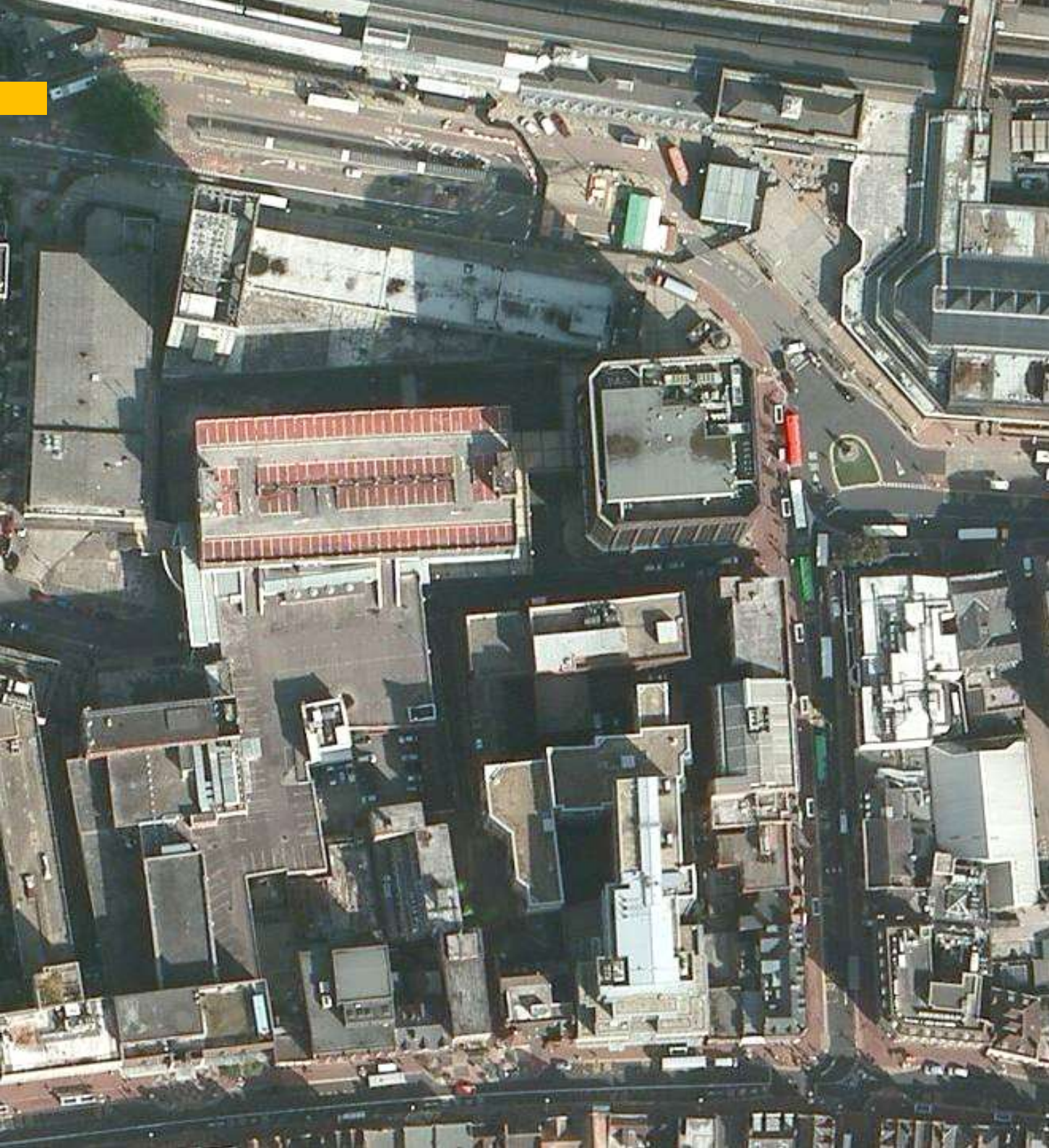


Reading Town Centre [Photographs taken 03/12/14]

The area in close proximity to the site and to the south of Reading Station comprises predominantly of commercial, retail and community use.

The site is in the heart of Reading's commercial area with residential use generally located outside of the town centre. This provides huge opportunity for new residential, especially with its close proximity to the train station which is a direct line to London.

Further retail uses are located on the Vastern Road Retail Park to the north of the railway, which consist of a supermarket, a wine warehouse and restaurant.



29 to 35 Station Road & Garrard House



29 to 35 Station Road comprises a disused, dilapidated office building and unoccupied shops. The site also includes the access route through the rear of the site and existing service yard.

29 to 35 Station Road sits adjacent to Garrard House access via Garrard Street.

The general condition of the site is poor; the majority of the shops are boarded up and the unused office building is not accessible to pedestrians.



Internal & External Photographs 28/08/14 Existing



Garrard Street looking towards Thames Tower [Photograph 03/12/14]



Station Road from the Station Approach [Photograph 03/12/14]



29 to 35 Station Road and Thames Tower beyond Reading Station [Photograph 03/12/14]

This area of Reading was extensively developed in the mid 20th Century and is now largely derelict and in a widespread state of neglect.

Garrard Street

Garrard Street is at present a hostile and uninviting environment. The Street mainly consists of 1960s concrete and system-built buildings of significant height and large footprints, many of which fail to address the street or provide a positive contribution to the public realm. There is a significant amount of parking provision in the multi-storey car park opposite Garrard House to the north which is to be restored as part of the Sackville development. There is also car parking over the (now redundant) Friars Walk Shopping Centre to the east, as well as a vacant old bus station to the north east of the site.

Station Road

Station Road leads from the Train Station, towards the main shopping district, to the centre of Reading. The street is generally of a high quality, with fewer derelict buildings, its character defined by a series of similar historic brick facades along its length.

Station Hill/Reading Station

To the north of the site is Station Hill and Reading Station.

Reading station is positioned north of the site, located at the top of Station Road and is a major railway station and transport hub. In 2008 Network Rail unveiled a £900million regeneration and reconfiguration of the station and track; including an overpass system to the west of the station as part of the expanding links direct to Heathrow and Cross rail. The local council also planned developments to the surrounding area in association with the work at the station.

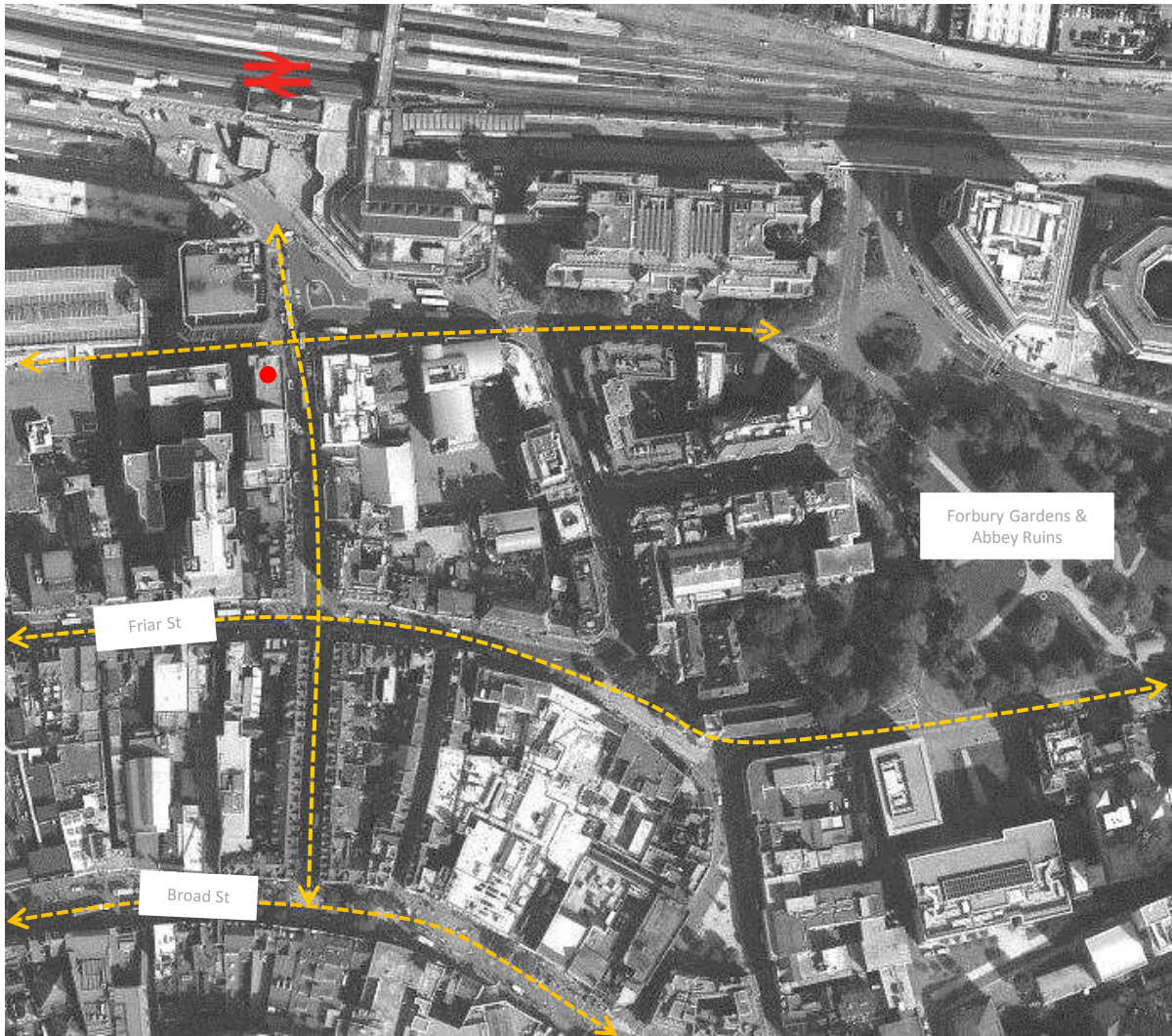
There is a bus interchange adjacent to the station.



Reading Station [Photographs taken 03/12/14]



Key Vehicular Routes



Pedestrian Routes

Reading has superb transport connections and they are central to its reputation as a world class business location. Reading has links to London with approximately 200 trains a day from the revitalised rail station to London. In addition there are regular services to Oxford, Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff.

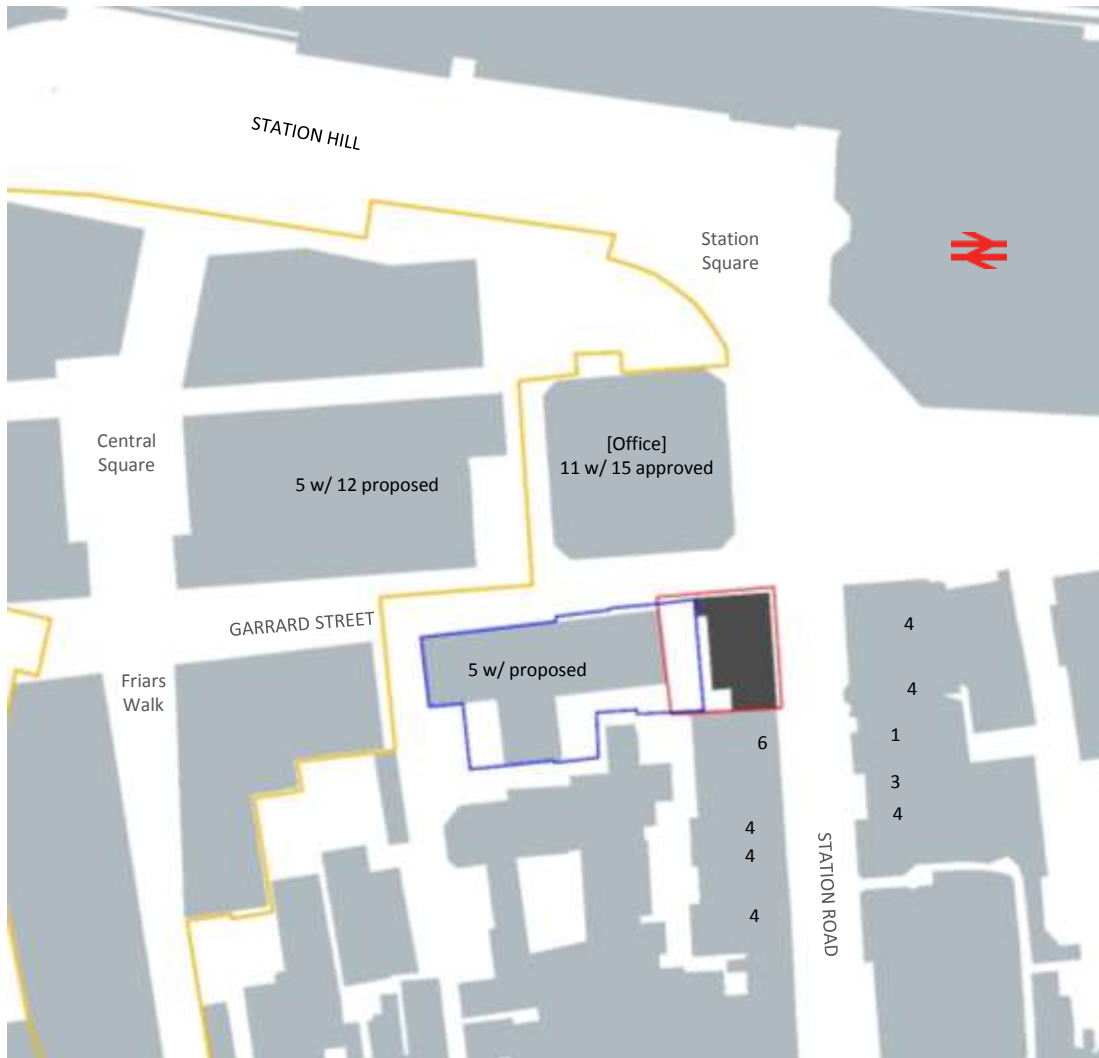
Reading also has good flight connections with Heathrow just 28 miles away and excellent motorway connections to Gatwick. Reading will soon be even better connected with the arrival of Cross rail, which will create a direct link to London by 2019. The Western Rail Access to Heathrow Terminal 5 (WRATH) project is set to drastically reduce journey times to the UK's biggest airport.

Rail	
London Paddington	25mins
Bristol Temple Meads	74mins
Birmingham	97mins
Cardiff	94mins
Gatwick Airport	76mins
Maidenhead	14mins
Oxford	24mins
Slough	13mins
Cross Rail (2019)	
Bond Street	53mins
Liverpool Street	61mins
Heathrow	38mins
Wreath	
Heathrow	28mins
Road	
M25	27mins/24miles
London	48mins/40miles

- KEY
- Train Line
 - Major Roads
 - Pedestrian Links



WCEC Architects 3D Site Model



Existing Building Heights

Existing Building Heights

The surrounding context on Station Road is averaging around 4 storeys. The Sackville's development, to the north and west of the site, results in a greater building height than has been planned.

Topography

The existing site is at its highest on the east side of 29 to 35 Station road. Station Road falls down Garrard Street past Garrard House, towards Friars Walk and the centre of the Station Hill redevelopment.

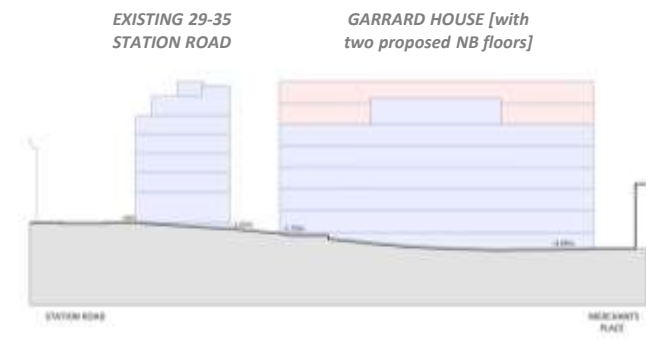
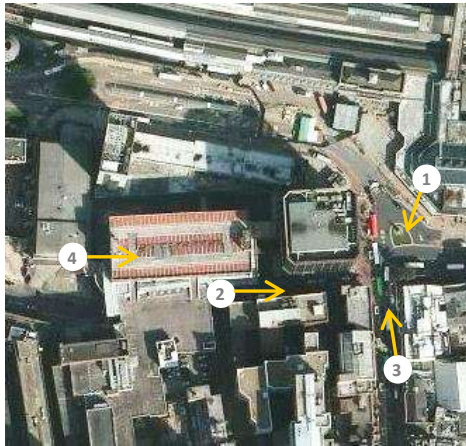


Figure 1.24: Existing Site topography

- Station Hill Redevelopment
- Garrard House
- 29-35 Station Road



Site Aerial View



1 – Looking towards 29 to 35 Station Road from Station Approach



2 – Looking up Garrard Street towards 29 to 35 Station Road



3 – Station Road



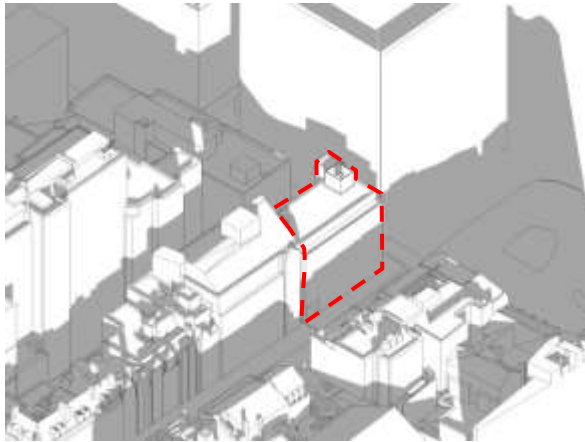
4 – Looking towards Thames Tower and 29 to 35 Station Road from the multi-storey car park

Key View Study

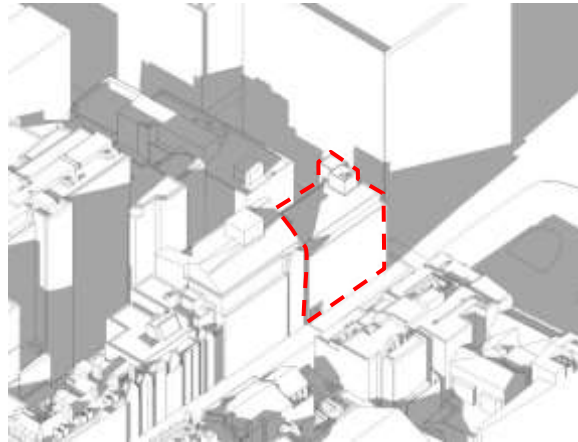
A study has been carried out to record the key views looking towards the site from the main access routes. This includes an aerial view from above the site (from the existing multi-storey car park) looking down onto 29 to 35 Station Road and surrounding buildings.

Verified View Consultants

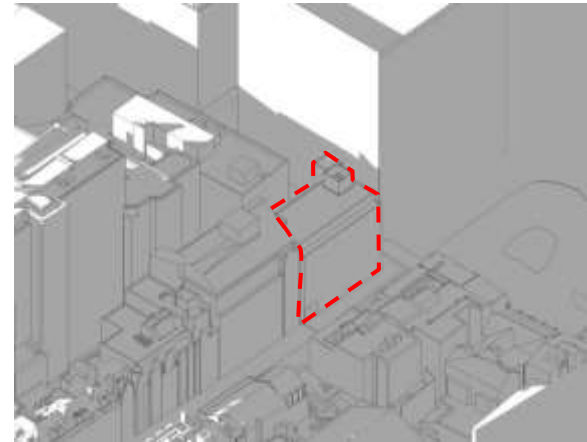
Anderson Terzic Consultants has been appointed to complete a verified view survey and this report will form a part of the full planning application.



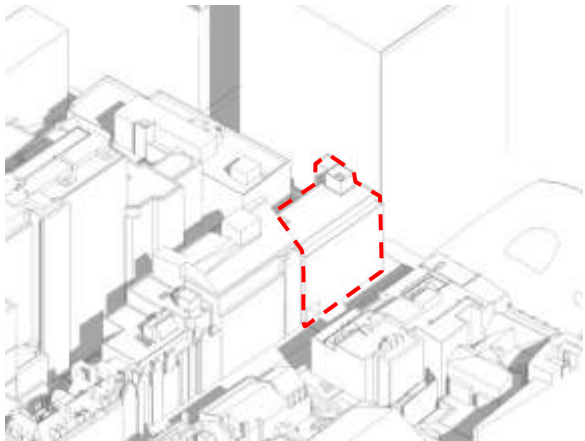
9.00am
Winter



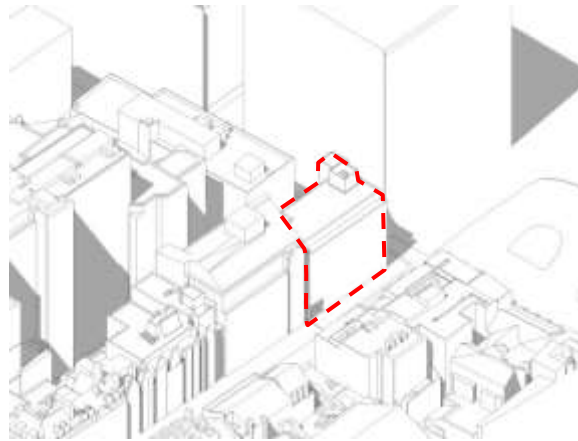
Midday



4.00pm



9.00am
Summer



Midday



4.00pm

A study has been carried out to analyse the existing sunlight that falls on the site throughout summer and winter at different times of day.



9.00am

Winter



Midday



4.00pm



9.00am

Summer



Midday



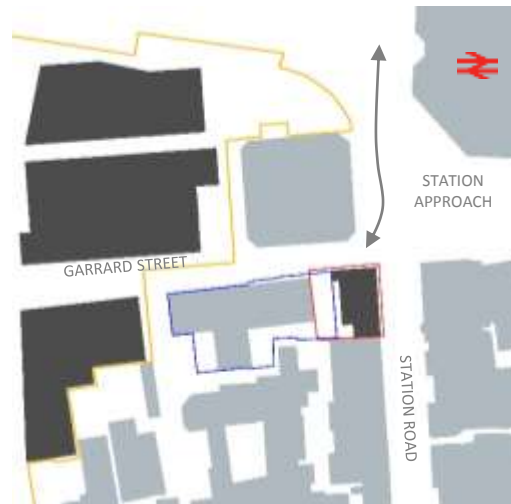
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KEY SITE OPPORTUNITY

Relationship to Sackville's Re-development

The site is adjacent to Sackville's development and the proposed heights of this mixed use development provides precedent for this proposal.



KEY SITE OPPORTUNITY

Relationship to Reading Station/main transport route

This site is within close proximity to Reading Station and thus has direct access to this transport hub in the centre of Reading.

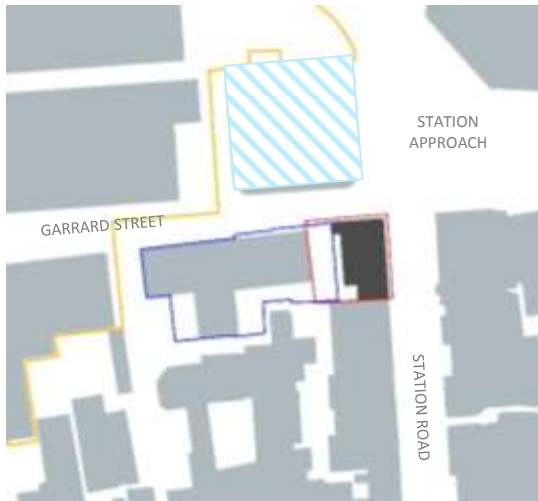


KEY SITE OPPORTUNITY

Fronting onto Station Road (Vehicular and Pedestrian)

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing building at Station Road and replaces it with a tower which fronts onto Station Road. This tower will maintain the frontage at the lower levels and maximise the business/commercial opportunities by capitalising on the large numbers of pedestrians that use this route.

Key Opportunities and Key Site Constraints



KEY SITE CONSTRAINT

Relationship to Thames Tower

Immediately to the north of the site is Thames Tower which is to be redeveloped in addition to the Station Hill redevelopment. This also provides precedent for the scale and height of the proposed tower.



KEY SITE CONSTRAINT

Relationship to Garrard House

A connection will be formed between Garrard House and the Station Road proposal, linking the two Titan Property developments visually but there will be no direct link/route between the two.



KEY SITE CONSTRAINT

Impact on adjacent buildings

There are a small number of office, retail and residential buildings that surround the site at a lower level. The tower must take into consideration these surrounding buildings.

Summary

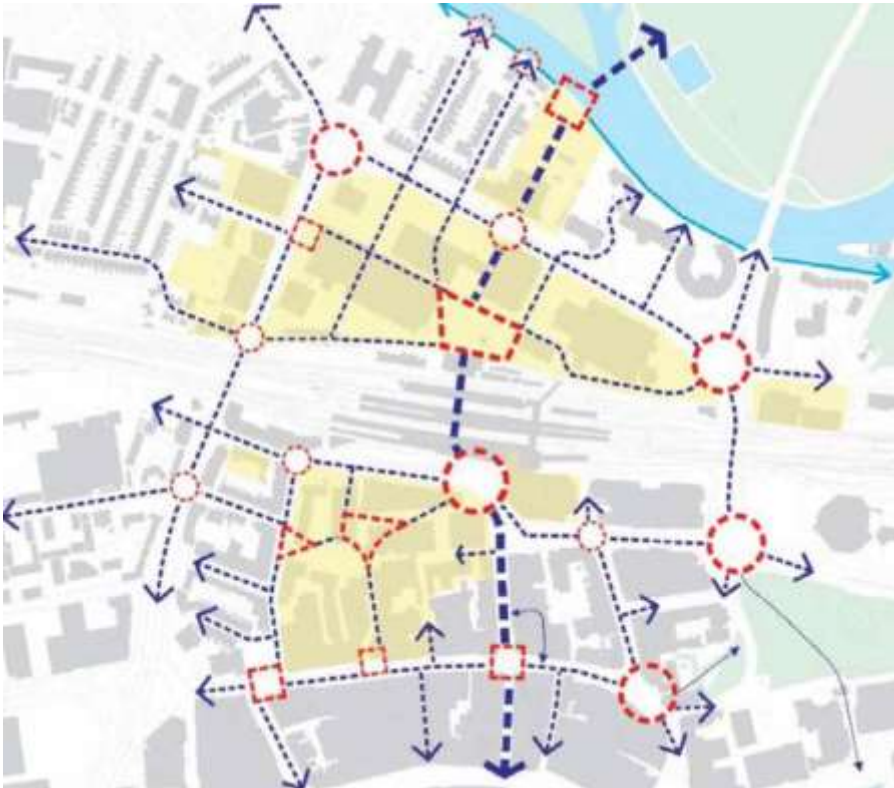
The illustrations above highlight the site opportunities and constraints, these helped and enabled us to develop a skeleton for a site layout. We aim to maximise the site's opportunities whilst taking the sites constraints into account.



Station Hill Development (Image from Station Hill 'All Change for Reading')



Station Hill Development (Image from Station Hill 'All Change for Reading')



Master plan Vision
[image from Reading Sackville Developments D&A]

- Major path/pedestrian link
- Minor Path
- Public space/square
- Water side footpath
- Development opportunity

Station Hill Development

Station Hill, a quality mixed use development, is an approved proposal in the town centre of Reading.

Station Hill is a fully managed estate in a contemporary urban setting, it incorporates 930,000sqft of offices, 150,000sqft of retail and 300 residential units.

Station Hill is instrumental in the regeneration of Reading town centre and will help to release the enormous commercial and social potential this area has to offer. 29 to 35 Station Road will enhance this already approved scheme and in turn will act as a catalyst to further improve the area.

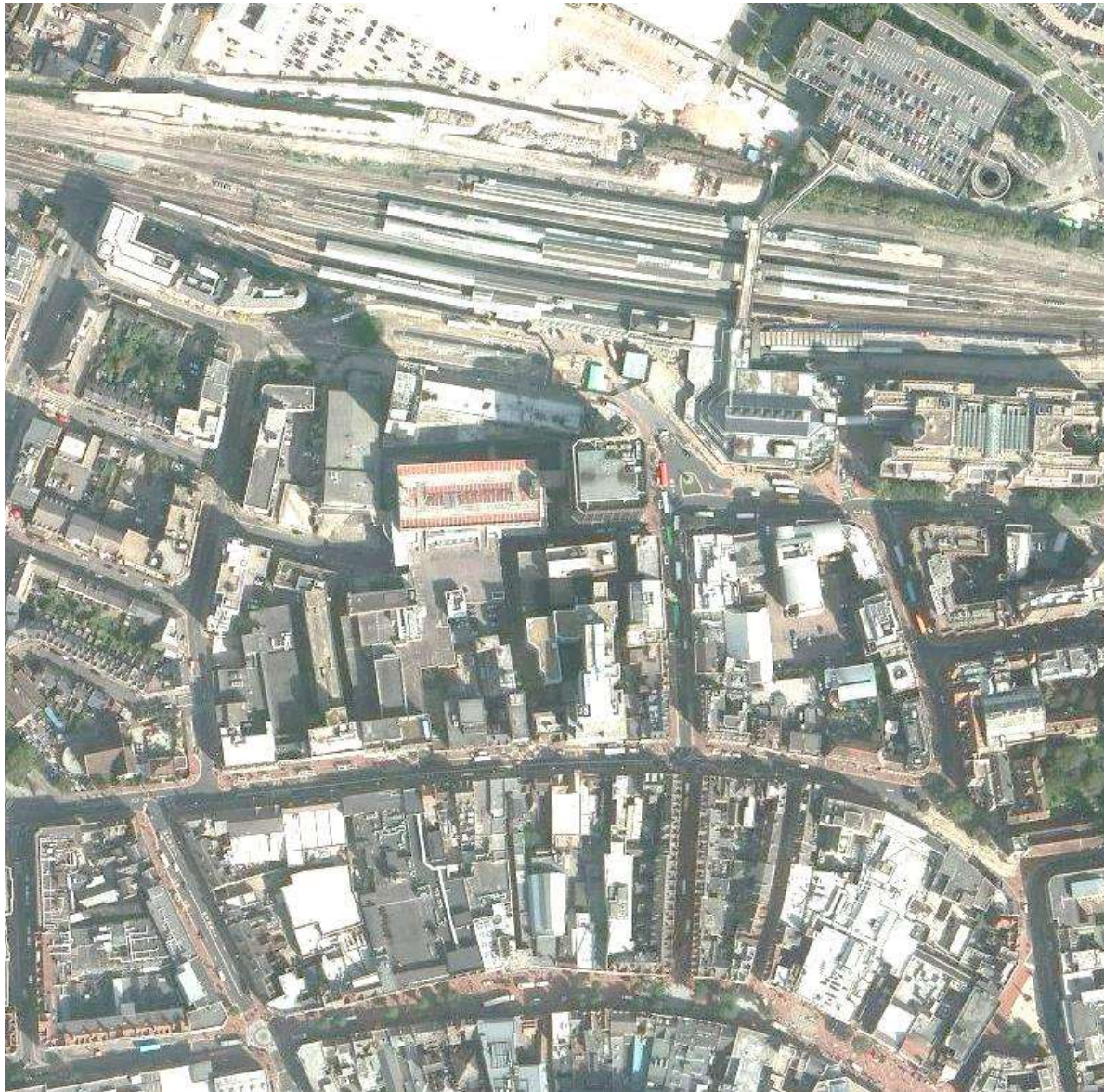
This central area of Reading has exceptional accessibility with motorway links, excellent rail links and is also in the proximity of Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. This development looks to aid future development of the area.

Key Sustainability Features

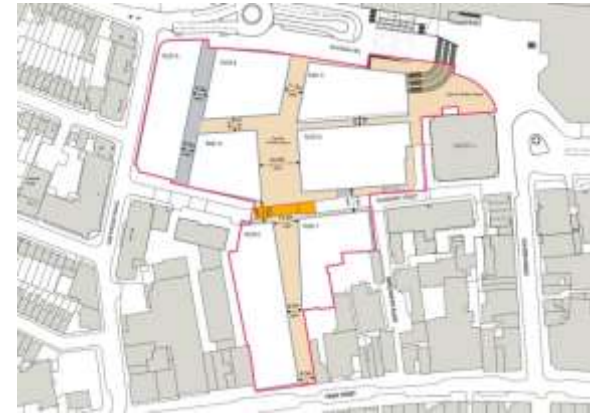
- Development of brownfield site
- BREEAM 2014 Excellent rating target
- Energy efficient façade design
- CHP technology reducing CO₂ emissions (20-25% beneath current Building Regulations)
- Green Roof

02

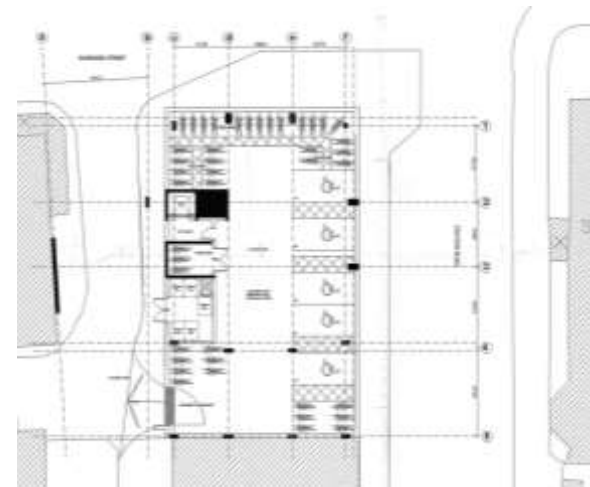
PLANNING HISTORY & PLANNING POLICY



Reading Town Centre [Image from Bing Maps]



Station Hill Plan [Image from Reading Sackville Developments D&A]



Broadway Malyan Planning Application/Ground Floor Plan



National Planning Policy Framework

The Government has set out its planning policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, published in March 2012. The Government's policies support the redevelopment of brownfield land, encouraging development in locations with the best public transport links, and seeks to address the nation's housing crisis by promoting a step-change in the number of new homes being built.

Residential Design Standards

The detailed proposal has been developed to include the principles of the following design guidance documents. The list below represents a proportion of residential design standards that were considered.

Design Standards referenced:

- Reading Council Local Plan
- BRE Environmental Assessment Method
- Lifetime Homes
- Building for Life
- BRE Wheelchair Housing Design Guide (2006)
- Secure by Design

Strategic Planning Policies & Material Considerations

Relevant planning policies and material considerations for the Union Tower application are noted below:

Local Plan

- Reading Core Strategy (adopted 2008/alterd Jan 2015)
- Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) (adopted 2009)
- Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) (adopted 2012/alterd Jan 2015)
- Proposals Map (adopted 2012)

Other Relevant Planning Policy Documents

- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (adopted July 2013)
- Employment, skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document (approved April 2013)
- Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (adopted July 2011)
- Reading Station Area Framework (adopted Dec 2010)
- Station Hill South Planning and Urban Designs Brief (adopted March 2007)
- Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (2008)

Previous Approved Planning Application

The development of this site has already been considered with acceptance (Application Number 040516) for the erection of a 22 storey building of 103 residential units, two ground floor Class A1 retail and/or Class A3 restaurant units with a basement level providing car/cycle parking spaces and refuse storage proposed by Broadway Malan Architects.

Consultations

The design has been discussed with Reading Council.

These discussions have provided the design team with valuable feedback which has been used to adjust, develop and improve the design.

In addition consultations have been held with:

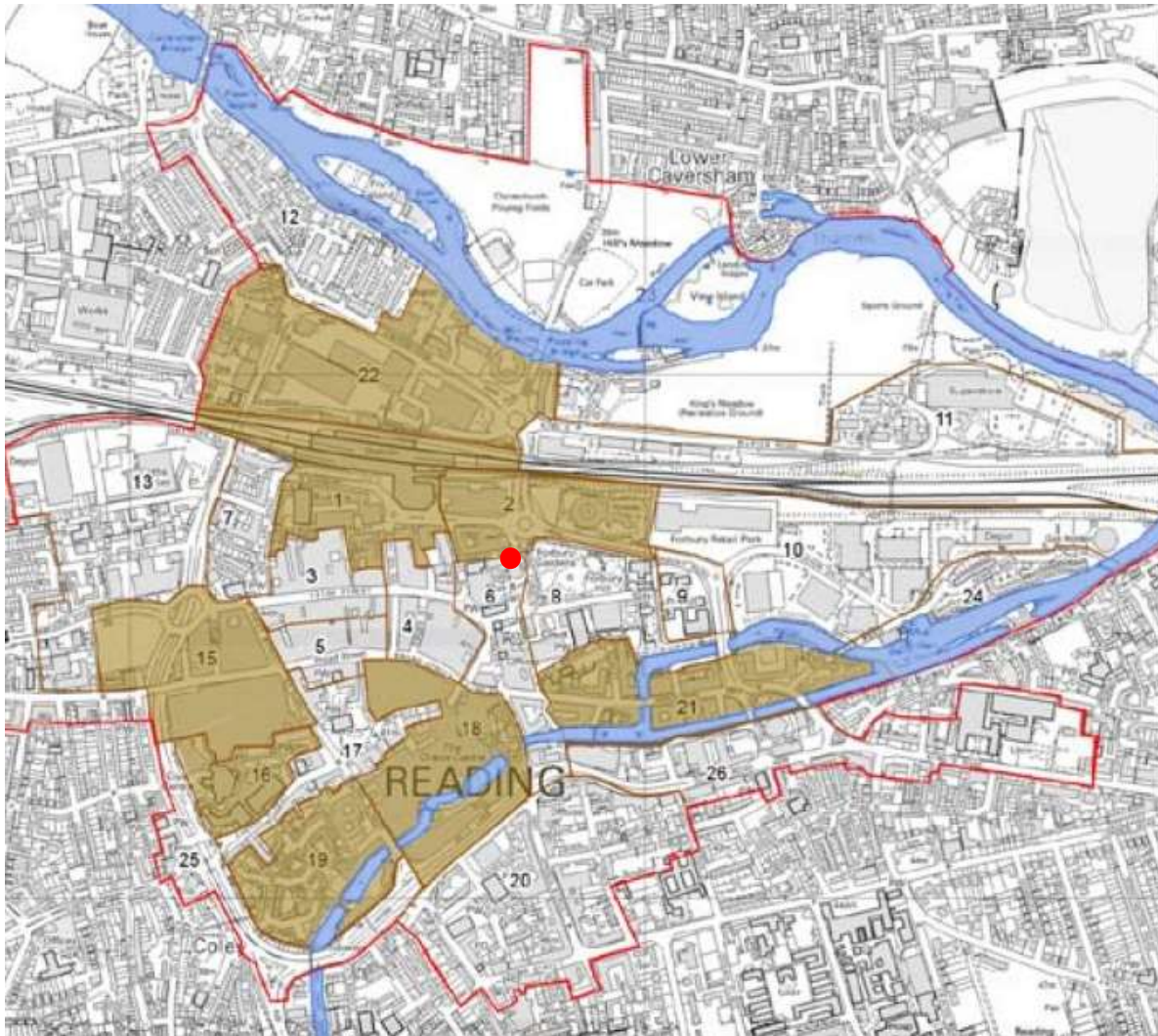
- RBC Local Planning Authority (LPA)
- RBC Local Highways Authority
- Transport Consultant – Paul Crosby
- Fire Consultant – Trenton Fire
- Structural Consultant – BWB Consultants
- M&E Consultant - BWB Consultants

Design Review Panel

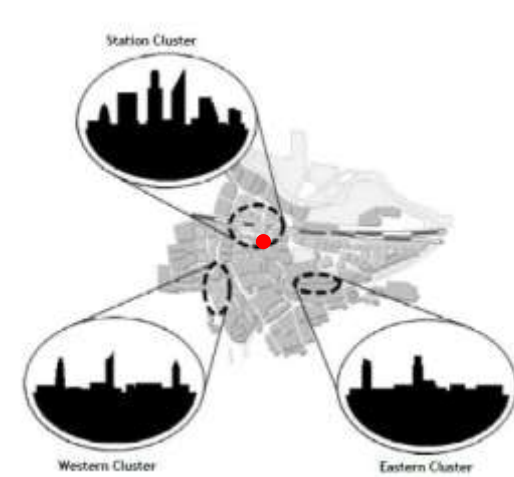
The Design Review Panel was held with the South East Regional Design Panel on 1st July 2015 with Reading Borough Council, WCEC Architects and Titan Properties present.

The Panel accepts the suitability of this site for a tall building and feedback/comments were provided to help further design work and development.

Please refer to Section 05 *DRP Review* in the subsequent section for WCEC's response to each comment from the DRP and Panel Managers .



Townscape Capacity for Tall Buildings [Reading Tall Buildings Rort]



Diagrammatic representation of the clusters and direction of the policy [Reading Tall Buildings Report]



Major Opportunities Areas [Reading Central Area Action Plan]

Overview

The two key documents which have been consulted during the Station Road design stages, are the Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 and the Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009 (RCAAP). The relevant policy requirements have been analysed and our response has been summarised in the following sections; Context, Programme, Building Design, Material Quality, Sustainable Transport and Sustainability.

“The vision for the central area seeks to build on the status of central Reading as the dynamic and creative core of the capital of the Thames Valley, and an important regional hub..”

Tall Buildings have a symbolic role in marking Reading centre out as a regionally significant hub of activity. This proposal will fall within the RC13a Station Area Cluster (Fig 2.05).

“A new cluster of tall buildings with the station at its heart will signify the status of the station area as a major mixed-use destination and the main gateway to, and most accessible part of, Reading.”

Context

29 to 35 Station Road sits adjacent to the Station Hill development and opposite Thames Tower. It is positioned to the far east of this cluster, providing much needed height in this position.

29 to 35 Station Road sits at 72m high, 16.5m wide by 24.5m wide. 29 to 35 Station Road is of a slender form and mass. The RCAAP states that the Station Cluster is signified by the tallest buildings.

WCEC have developed 29 to 35 Station Road as an additional element to the already changing/developing Station Hill area. 29 to 35 Station Road will form an important part of this new cluster of predominantly tall buildings.

Programme

The time frame for the construction of Station Road has been carefully considered in order to co-ordinate with the other developments in the area and fit into the wider planning framework. The new Reading Station was officially opened on 17th July 2014; Work on the Station Hill redevelopment opposite Reading Station is currently underway and construction on one of the five buildings is taking shape. 29 to 35 Station Road construction would therefore hope to fall towards the end of the Station Hill development.

Building Design

29 to 35 Station Road will provide a sustainable, modern and well detailed design that works well with the proposed Station Hill development in terms of form, height, style and materiality. One building is proposed to be built on the site, avoiding the creation of an overly dense townscape. Views from distance, middle-distance and immediate locality are analysed within a verified views report that forms part of this planning application.

“It is vital that, given their prominence, new tall buildings are of the highest architectural quality...They need to make a positive contribution to the character of the centre of Reading and to views into the centre..”

WCEC propose both commercial and leisure facilities at ground and first floors, these spaces maximise the buildings potential in this prominent location in the town centre. In addition the plinth provides a well articulated base to the tower which is in keeping with the adjacent Thames Tower. Both Thames Tower and 29-53 Station Road propose more glazing to define the internal space and give a better quality of space in terms of enhanced daylighting and framing of views where applicable.

“It is important that a coherent, attractive and sustainable grouping of buildings is created within a high quality public realm.”

Material Quality

WCEC have spent time researching, detailing and sourcing materials for the proposal, which we feel not only link back to Readings brick history, but provide a modern palette of materials to compliment the adjacent Station Hill development and Thames Tower.

Sustainable Transport

Due to its central locality, being in close proximity to excellent public transport links, the development doesn't include any car parking provisions, except for disabled use. The scheme does provide generous cycle storage, thus encouraging residents and users to consider greener forms of transport.

Sustainability

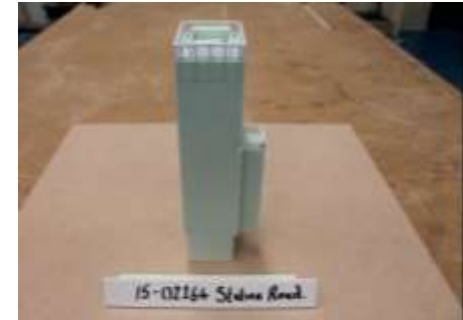
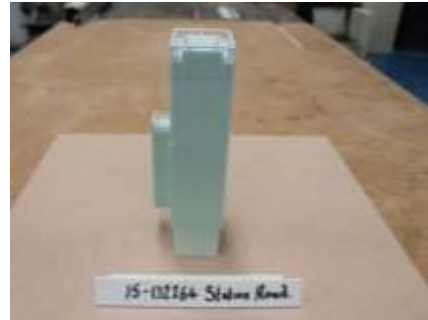
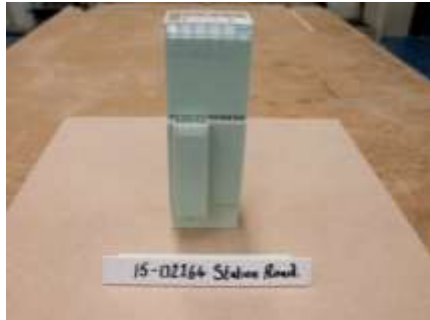
29 to 35 Station Road is relatively narrow in plan, with a large amount of glazing to incorporate maximum natural light. To ensure that the tower does not overheat, the design incorporates fins and louvres which provide solar shading. The large amount of glazing also allows for the tower to be naturally ventilated. Wind speed, turbulence and overshadowing of adjacent buildings has been considered throughout the design process.

“Tall buildings are inherently energy intensive, so there will need to be particular efforts made to ensure that tall buildings meet the requirements of Core Strategy.”

The development is also aiming for a BRE AAM rating of very good.

03

THE DESIGN APPROACH



Photographs of Wind Consultant RWDI 29 to 35 Station Road Initial Model for testing



Photographs of WCEC sketch model of 29 to 35 Station Road in 3D Model context model

Scheme Development

Following receipt of the brief from Titan Properties WCEC Architects were appointed as Architects for 29 to 35 Station Road, Reading.

Key development stages of the proposal for 29 to 35 Station Road can be categorised into four distinct stages;

- **Pre App Meeting**
- **Initial design development (pre DRP)**
- **DRP Review & Response**
- **Final Scheme**

Pre App Meeting

There was an initial pre app meeting held with the council. This enabled dialogue to start with the Local Authority.

Initial design development (pre DRP)

This early design stage was key to understanding and analysing any planning history, planning policy and the site context. WCEC liaised with consultants as they were brought into the design team.

DRP Review & Response

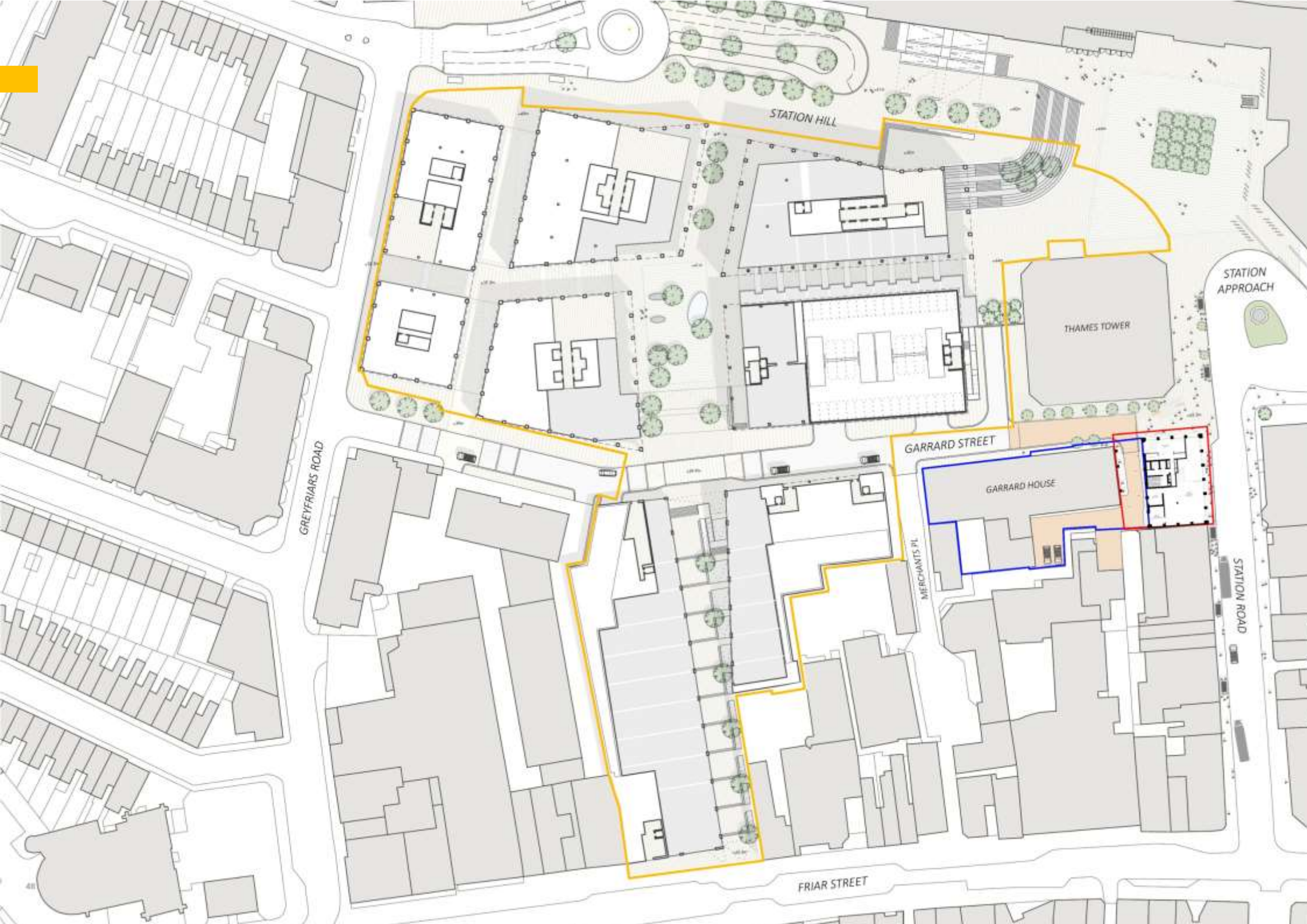
Following the DRP that was held on the 1st July 2015 WCEC Architects received a letter that included Berkshire Design Review Panels comments on Union Tower, 29 to 35 Station Road, Reading.

WCEC Architects were able to review these comments that were made, discussing this both internally and externally with client, planning consultant and other key consultants. WCEC were then able to respond to these comments, this was documented during this process. This is shown within the subsequent section 04 DRP Review.

During this time all consultants have revised, refined and finalised their reports for submission. Of particular importance is the Wind Consultants Report, Ecological Report and Daylighting Report.

Final Scheme

The final scheme is documented within section 06.



STATION HILL

THAMES TOWER

GARRARD STREET

GARRARD HOUSE

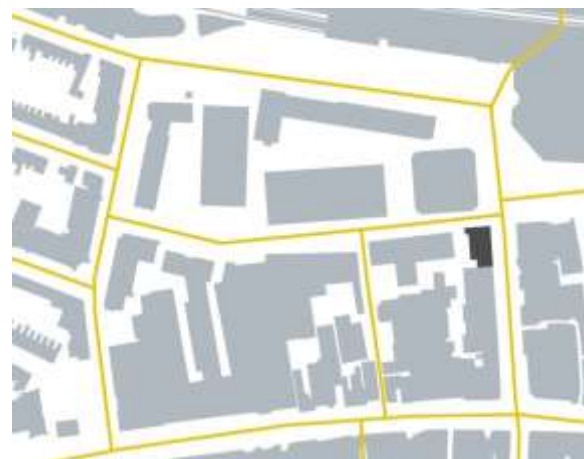
MERCHANTS PL

GREYFRIARS ROAD

FRIAR STREET

STATION APPROACH

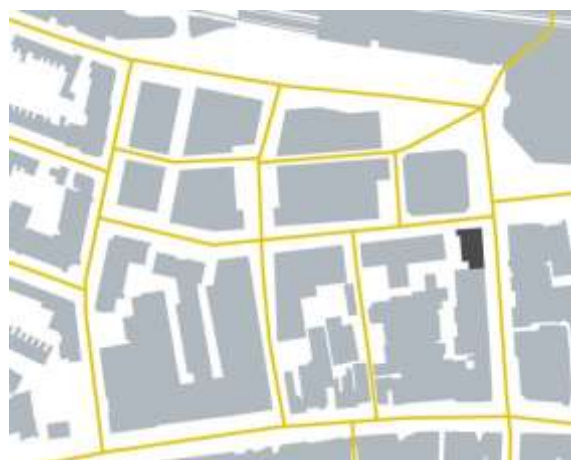
STATION ROAD



Existing Routes



New Plots [that impact the site]



New Routes

- Station Hill Redevelopment
- Garrard House
- 29-35 Station Road

Figure 3.01: Proposed Site Plan

The network of routes and spaces that surround the site/land ownership have been analysed as part of the proposal for 29 to 35 Station Road. These routes connect the wider locality of Reading to the proposal, and in particular provide routes to the public commercial/leisure facilities at ground and first floor levels.

The establishment of these routes is a vital part of any future proposals within the centre of Reading.

The 'existing routes' diagram shows the site today with the existing buildings adjacent to the site and the existing networks and key routes. The key difference here is that the proposed buildings which form part of Station Hill development are not shown.

The 'New Plots [that impact the site]' diagram adds the footprint of the proposed Tower at 29 to 35 Station Road. In addition, this shows in grey, the buildings that form part of the Station Hill Development.

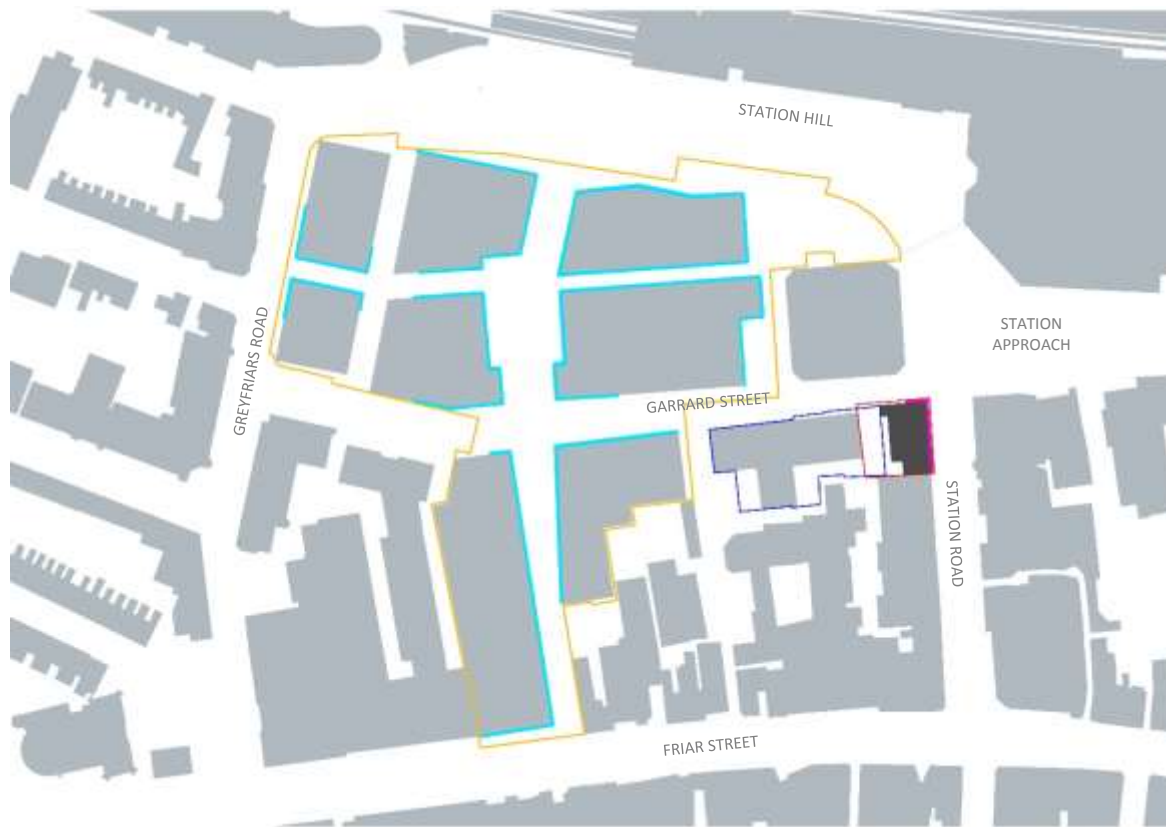
The 'New Routes' diagram shows the introduction of the Station Hill development and the new networks and routes that form part of this redevelopment.



Station Hill Development Frontage (<http://www.stationhillreading.co.uk/>)



Station Hill Development Frontage (<http://www.stationhillreading.co.uk/>)



Building Frontages

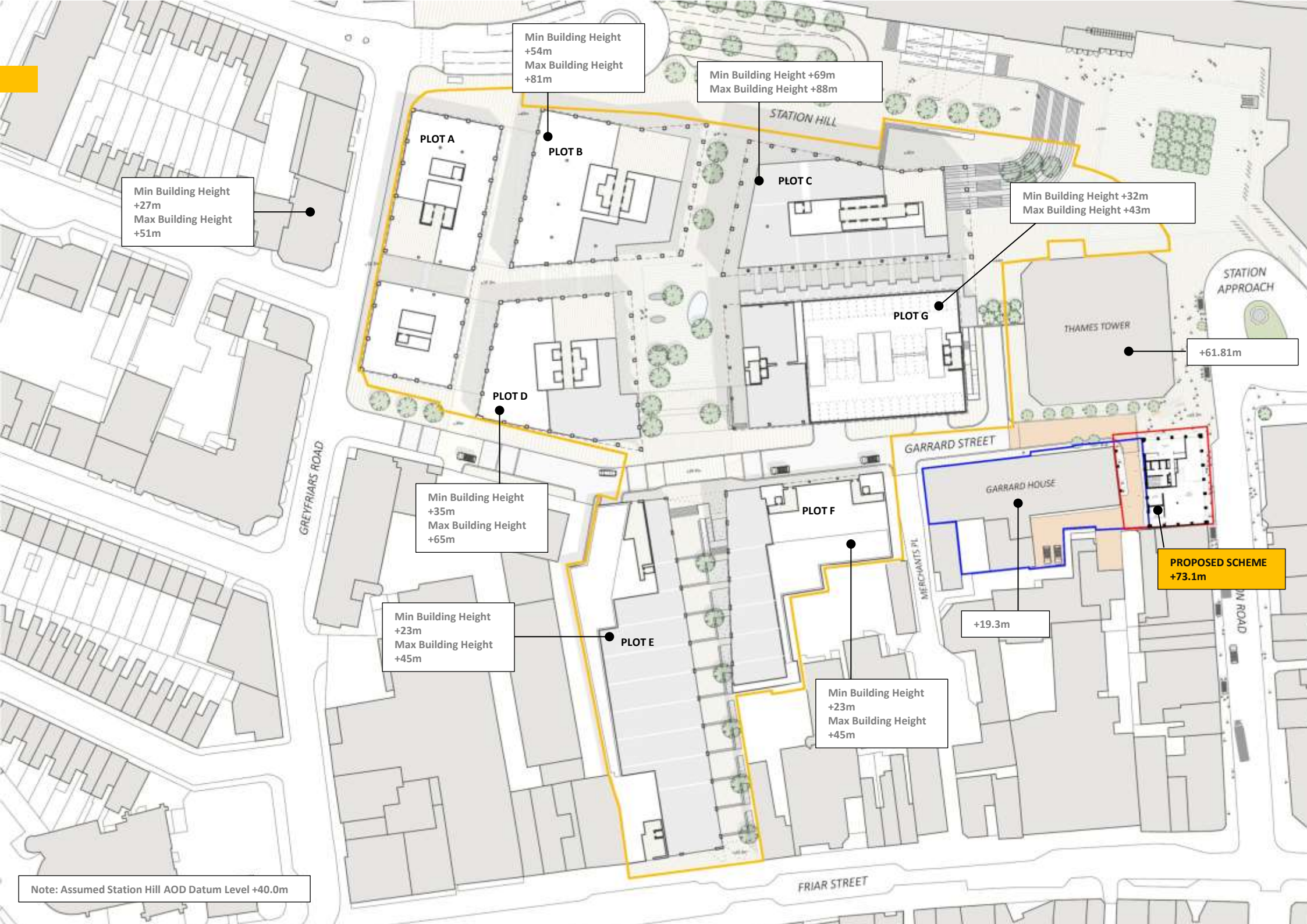
- Union Tower Active Frontage
- Station Hill Active Frontage
- Station Hill Redevelopment boundary
- Garrard House boundary
- 29-35 Station Road boundary

- Union Tower Active Frontage
- Station Hill Active Frontage

The plan adjacent specifies the active frontage zones for both 29 to 35 Station Road on Station Road and for the Plots which form the Station Hill development.

It was a part of the clients brief to include retail, commercial and leisure at ground and mezzanine floors. WCEC have created active frontage on both the north and east elevations.

29 to 35 Station Road is positioned at the top of Station Road, contributing to the activity on the street leading down to the main central shopping area of Reading.



Min Building Height
+27m
Max Building Height
+51m

Min Building Height
+54m
Max Building Height
+81m

Min Building Height +69m
Max Building Height +88m

Min Building Height +32m
Max Building Height +43m

+61.81m

Min Building Height
+35m
Max Building Height
+65m

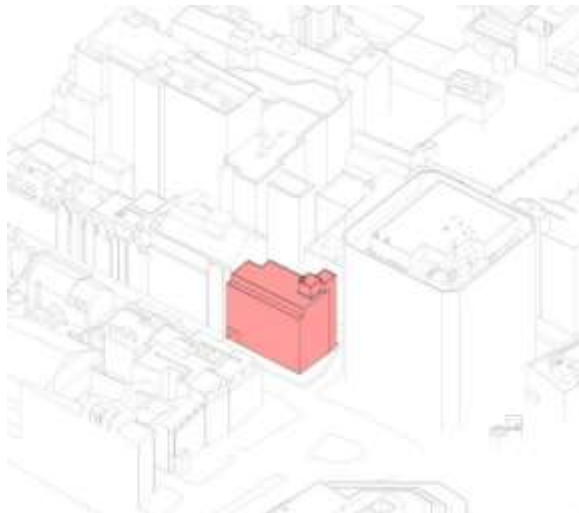
Min Building Height
+23m
Max Building Height
+45m

Min Building Height
+23m
Max Building Height
+45m

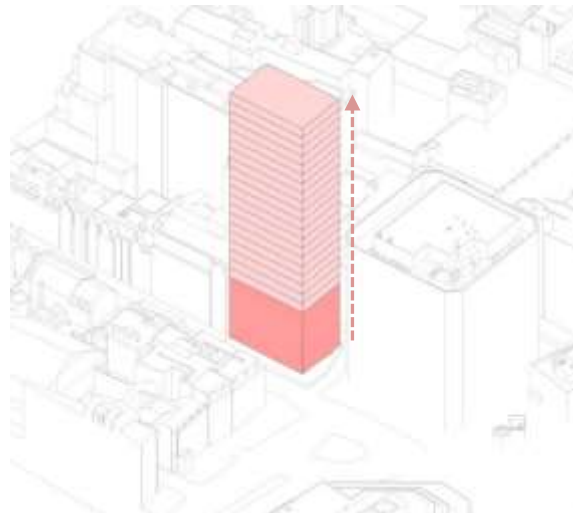
+19.3m

PROPOSED SCHEME
+73.1m

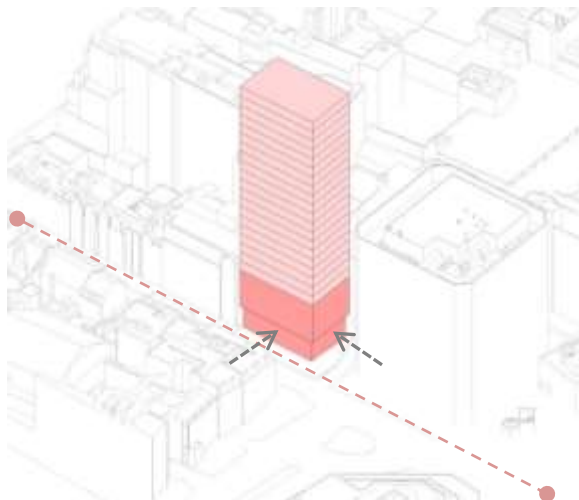
Note: Assumed Station Hill AOD Datum Level +40.0m



1 | EXISTING Office Building

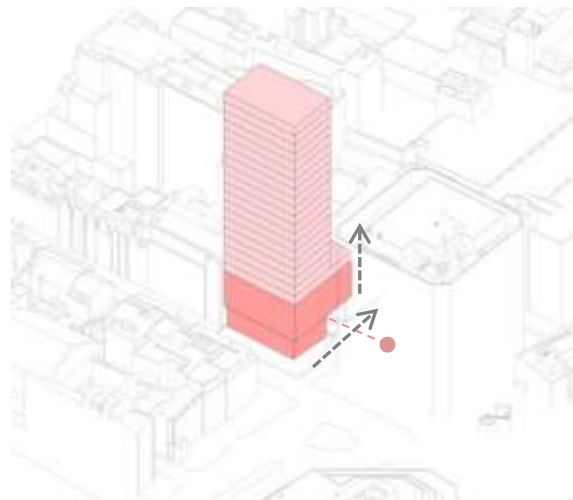


2 | EXTEND UP Expand usable space on footprint



3 | CARVE Allow public space between building mass and street

Massing of 29 to 35 Station Road



4 | EXTEND ACROSS Maximise site and extend to Garrard House

Principles of height

The approach to heights is defined by the previous submission by Broadway Malyan for the site which sets precedent for the proposal. The basic principle is to match (approximately) the previously accepted scheme in height in order to produce a proposal that is both to the Council's requirements and that takes its context into account.

The basic principle is for there to be an increase in height from the adjacent Garrard House and the existing Thames Tower to the North. The diagrams opposite demonstrate the approach to massing in the context. Careful consideration has been paid to develop the height of the tower in its specific context.

Reading Borough Council 'Tall Building Strategy'

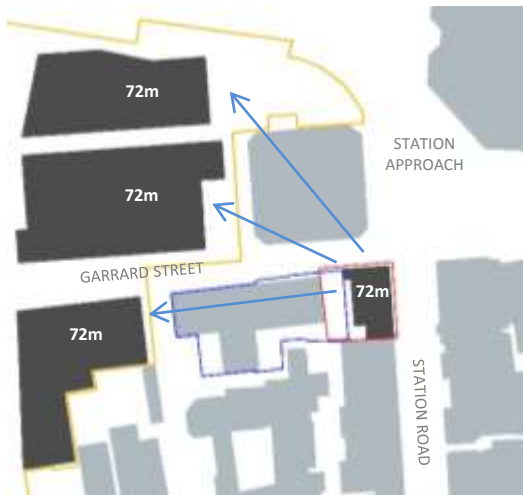
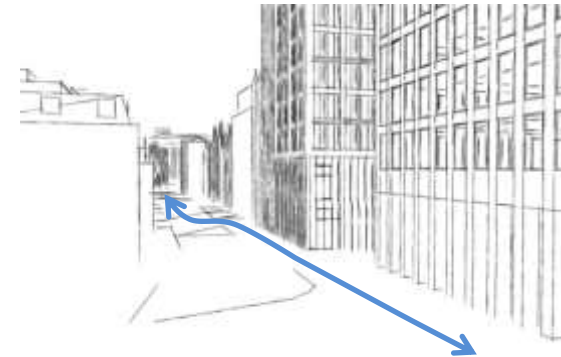
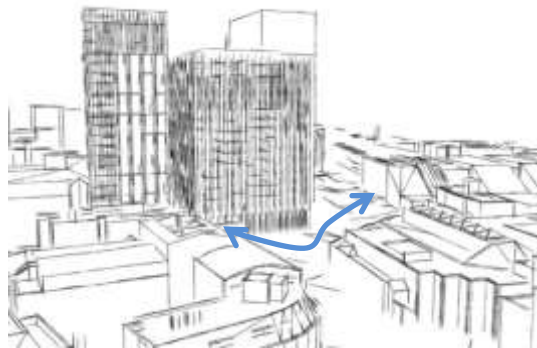
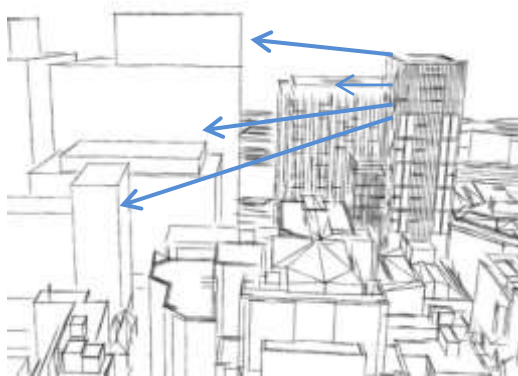
The 'Tall Building Strategy' provides information regarding the appropriate locations for the development of tall buildings in Reading. It provides a vision for the town centre and the ongoing redevelopment of Reading town centre.

Within this report a building termed tall is defined as over 10 storeys. Our proposal at 29 to 35 Station Road is 23 storeys tall and thus is classed as a 'tall building'.

General Principles for designing Tall Buildings

In order to make a positive contribution to the town centre of Reading and to views into the centre, the proposal must:

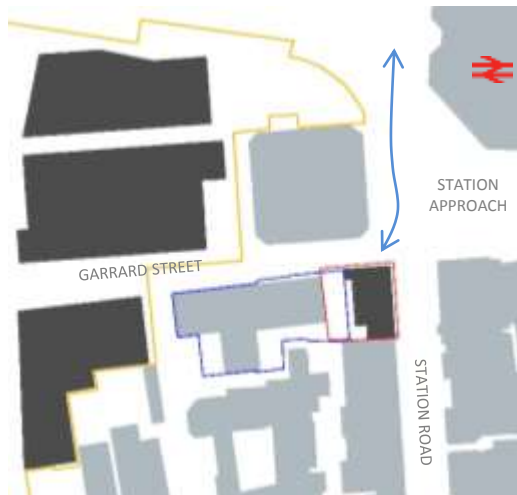
- Enhance Readings skyline through a distinctive profile and top quality design of the upper section of the building.
- Afford the highest architectural design quality.
- Contribute to a human scale street environment, through paying careful attention to the lower section of the building, providing rich architectural detailing and reflecting the surroundings.
- Contribute to high quality views from distance, views from middle distance and local views.
- Take into account the context within which sites.
- Avoid bulky dominant massing.
- Avoid detrimental impacts upon conservation areas and listed buildings.
- Use high quality materials that reference their physical, cultural and historic surroundings.



RESPONSE TO SITE OPPORTUNITY

Relationship to Sackville's Re-development

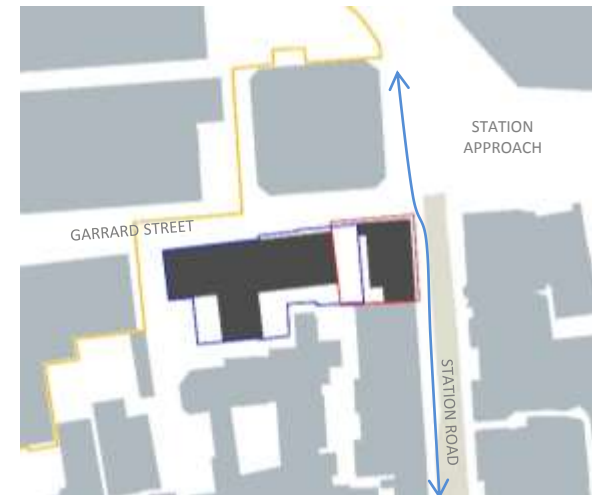
29 to 35 Station Roads height has been designed to replicate the height of the previous application on the site whilst respecting the future Station Hill Development. The proposed height has been restricted to allow for the tallest building within the Station Hill development to retain a hierarchy in scale. The scale of the Station Hill development increases in scale towards the north and the railway station. This allows 29 to 35 Station Road to become an added element that ties into the scale of the surrounding context., Adding a feature building that can relate to views from the south and the town centre.



RESPONSE TO SITE OPPORTUNITY

Relationship to Reading Station/main transport route

This site is within close proximity to Reading Station this provides excellent transport connections for all residents. The proposals position has been designed to emerge from behind Thames Tower to address the entrance to the train station, directing pedestrians along Station Road. The corner of the building addressing the Station will become a key element in terms of use and active frontage.

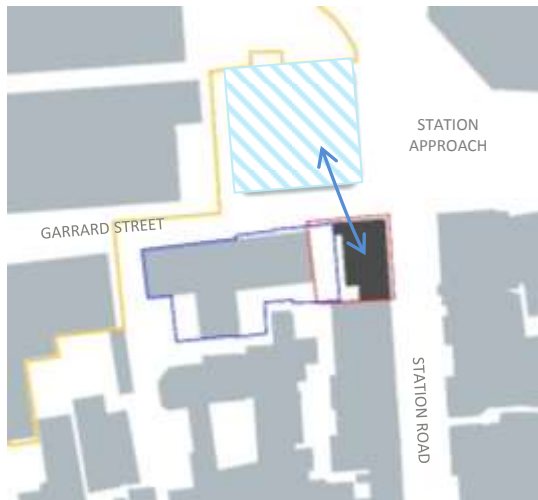
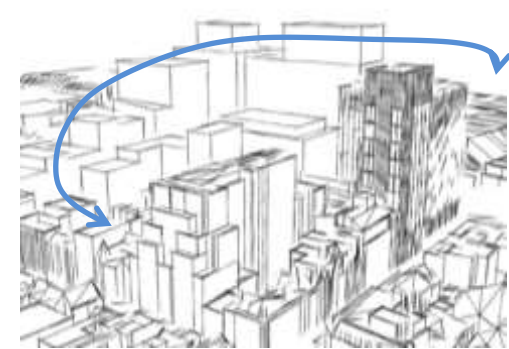
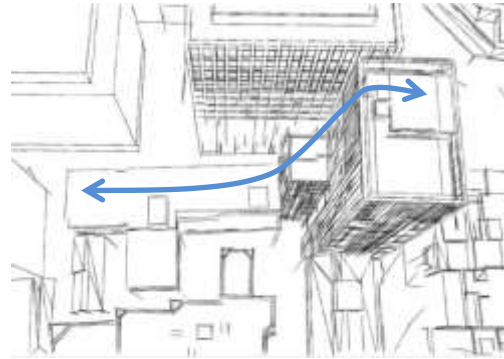


RESPONSE TO SITE OPPORTUNITY

Fronting onto Station Road (Vehicular and Pedestrian)

The proposal removes the existing building at 29 to 35 Station Road and replaces it with a tower that fronts onto Station Road. 29 to 35 Station Road will maintain the frontage at the lower plinth levels and with the large numbers of pedestrians that use this route, will maximise the business opportunities. The scale of the commercial levels will seek to replicate the surrounding context, whilst the architectural language will provide a subtle visual break framing the retail space.

Key Site Opportunities and Key Site Constraints



RESPONSE TO SITE CONSTRAINT

Relationship to Thames Tower

Immediately to the north of the site is Thames Tower which is to be redeveloped in addition to the Station Hill redevelopment. This provides precedent for the scale and height of the proposed tower. The building layout will seek to provide dual aspect units to the northern elevation allowing daylight to be maximised.



RESPONSE TO SITE CONSTRAINT

Relationship to Garrard House

A connection will be formed between the Garrard House proposal and 29 to 35 Station Road proposal, linking the two developments. The connection will seek to provide a subtle architectural language, allowing for the 29 to 35 tower element to take precedent; giving the street scene a level of hierarchy.



RESPONSE TO SITE CONSTRAINT

Impact on adjacent buildings

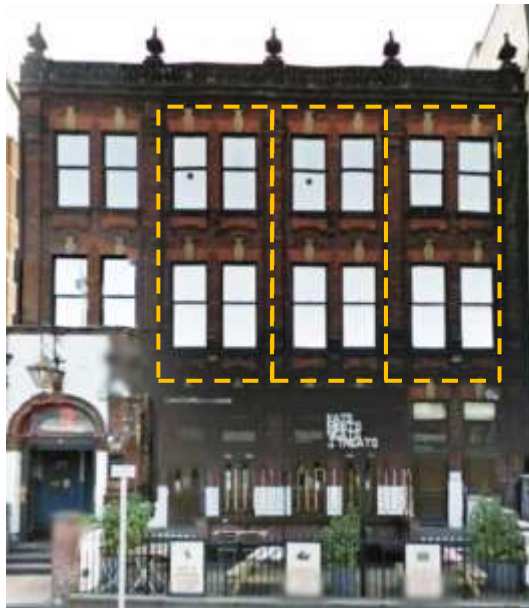
There are a small number of office, retail and residential buildings all that surround the site at a lower level. 29 to 35 Station Road must take into consideration these surrounding buildings. Sunlight and daylight assessments have been completed.

04

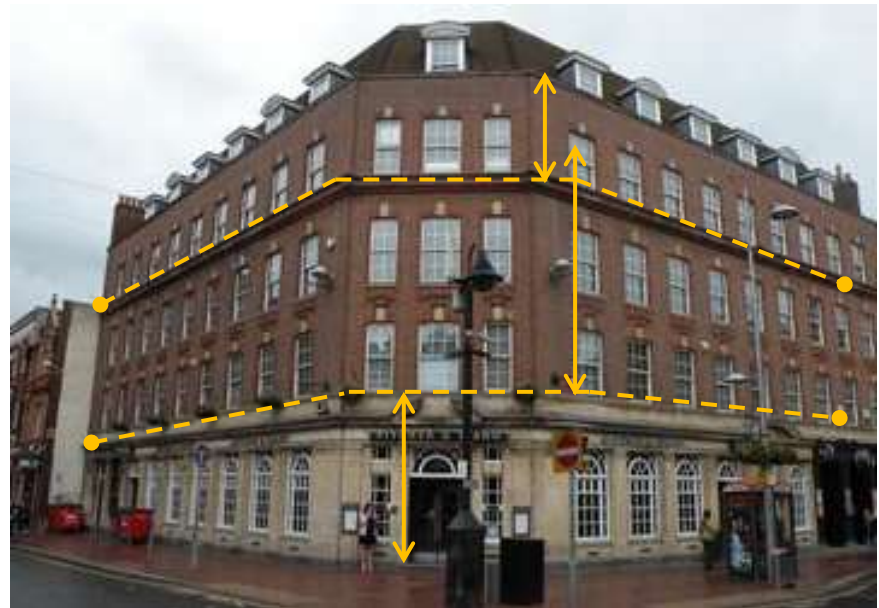
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



1.



2.



3.



4.



Key

Images taken from surrounding site

1. *Four Window Bays*
2. *Strong Verticality*
3. *Hierarchy*
4. *Malmaison Hotel
Precedent for Tower Plinth Level*

Contextual Façade Study

Whilst conducting the context study it was noted that the surrounding buildings all had similar characteristics; the primary material used is brick and there is subtle detailing employed to separate and add interest to the façade.

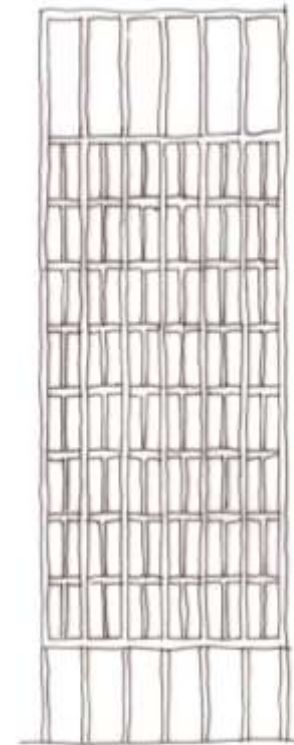
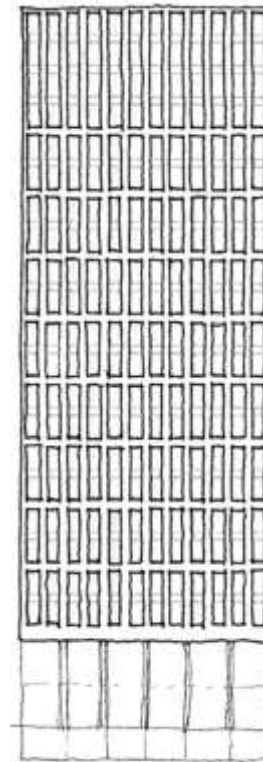
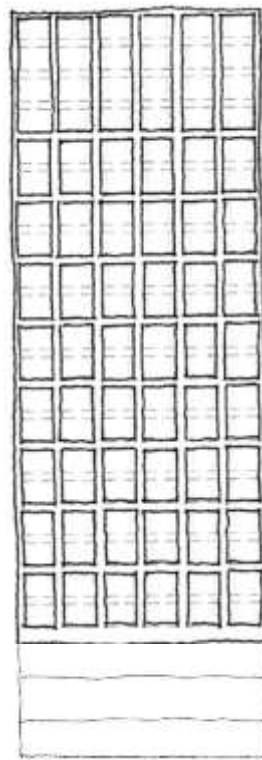
Bays give the façade a certain simplicity of design, whilst providing interest and detailing.

Strong verticality is used to unite the façade and in some instances heightens the building mass.

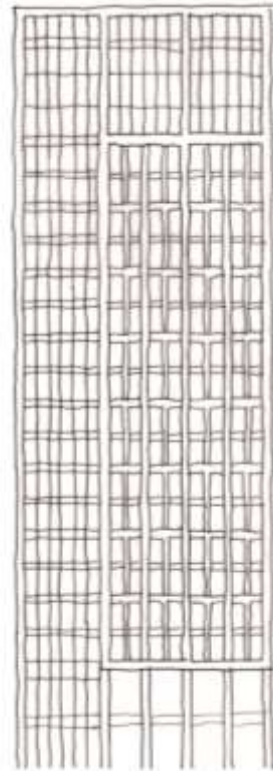
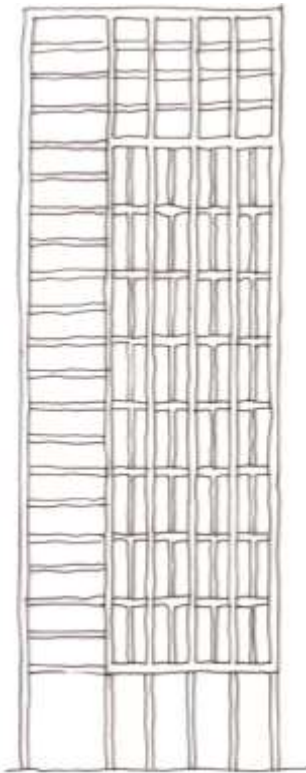
The mixed-use buildings show a definitive hierarchy in three zones; retail at ground level, with residential or office above. The base plinth has design similarities with the façade above but is usually rendered differently; this automatically shows differentiation between the buildings uses. The top zone uses similar principles, but creates a mirror in terms of proportion, as the plinth.



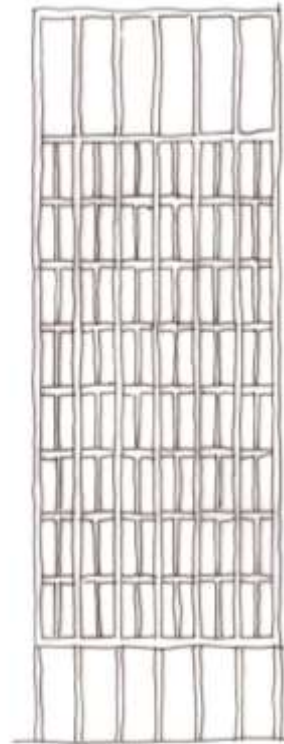
*Breaking down the building....
Top.....middle.....bottom.....*



*Experimenting with rhythm and proportion.....
Planes.....bays.....hierarchy.....verticality.....*



*Further options explored.....
Overly complex?*



Having undertaken the contextual façade study it became apparent that the sites surrounding context had a number of elements that could influence the design.

The first item being the use of rhythm within the composition of facades. This led to a process of experimenting with the use of a grid, with various different options being explored. The idea being to reference the surrounding context (including the architectural language of the Station Hill development and the Thames Tower proposals) whilst allowing the tower to read correctly in isolation. Verticality is an important aspect of this – to allow the tower to read as a slender element free of bulky massing. The use of hierarchy within the facades composition will allow for the verticality to be expressed whilst the breaking down of the grid allows for bays to read as portrait elements rather than landscape.

Further development was explored to further enhance the scheme however it was felt that this became overly complex, taking away from the simplicity of design.



St Marys Church, Reading



St Marys Church, Reading / Flint



Reading has a clear local vernacular in terms of materiality with large proportion of its building stock demonstrating various types and colours.

Reading has various buildings of historic value, paying close attention to the use of materials and detail. This is evident in some of the examples of building that use a combination of flint and stone as an alternative to other fair faced materials.

Various materials have been explored as the proposal has developed however a material that makes reference to this interesting local vernacular is desired. A brick that has varied colour and texture can be used to reference the brick and flint seen within the town.



Variation...

Colour...

Texture...



Abbey Gateway, Reading

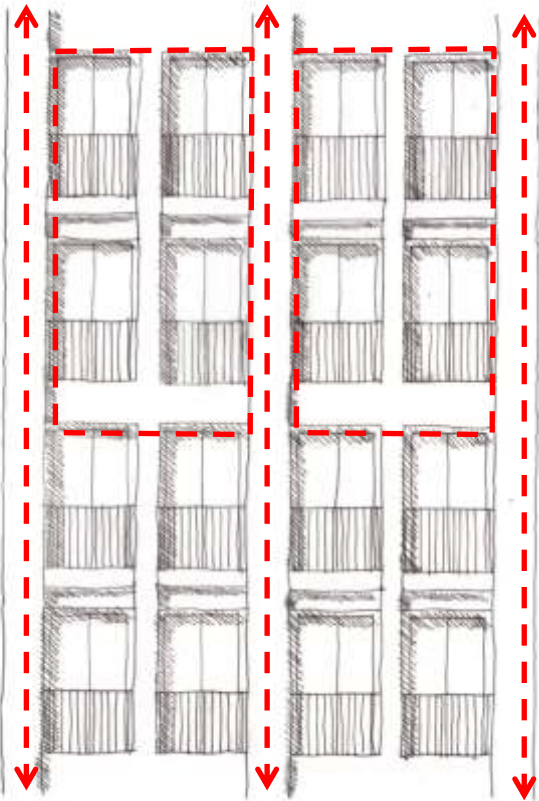


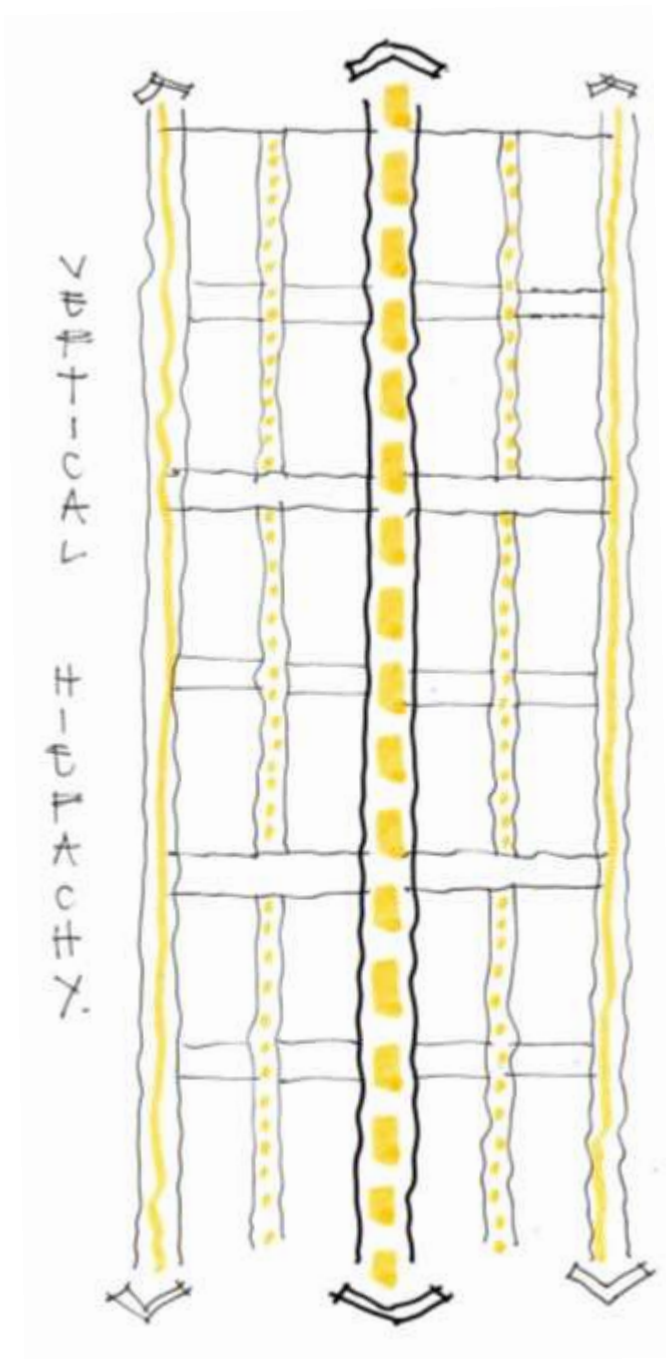


This double spread highlights WCEC's architectural approach to the design and facade of the Station Road proposal in the centre of Reading, focussing on the use of a well developed bay,

The images included all show a simple material palette and regular facade composition. WCEC look to use a selection of two to three materials maximum and in addition a strong vertical grid composition. This will help to achieve the simple yet defined design that will sit adjacent to Garrard House and the new/proposed Sackville's development in the centre of Reading.

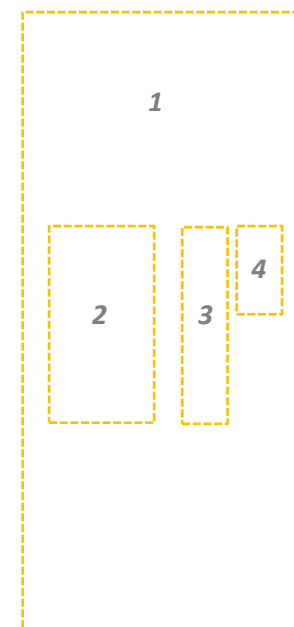
Progression.....





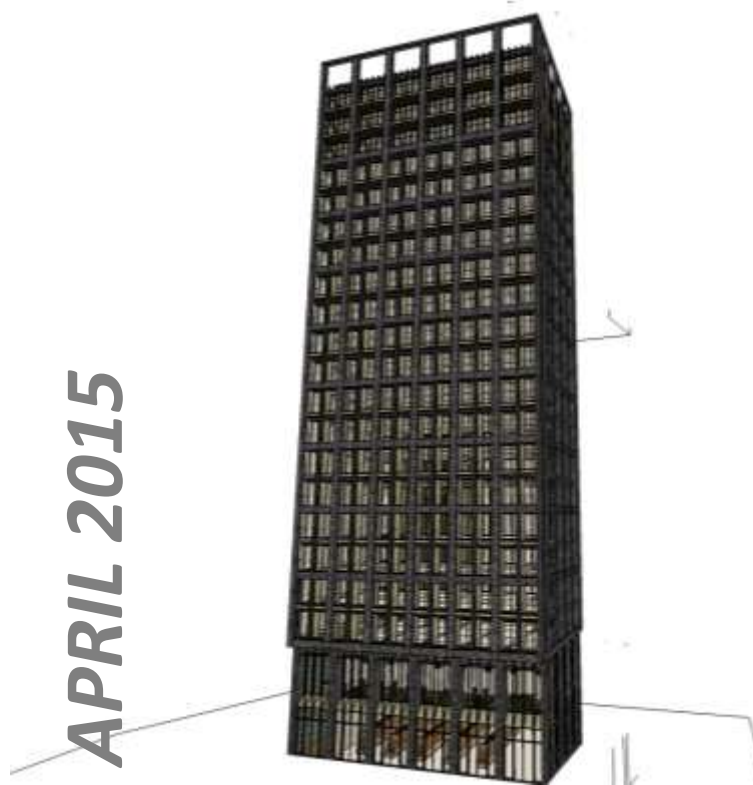
As the scheme has developed the hierarchy within the façade has been explored and refined. The use of vertical and horizontal planes works to break the façade down. The use of materiality has then been developed to supplement this adding an extra layer to the hierarchy.

The façade can be read as a series of bays slowly breaking down to individual openings.





FEBRUARY 2015



APRIL 2015



This spread demonstrates the progression of the scheme from initial brief to the finalised scheme. Over the course of this process the design has been refined to respond to the sites context, clients brief and comments received through the planning consultation process.

