

8 Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA)

Introduction

Purpose

- 8.1 This built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) forms Chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES), which is submitted as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for this application, as required by the 2017 EIA Regulations (as amended).
- 8.2 This Chapter of the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the Development on Site on the significance of built heritage assets within the Study Area of the Site, on the townscape character of the Site and local area, and on the visual amenity of visual receptors and views within that Study Area. For the purposes of this Chapter, the term 'built heritage' refers to the above-ground heritage assets.
- 8.3 This assessment considers how the Development considers embedded mitigation measures within the design of the Development. It then considers the need for additional mitigation to conclude on the residual effects. A cumulative assessment of the relevant committed developments is also presented.
- 8.4 A description of the Development on Site is provided within **ES Chapter 3: Site and Development Description**. The Development is further described in the Design and Access Statement (DAS), architectural / landscape drawings / illustrations produced by the project architects RTKL and LDA landscape architects, and also the overarching Planning Statement produced by Turley.
- 8.5 Built heritage effects are assessed in terms of the Development's interaction with the particular significance of the identified relevant built heritage assets / receptors. It considers how the ability to understand and appreciate the built heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting to significance would be changed as a result of the Development. That assessment is undertaken considering the relevant statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 and supporting NPPG; the local Development Plan; and other relevant material considerations.
- 8.6 The relevant townscape receptors that are likely to be affected by the Development are also identified and described, including a number of local Townscape Character Areas (TCA) within the Study Area and including the Site and its local area.
- 8.7 A number of key visual receptors requiring assessment are also identified in this Chapter; as relates to the likely visibility and visual amenity and views of the Site and Development. To help inform the assessments of the impacts of the Development on each of the relevant built heritage, townscape and visual receptors, a proportionate number and distribution of representative views have been agreed with Reading Borough Council (RBC). Accordingly, the assessment is informed by Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) produced by Ambiente for each of the viewpoints; included at **Appendix 8.4**.
- 8.8 A proportionate **Built Heritage Statement** is included as **Appendix 8.1** for the purposes of NPPF and local planning policy requirements, which provides a proportionate assessment of significance for the relevant built heritage assets (including the contribution made by the Site and or setting to that significance) and then a narrative assessment of the impacts of the Development on that significance. The Built Heritage Statement informs the heritage content of this ES Chapter.
- 8.9 A **Representative Views Assessment** is also included as **Appendix 8.3** as part of this Chapter, which is in support of, and supplementary to, the wider assessment of the likely significant effects of the Development on Site on the visual amenity of visual receptors and views within the Study Area.

Contents

- 8.10 A single Chapter has been prepared that considers all significant and non-significant effects, which is the most effective way of presenting an integrated assessment of the likely HTVIA effects. This approach

maintains the same level of rigour and robustness as to satisfy the specific requirements of EIA assessment and is framed to address the narrative impact assessment required by planning policy and best practice guidance / advice.

8.11 This Chapter comprises of the following **Sections / Appendices**:

- Introduction
- Legislative and Policy Context
- Assessment Methodology
- Baseline Conditions
- Likely Significant Effects
- Mitigation Measures
- Residual Effects
- Cumulative Effects
- Summary
- Appendix 8.1: Built Heritage Statement
- Appendix 8.2: HTVIA Supporting Figures
 - a. Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan (500m / 2km radius)
 - b. Heritage Assets Plan (HAP) (500m radius)
 - c. Townscape Character Areas (TCA) Plan (500m radius)
 - d. Representative Viewpoints (RV) Plan (500m / 2km radius)
- Appendix 8.3: Representative Views Assessment
- Appendix 8.4: Full Size Accurate Visual Representations (AVR) and Technical Methodology.

8.12 Appendix 8.5: National and Local Best Practice Guidance

Legislative and Policy Context

8.13 This section sets out in summary the legislation and national and local policy and guidance relevant to the application and the Development on Site and in relation to the heritage assets; their significance and setting.

Statutory Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990¹

8.14 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a general duty as respects listed buildings in the exercise of planning functions. Subsection (1) provides that:

“In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of

¹ UK Public General Acts (1990) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

- 8.15 It is also a statutory duty for the decision maker when determining applications for planning permission within conservation areas that (Section 72):

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

- 8.16 The setting of a conservation area is not however protected by statute.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023²

- 8.17 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012 and updated in July 2018, February 2019, July 2021 and September and December 2023. The new NPPF provides a full statement of the Government’s planning policies.

- 8.18 Chapter 12 of the NPPF outlines the Government’s guidance regarding requiring good design.

- 8.19 Paragraph 131 establishes that for the Government the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this.

- 8.20 Paragraph 135 sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

“a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

- 8.21 Paragraph 137 establishes that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals.

- 8.22 Paragraph 139 states that permission should be refused for development of poor design, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to development which reflects local design

² MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

policies and government guidance on design. Paragraph 139 also sets out that in determining applications, significant weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

- 8.23 Paragraph 180 of the NPPF goes on to say that the planning system should 'contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment' by a number of things including:

"a) protecting and enhancing valued landscape ... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside ..."

- 8.24 Paragraph 181 states that plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

- 8.25 Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, sets out the Government's policies regarding planning and the historic environment.

- 8.26 Paragraph 200 requires the significance of the heritage assets, which may be affected by the proposals to be described as part of any submission, ideally as part of a Heritage Statement report. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the assets and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance. Paragraph 201 sets out that local planning authorities should also identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets that may be affected by proposals. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of proposals in order to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

- 8.27 Paragraph 203 states that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of all heritage assets and putting them into viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- 8.28 Paragraph 205 further outlines that local planning authorities should give great weight to the asset's conservation when considering the impact on a Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight should be. Noting that Annex 2 of the NPPF defines "conservation" as:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

- 8.29 Paragraph 206 specifies that any harm to, or loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 207 outlines that local planning authorities should refuse consent where a proposal will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh such harm or loss, or a number of other tests can be satisfied. Paragraph 208 concerns proposals which will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. Here harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

- 8.30 Paragraph 209 sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

- 8.31 Paragraph 212 states that proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of a heritage asset should be treated favourably. It outlines that local planning authorities should also look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance.

- 8.32 Paragraph 213 confirms that not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 201 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the area as a whole.

Local Policy

- 8.33 The Development Plan for this local planning authority area comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and other published SPD and SPG. These documents provide local guidance with regard to development affecting heritage assets, townscape character and visual amenity, and should accord with the statutory duties and the general principles outlined in the NPPF.

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019³

- 8.34 The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted on 4 November 2019. This document sets out local planning policies for development in Reading up to 2036, and are the main considerations in deciding planning applications. The Local Plan replaces previous development plans - the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Action Plan and Sites and Detailed Policies Document - which no longer apply. The relevant Local Plan policies for the development of the Site and built heritage, townscape and visual matters include:

- Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment);
- Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas);
- Policy EN4 (Locally Important Heritage Assets);
- Policy EN5 (Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest);
- Policy EN6 (New Development in an Historic Context);
- Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm);
- Policy CR2 (Design in Central Reading); and
- Policy CR10 (Tall Buildings).

Other Material Considerations

European Landscape Convention⁴

- 8.35 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) provides a basis for closer co-operation on landscape issues across Europe and was signed and ratified in the UK. This recognition to landscape matters raises the profile and the ELC has been set out to improve approaches to the planning, management and protection of landscapes throughout Europe. The ELC defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors” and it includes townscape, as well as all forms of rural landscape.

- 8.36 Other relevant national guidance include:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition, 2013 (Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment) (GLVIA3)⁵

³ Reading Borough Council (2019) Reading Borough Local Plan

⁴ Council of Europe (2004) European Landscape Convention, Treaty no. 176

⁵ Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd edition (GLVIA3), including Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) (Technical Guidance Note 05/23)

- Townscape Character Assessment, 2017 (Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 05/2017)⁶
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, 2019 (Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 06/19)⁷
- National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)⁸

8.37 National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first issued by the Government in 2014 as a web-based resource and living document. This is intended to provide more detailed guidance and information with regard to the implementation of national policy set out in the NPPF. The most recent updates date from 2021.

8.38 Other relevant national and local best practice guidance is included as a list at **Appendix 8.5**:

Assessment Methodology

8.39 Our approach and methodology for undertaking this HTVIA is set out in full in this section of the report. Our team's professional approach is based upon informed and reasoned professional judgement, taking into account a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors. Our methodology is drawn from the legislation, national and local planning policy and best practice guidance set out in full in the previous section of this Chapter.

8.40 In addition, the following elements of the HTVIA have been scoped out of the EIA:

Change in private views from residential properties

8.41 In most landscape / townscape and visual assessments, in accordance with GLVIA3, unless specifically requested by the local planning authority, visual receptors are restricted to groups of people in publicly accessible places. Views from private houses and or individual residential properties will not be included in the assessment as changes to such views are a matter of private amenity, and are not a planning consideration⁹ unless the Development is likely to be so overbearing or dominating that it could result in unacceptable living conditions and affect the residential amenity of a property. Due to existing visual constraints imposed by the street pattern and density of development within the local area, and also separation distances between residential properties and the Site, the residential amenity of domestic properties is unlikely to be significantly affected by the Development. Visual effects on private residential properties are, therefore, not considered within this ES Chapter.

Demolition and construction works

8.42 In preparing this Chapter, it has been assumed that the Development would be delivered in accordance with the enabling and construction programme and design information as set out in **Chapter 5: Construction Methodology and Phasing** and the drawings and supporting information that accompany the full planning application. As the construction works are temporary in duration and would transition to operational phase effects as the Development nears completion and the completed buildings obscure views of those elements which remain under construction. Accordingly, the only receptors scoped in for assessment of demolition and construction phase works are the direct effects on the built heritage asset of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, and also Townscape Character Area 18 (TCA18) – The Oracle, arising from demolition of existing buildings / spaces and related enabling works on the Site itself and within part of both of those defined areas.

Consultation

8.43 As set out in Chapter 4 of this ES, the process of constructive engagement with officers and their advisers has continued through the determination period of the applications post validation. Accordingly, the

⁶ Landscape Institute (2017) Townscape Character Assessment (Technical Information Note 05/2017)

⁷ Landscape Institute (2019) Visual Representation of Development Proposals (Technical Information Note 06/19)

⁸ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

⁹ Aldred's Case in 1610 established in English law that views from private property cannot be protected

Development has been informed by the feedback received, and also further revisions to the design made during determination.

- 8.44 In this instance the proposed full extent of built heritage, townscape and visual receptors, including viewpoints and visualisation types, have been agreed with RBC as part of that earlier process of pre-application engagement through meetings, formal pre-application feedback and email correspondence.

Defining the Baseline Conditions

Site and Study Area

- 8.45 In defining an appropriate extent to the Study Area for the Site, the following factors were considered:
- the nature and scope of the Development;
 - the proximity of heritage assets, townscape receptors and visual receptors to the Site;
 - the degree of inter-visibility between the heritage assets, townscape receptors and visual receptors and the Site considering, for instance, changes in topography, as well as interposing landscape features;
 - the sensitivity of the relevant heritage assets and their setting;
 - the sensitivity of the townscape receptors and visual receptors;
 - groups/collections of heritage assets; and
 - approaches to the Site as part of a kinetic experience in the urban environment.
- 8.46 Initially a 500 metre radius of search from the centre of the Site was established for the Study Area. This was considered appropriate from a professional assessment and analysis of the likely built heritage and townscape effects of new development of this type and scale on the wider urban area given the particular history, pattern, form and character of the surrounding townscape. There will be more distant areas beyond this with some inter-visibility with the Site, however, the effects on heritage and townscape receptors beyond the Study Area would not be significant and, as such, further detailed assessment is not warranted. This approach is supported by the GLVIA3, which states that the scale of assessment should be appropriate and proportional to the nature of the Development.
- 8.47 The related visual appraisal considers the approximate zone of visual influence of the Development within first a 1km and then a wider 2km Study Area, with further long distant views being considered where identified and relevant. This study area was informed by the production of a computer-generated ZTV, which was first run in October 2022 on the basis of maximum building heights envisioned at that time. The ZTV identifies where in the surrounding townscape the Development is likely to be visible. This was run as a technical exercise using the LiDAR data available (2019) and the proposed height, scale and massing of the Development. This is included as a supporting figure at **Appendix 8.2A**.

Survey Work

- 8.48 A preliminary desk study was undertaken to establish the physical components of the Site and its surrounding townscape. Built heritage assets were identified within the Study Area, published townscape characterisation studies reviewed, and visual receptors to the Site from within this area were identified, along with a number of supporting representative viewpoints that could be tested to better appreciate the likely visual effects of the Development within its context. Historical and current Ordnance Survey (OS) maps and aerial photography were utilised to identify these features, alongside other online sources such as the National Heritage List for England (Historic England or HE) and RBC.
- 8.49 Field studies were then undertaken by built heritage consultant(s) and townscape / landscape specialist(s) firstly in August 2021 and again in April 2022. On both occasions the weather conditions were appropriate for a site visit and visibility was good, and therefore did not preclude the findings of the assessment. The key features of the Site and surrounding townscape were identified, and the nature and extent of likely

visibility of the Development was established. Representative views were selected based upon the localised screening effect of distance, topography, built form and vegetation. The location and extent of the identified built heritage assets were confirmed and explored during this survey, including consideration of heritage significance and also any contribution of setting and the experience of views whilst in the field. This was accompanied by the identification of a number of Townscape Character Areas (TCA), and also key views and vistas within the Study Area to help describe the wider surroundings of the Site and how the Development may affect the character of these areas. The field study also involved travelling around the Study Area and producing a working photographic record.

Informal Scoping of Receptors

- 8.50 The following section describes the process of establishing the baseline conditions of the Site and its Study Area for each of these closely related disciplines. In relation to built heritage matters, the scene is first set with a short description of the historical development of the Site within the context of its local area. Through desktop and subsequent site survey work by our team define the scope of built heritage assets / receptors; the significance of which has the potential to be affected (directly and or indirectly through change to setting and views) by the Development on Site. Also provided is a proportionate description of the particular significance and any contribution of setting of each of these heritage assets. This part of the baseline conditions is fully described in our Built Heritage Statement at **Appendix 8.1** to this report, which is in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF and also best practice guidance. A Heritage Assets Plan (HAP) is also provided again as a figure in **Appendix 8.2B**.
- 8.51 An appraisal of the townscape character within the 500m study area from the Site was undertaken to understand the townscape context of the Development and identify the key features and characteristics. This analysis builds on the built heritage baseline appraisal, which is described above. The baseline townscape appraisal has also been informed by a desk-based study and on-site analysis to confirm and expand findings, which includes review of the character appraisals adopted by RBC. This process has resulted in the identification of a number of local TCAs, which form the townscape receptors against which the townscape effects of the Development will be assessed. The relevant figure is included in **Appendix 8.2C**. This is drawn from published characterisation studies as appropriate, alongside site-specific analysis by our team.
- 8.52 The baseline analysis also sets out the identification of key visual receptors for the Study Area, visibility and visual amenity considerations. An assessment of the local visual context and visual amenity was first undertaken on Site in August 2021 to understand the existing extent of visibility of the Site and key views and visual receptors likely to be affected by the Development, as also informed by an initial ZTV technical exercise. In this context, the term Site is used to refer to the full extent of the Site and the existing features within it. Key representative views were identified, which reflect the character and quality of typical views from the key receptors and to form the baseline against which the visual effect of the Development will be assessed. This process was confirmed through return site survey work (April 2022). The final selection of representative views included within the HTVIA has been discussed with officers at RBC as part of the pre-application process accordingly. The relevant figure at **Appendix 8.2D** provides a plan of the representative viewpoint locations.

Night-Time Effects

- 8.53 A separate night-time assessment was not undertaken as it was considered that effects after dark would not be significantly greater in magnitude than those described for the construction phase or completed development. However, in general terms, the Development would be visible after dark because of internal lighting and external lighting in the surrounding public realm. This lighting would be seen in the context of other lighting in the surrounding urban area and would not be an incongruent feature.

Cumulative Effects

- 8.54 The HTVIA in this Chapter of the ES has considered the consented or under construction future developments in the area (i.e. that have recently secured consent and or have begun to be implemented) and the potential cumulative effect of the Development on Site with these in place. These schemes have been identified as having the potential to have cumulative effects on built heritage, townscape and visual receptors by virtue of their height and disposition relative to the Site. A list and also location plan of the cumulative scheme is set out in Chapter 3 of the ES.

Impact Assessment Methodology

Demolition and Construction: Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual

- 8.55 The likely effects of the Development on built heritage assets, townscape and visual receptors would vary according to the nature of the construction works overtime, with certain construction operations having more perceptible effects on built heritage receptors than others as a result of the following processes:
- Demolition of existing buildings within the Site;
 - Ground works, including construction of foundations;
 - Movement of heavy plant and material to and from the Site;
 - Erection of construction infrastructure e.g., scaffolding, fixed tower crane, mobile cranes, hoarding, lighting; and
 - Construction of new buildings / public realm.
- 8.56 As a result of these processes, there will be localised, transient and temporary, effects lasting for the duration of the construction works. The Development would adhere to construction best practice and provide updates on the construction programme to the local community, which is described in Chapter 5 of the ES, including reference to the commitment to a planning condition requiring a CEMP. The core construction activities would be limited to within the Site and would be temporary in duration. With time, the construction effects would transition to the operational phase effects as the Development nears completion and the completed buildings obscure views of those elements which remain under construction.
- 8.57 Development effects are likely to be focussed on the following built heritage asset, due to considerations of its proximity to the Site; its particular significance and the contribution made by the Site to that significance; and the presence of interposing built form / landscape:
- Market Place / London Road Conservation Area (direct impacts through works within part of the designated boundaries of this heritage asset).
- 8.58 Otherwise, all construction effects on the heritage significance of the relevant built heritage assets during the construction stage will be indirect, arising from construction activities within parts of their settings and not significant in EIA terms.
- 8.59 Construction operations are not likely to result in significant effects on the identified townscape character areas or visual receptors. This is due to the combined effect of: distance of the character areas from the Site; sensitivity of the character areas; and the temporary and short-term nature of the operations in an urban context.

Completed Development:

Built Heritage

- 8.60 Environmental effects are assessed in terms of the Development's effects upon the heritage significance of the relevant built heritage assets, and how it would be understood and appreciated as part of the changed experience of the place, including any contribution made by setting or views to significance.
- 8.61 The methodology used to identify the potential effects to built heritage assets is summarised below:
- Establish the significance of the heritage asset receptors, including the contribution made by setting to that significance;
 - Predict the potential impacts and magnitude of the impact on the heritage significance of assets, considering relevant embedded mitigation within the design and construction or operational lifetime of the Development to mitigate any likely adverse effects;

- Identification of any future mitigation required, if relevant;
 - Quantification of the scale, nature, and effect significance of any residual effects (those that might remain after mitigation); and
 - Assessment of any cumulative effect.
- 8.62 There is no prescribed or preferred method of preparing an assessment of built heritage effects. There are a number of potential methodologies in guideline documents (rather than policy or prescribed guidance), which have been accepted in a number of contexts. This methodology utilises established national policy, guidance and advice documents to frame the assessment process for construction, operation and cumulative effects. The methodology acknowledges how the understanding and appreciation of the heritage interests of the heritage assets and its constituent elements can be affected both directly and indirectly through change to setting; not only visually but also as part of a broader experience.
- 8.63 The assessment considers effects on the heritage significance of built heritage asset receptors of the operation of the completed Development, and also in conjunction with any relevant cumulative development schemes.
- 8.64 A number of tables contained within the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges' ('DMRB') (LA 104 2020¹⁰ and LA 106 2020¹¹) have been utilised, and adapted as appropriate for this topic, for the built heritage assessment, with terminology for the scale of effects and magnitude of impacts aligned with the ES as a whole for the sake of consistency in reporting effects. The approach to assessment utilises best practice guidance / advice published by Historic England (HE) and relevant professional bodies:
- Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment 2015;¹²
 - The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (2nd Edition) 2017;¹³
 - Historic England Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings (2nd Edition) 2022;¹⁴
 - Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets 2019;¹⁵ and
 - Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA): Principles for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment 2021.¹⁶
- 8.65 These guidelines assist in understanding and articulating how change can affect heritage significance. Together this framework provides an appropriate approach for determining the impact of the Development on the significance of the built heritage assets / receptors.
- 8.66 To assist in the assessment of the likely completed development effects of the Development upon the significance of the identified built heritage assets, the Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) within this ES Chapter have been utilised, which are included in full at **Appendix 8.4**. Additional information, including the application drawings / illustrations submitted for approval, as well as the documents which accompany the application, including the DAS, have been used to inform this assessment. Where illustrative material is used to inform an assessment, this is clearly identified within this ES Chapter. This

¹⁰ Highways England et al (2020) LA 104 Environmental assessment and monitoring Revision 1

¹¹ Highways England et al (2020) LA 106 Cultural heritage assessment. Revision 1

¹² Historic England (2015) Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

¹³ The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (2nd Edition)

¹⁴ Historic England (2022) Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings (2nd Edition)

¹⁵ Historic England (2019) Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets

¹⁶ Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) (2021) Principles for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment

approach allows for a balanced assessment that considers all the relevant material and allows for judgements to be made on design quality and associated mitigating effects.

- 8.67 All the assessments within this Chapter compare the baseline conditions against a proposed condition that assumes the Development comes forward together all at once (i.e. no phased construction / occupation) – as this represents the worst case scenario.
- 8.68 The impact assessment included within our proportionate **Built Heritage Statement (Appendix 8.1)** informs the assessment of the effects of the Development on the relevant built heritage assets / receptors in this document.

Receptors and Receptor Value / Sensitivity

- 8.69 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines a heritage asset as:

*“A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)”.*¹⁷

- 8.70 There are two types of heritage assets: designated and non-designated. Designated heritage assets are those which possess a level of heritage interest that justifies designation under relevant legislation and are then subject to particular procedures in planning decisions which involve them, including listed buildings and conservation areas. The NPPF also identifies non-designated heritage assets, defined as those that may be identified by the local planning authority during the plan making and / or application process (including through the Council-led process of local listing). They are a material consideration in determining applications for planning permission.
- 8.71 The process of informal scoping heritage assets for assessment has already been covered in detail earlier in this section. In summary, an initial review of the baseline situation has been used to identify the likely heritage sensitivities of the Site, which include designated built heritage assets (world heritage site / buffer zones, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, and conservation areas) and non-designated heritage assets (locally listed buildings). A judgement has then been made; based on initial desktop and following fieldwork, to scope in the likely sensitive (built heritage asset) receptors regarding the Development.
- 8.72 Following the identification of each receptor, a judgement is made of the value of that heritage asset, and also the sensitivity of its significance to further change within its surroundings. The value (or importance) of the heritage assets is defined based on **Table 8.1** (adapted from a table within DMRB LA 104 2020¹⁸). The assessment of the value and sensitivity of a built heritage asset is a matter of professional judgement, which is informed by the proportionate assessment of heritage significance. In accordance with DMRB LA 106 2020¹⁹, the particular significance of some heritage assets may mean that they may be in a different importance category to that normally required by its designation.
- 8.73 Annex 2 of the NPPF defines the heritage significance of a heritage asset as:
- “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. For World Heritage Sites, the cultural value described within each site’s Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance.”*²⁰
- 8.74 Again Annex 2 and also best practice advice²¹ identifies the following interests of a heritage asset that may contribute to its heritage significance: archaeological; architectural; artistic; and historic.

¹⁷ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework 2021 – Annex 2: Glossary

¹⁸ Highways England et al (2020) LA 104 Environmental assessment and monitoring Revision 1

¹⁹ Highways England et al (2020) LA 106 Cultural heritage assessment. Revision 1

²⁰ MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework 2021 – Annex 2: Glossary

²¹ Historic England (2019) Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance

- 8.75 The definition of significance given in Annex 2 of the NPPF also includes a reference to the setting of a heritage asset. This term is also defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”²²

- 8.76 HE has published good practice advice²³ in respect of the setting of heritage assets, providing detail on understanding and describing setting and the associated assessment of the impact of any changes.
- 8.77 The heritage significance of the identified heritage assets, as well as any contribution from their setting, has informed their assessment of value, in line with **Table 8.1**. The methodology and approach in undertaking this built heritage baseline appraisal is based upon informed and reasoned professional judgement, considering a combination of quantitative and qualitative factors. The appraisal work is informed by the NPPF and also Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and HE best practice guidance.

Table 8.1 Value / Sensitivity of Built Heritage Asset Receptors

Value / Sensitivity	Typical Level of Designation/ Rarity	Definition
Very High	International, National	Very high importance and rarity and very limited potential for substitution e.g., World Heritage Sites.
High	National, Regional	High importance and rarity and limited potential for substitution e.g., Grade I and II* listed buildings and registered parks and gardens; and scheduled monuments.
Medium	Regional, Local	High or medium importance and rarity, limited potential for substitution e.g., Grade II listed buildings and registered parks and gardens; and conservation areas.
Low	Local	Low or medium importance and rarity e.g., Locally listed buildings; and locally listed parks and gardens.
Negligible	Local	Very low importance and rarity e.g., some locally listed buildings; and locally listed parks and gardens.

Magnitude of Impact

- 8.78 The impact of the Development on the heritage significance of each of the identified built heritage receptors is considered, and a judgement formed as to the duration, extent and magnitude of change. The type or nature of the impact could be beneficial or adverse, or no change (distinct from negligible) to the receptor could also be identified, with examples of these included within **Table 8.2**. The DMRB guidance (DMRB LA 104 2020 and LA 106 2020) has been considered when identifying the scales used for the magnitude of impact and effects outlined below. Consideration will be had to other technical assessments i.e., TVIA (in terms of assessing the extent and nature of visual effects on heritage significance) and archaeology (in terms of any potential contribution made by archaeological heritage assets to the significance of built heritage assets as elements of setting), in assessing the effects of the Development on the built heritage assets, as required.

Table 8.2 Magnitude of Impact on Built Heritage Receptors

Magnitude of Impact		Definition
Major	Adverse	Loss of resource and / or quality and integrity of resource; severe damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Large scale or major improvement of resource quality; extensive restoration; major improvement of attribute quality.

²² MHCLG (2021) National Planning Policy Framework 2021 – Annex 2: Glossary

²³ Historic England (2017) Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (2nd Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets

Magnitude of Impact		Definition
Moderate	Adverse	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting the integrity; partial loss of / damage to key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features or elements; improvement of attribute quality.
Minor	Adverse	Some measurable change in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Minor benefit to, or addition of, one (maybe more) key characteristics, features or elements; some beneficial impact or attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring.
Negligible	Adverse	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements.
	Beneficial	Very minor benefit to or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features or elements.
None / Neutral		No loss or alteration of characteristics, features or elements; no observable impact in either direction.

Defining the Effects

- 8.79 Built heritage assets can be affected by a broad range of factors causing change, these may be physical changes or changes to their setting. The range of effects in relation to change of built heritage assets, and at which point they may be considered significant, does not fit the strict outcome of the binary assessment (**Tables 8.1 and 8.2**). For guidance, however, overall effects determined to be moderate or above (i.e. moderate and major) may be significant depending on the type of change and factors involved. Whether an effect is significant or not significant is a matter of professional judgement. The matrix shown in **Table 8.3** combines the two measures of value (and relative sensitivity) and magnitude of impact to measure the scale of effect of the Development. The description of the effects identified are included in **Table 8.4** (adapted from a table within DMRB LA 104 2020).

Table 8.3 Matrix for Significance of Effects

	Magnitude of Impact				
Value / Sensitivity of Receptor	No Impact	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Slight or Moderate	Moderate or Large	Large or Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate or Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight	Slight or Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Slight

Table 8.4 Significance Criteria / Categories

Significance Category	Definition
Very Large	Change to key elements of the significance of a heritage asset, such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to the setting of a heritage asset. Effects at this level are material in the decision-making process.
Large	Change to many key elements of the significance of the heritage asset, such that the resource is significantly modified. Changes to the setting of a heritage asset, such that it is significantly modified. Effects at this level are likely to be material in the decision-making process.
Moderate	Change to elements of the significance of a heritage asset, such that the asset is slightly different. Change to setting of a heritage asset, such that it is noticeably changed. Effects at this level can be considered to be material decision-making factors, and also may be "significant" in EIA terms.
Slight	Slight changes to the significance of a heritage asset or elements or setting that hardly affect it. Effects at this level are not material in the decision-making process.

Neutral ²⁴	No overall change to the significance of a heritage asset or its setting that affects an appreciation of that significance i.e. its heritage significance is sustained / preserved.
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Completed Development:

Townscape

- 8.80 The methodology for both townscape and visual assessment is based on current best practice as set out in:
- Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) (2013)²⁵;
 - Townscape Character Assessment, 2017 (Revised April 2018) (Landscape Institute: Technical Information Note 05/2017)²⁶; and
 - Visual Representation of Development Proposals, 2019 (Landscape Institute Technical Information Note 06/19)²⁷.
- 8.81 GLVIA3 states that this type of assessment provides a tool for identifying and assessing “the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity” (Para. 1.1). It goes on to emphasise that the appraisal has two interlinked elements of: landscape (analogous with townscape for the purposes of this ES), as a resource; and visual amenity, including views. The effects of both must be addressed in the assessment.
- 8.82 The definition of landscape in the European Landscape Convention²⁸, which the UK has signed and ratified, includes villages, towns and cities, and the GLVIA3 states that ‘townscape’ refers to areas where the built environment is dominant. It goes on to state that townscape includes the buildings and the different types of urban spaces, and the relationship between the two.

Baseline Appraisal

- 8.83 A preliminary desk study of OS maps and aerial photography was undertaken to establish the physical components of the Site and its surroundings (including land use, topography, built form, accessibility and vegetation) and identify potential townscape and visual receptors. A review of the townscape character context of the Site was also undertaken, which references the current published townscape character studies relating to the study area at a national and city level. Potential visual receptors within the surrounding area, defined as the different groups of people who may experience views of the Development, have also been identified.
- 8.84 A field study was undertaken by a suitably qualified professional (in line with GLVIA3) and experienced practitioner in townscape assessment from Turley. In this case, field surveys were undertaken in 2021 and again in 2022. The field study establishes the key characteristics of the local townscape character including the associated elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors, which contribute to the townscape and the identification of the key townscape receptors. The approximate visibility of the Site is established by the walkover survey which considers the area within the study area from which the site is currently visible and the key visual receptors within this area (i.e. groups of people within this area who experience (or may experience) views of the site). A series of representative views experienced by these visual receptors is also identified. The study also confirms the visual receptors identified by the desk based study and produces a working photographic record of the area.

²⁴ To note, Neutral effects are defined differently for heritage than visual / townscape receptors reflecting the difference in receptor type, legislation, planning policy and best practice guidance / advice.

²⁵ Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) Paragraph 6.32

²⁶ Landscape Institute (2017) Townscape Character Assessment (Revised April 2018) (Technical Information Note 05/2017)

²⁷ Landscape Institute (2019) Visual Representation of Development Proposals (Technical Information Note 06/19)

²⁸ Council of Europe (2004) European Landscape Convention, Treaty no. 176 (Ref ETS no 176)

Assessment of Townscape Value

8.85 A judgement is made on the Value of each of the townscape receptors. This judgement is made based on the approach set out in GLVIA3 and as described below. The Value of each of the identified townscape receptors is assessed with reference to the following criteria and the definitions of level of value set out in **Table 8.5**:

- Any designations or policies (both national and local) which may be present; and
- The presence or absence of other attributes which contribute to townscape value, such as condition, scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreation value, perceptual aspects, or associations e.g., with writers, artists, or historic events.

Table 8.5 Value of Townscape Receptors

Value	Typical Level of Designation/ Rarity	Typical Examples
High	International, National, Regional	World Heritage Sites, and/or key features of World Heritage Sites, National Parks or AONBs and/or key features of these, Scheduled Monuments, some Conservation Areas, and townscape areas with typically a significant number of Grade I/II* listed buildings, and/or Registered Historic Park and Gardens. No or limited potential for substitution.
Medium	Regional, Local	Townscape areas designated at local level e.g. Special Landscape Areas, some conservation areas and other undesignated areas or features of notable scenic quality or recreational value with value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use. Limited potential for substitution.
Low	Local	Ordinary townscape features or character areas which are not related to designated, or non-designated heritage assets, or a planning designation; and/or mentioned in guidebooks or on tourist maps; and/or referenced in art and literature; and/or is of little scenic or townscape importance. Considerable potential for substitution.
Negligible	Local	Townscape features or local character areas in poor condition or quality and / or identified for recovery.

8.86 Townscape effects include:

- Changes to, and / or complete or partial loss of features, elements, characteristics, or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the townscape / local townscape area; and / or
- Introduction of new elements or features that influence the character and distinctiveness of the townscape / local townscape area.

8.87 The assessment of townscape effects considers the sensitivity of the townscape receptor and the magnitude of the predicted effect. Significance is then concluded as major, moderate, minor or negligible, with significant effects defined as effects which are 'moderate' or above and determined through professional judgement.

Susceptibility and Sensitivity of Townscape Receptors

8.88 The sensitivity of townscape receptors relates to the value attached to that receptor (which is established as part of the baseline assessment) and the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change or development proposed. GLVIA3 defines susceptibility as *"the ability of the landscape²⁹ receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the*

²⁹ Within GLVIA3 the term 'landscape' encompasses both urban areas (townscapes) and rural areas.

achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies".³⁰ Judgements on the susceptibility to change of each townscape receptor is made based on the scale set out in **Table 8.6**.

Table 8.6 Susceptibility to Change of Townscape Receptors

Susceptibility to Change	Description
High	Townscape receptor ³¹ would be unlikely to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative or beneficial consequences for the maintenance of the baseline townscape character and/ or the achievement of townscape planning policies and strategies. Townscape receptor has little or no relationship to the type of development proposed and / or would be difficult to replace or substitute if lost e.g. ancient woodland, veteran trees and historic parkland. Characteristics of the townscape which contribute to the townscape character are highly sensitive and would be fundamentally altered by the type of development proposed.
Medium	Townscape receptor would be compromised by the type of development proposed and / or the achievement of townscape planning policies and strategies would be compromised. Townscape receptor has some relationship to the type of development proposed and / or could be partially replaced or substituted if lost. Townscape receptor is moderately sensitive, and characteristics of the receptor would be altered by the type of development proposed. The general townscape character would remain but would be weakened by the type of development proposed.
Low	Townscape receptor would be likely to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative or beneficial consequences for the maintenance of the baseline townscape character and / or the achievement of townscape planning policies and strategies. Townscape receptor has a close relationship to the type of development proposed and could be easily replaced or substituted if lost. Townscape receptor is of low sensitivity and characteristics of the townscape would not be significantly altered by the type of development proposed. The general townscape character is resilient to change.

- 8.89 A judgement on the overall sensitivity of each townscape receptor (ranging from High, Medium, Low to Negligible) is made (**Table 8.7**). This is based on the combined evaluation of susceptibility and value attached to the receptor, together with informed professional judgement and guidance provided in GLVIA3. For example, a townscape receptor that has a High Sensitivity is likely to have a High Value and a High Susceptibility to change, a townscape receptor that has a Low Sensitivity is likely to have a Low Value and a Low Susceptibility to change. Where the sensitivity falls between two levels it is described as such e.g. low-medium or medium-high.

Table 8.7 Sensitivity of Townscape Receptors

	Susceptibility to Change		
Value	High	Medium	Low
High	High	Medium-High	Medium
Medium	Medium-High	Medium	Low-Medium
Low	Medium	Low-Medium	Low
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Magnitude of Impact

- 8.90 The magnitude of effect on townscape receptors considers the size or scale, geographical extent and the duration and reversibility of the effect. Judgements on the magnitude of effect on townscape receptors are broadly based on the descriptions of magnitude set out in **Table 8.8**. Consideration is also given to the Type of Effect in terms of whether it is Adverse, Beneficial or Neutral. Often, effects will include a combination of both beneficial and adverse effects. However, a professional judgement is made on the nature of the overall effect which is based on the following terms:

³⁰ Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) (GLVIA3) Reference 7.9 Paragraph 5.40

³¹ Includes townscape character areas, townscape elements or features and particular aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the townscape.

- Adverse: overall harm to townscape character / feature;
- Beneficial: overall improvement to townscape character / feature; or
- Neutral: no overall harm or improvement to townscape character / feature.

Table 8.8 Defining Magnitude of Change of Townscape Receptors

Magnitude of Change	Definition
Large	Permanent loss of all or most of the key characteristics of a townscape receptor and / or addition of major new elements which would be dominant features with little or no relationship to the townscape receptor. Changes would substantially alter the character of a large area.
Medium	Permanent partial loss or change to some of the key characteristics of a townscape receptor and / or addition of new elements which would be prominent features. Changes would result in a large change to the character of a small area or a noticeable change to a larger area.
Small	Permanent limited / localised loss or change to common characteristics of a townscape receptor and / or addition of new elements which would be noticeable features but largely in keeping with the existing character. Changes would result in a small change to the character of a large area or a noticeable change to a small area. Also includes temporary and / or reversible changes of larger scale or extent.
Negligible	No, or barely discernible, change to townscape receptor.
No change	No loss or alteration of characteristics, features or elements; no observable impact in either direction.

*Completed Development:**Visual**Baseline Appraisal*

8.91 In most townscape and visual assessments, unless specifically requested by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), visual receptors are restricted to groups of people in publicly accessible places. Following identification of the key visual receptors, representative views are identified to reflect typical views from the key visual receptors. A description and evaluation of the identified views was undertaken, which considered the following:

- type and relative numbers of people, and their occupation or activity.
- location, nature, and characteristics.
- nature, composition, and characteristics of the views (including directions).
- elements which may interrupt, filter, or otherwise influence the views; and
- seasonal changes in the view.

Assessment of Visual Effects

8.92 Visual effects include:

- Changes to, and / or complete or partial loss of features, elements, characteristics, or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the view; and / or
- Introduction of new elements or features that influence the character and distinctiveness of the view.

8.93 The assessment of visual effects considers the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of the predicted effect. Significance is then concluded as major, moderate, minor or negligible, with significant effects determined through professional judgement.

Value, Susceptibility & Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

8.94 The sensitivity of the visual receptor comprises a judgement on the value attached to the views and an assessment of the susceptibility of each receptor to the type of change proposed. A judgement on the value attached to the views is made with reference to the following criteria and the definitions of value set out in **Table 8.9**.

- Planning designations e.g., Designated Views or Protected Vistas identified in local or regional planning policy.
- Other designations relating to landscape features or heritage assets e.g., key views identified in conservation area appraisals or recorded in citations for listed buildings or registered parks and gardens.
- Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors e.g., views identified in guidebooks or on tourist maps, official viewpoints (often with sign boards and interpretive material) or views referenced in literature or art.

Table 8.9 Value Attached to Views

Value	Typical Level of Designation/ Rarity	Typical Examples
High	International, National, Regional	Designated views of national or regional importance e.g., views of noted importance to sites of national importance e.g., Scheduled Monuments, AONBs, Grade I / Grade II* listed buildings, and / or Registered Historic Park and Gardens
Medium	Regional, Local	Views identified or protected at local level e.g., identified in local planning policy or guidance and views associated with heritage or townscape features of regional or local importance e.g., some Conservation Areas and Grade II / II* listed buildings. May also include views which are undesignated, but value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or its contribution to enjoyment of a designated or non-designated heritage asset.
Low	Local	The view from the identified visual receptor is ordinary, not related to designated, or non-designated, heritage assets, or a planning designation; and / or mentioned in guidebooks or on tourist maps; and / or referenced in art and literature; but contributes positively to the visual amenity experienced by the receptor.
Negligible	Local	The view from the identified visual receptor does not make a positive contribution to local visual amenity.

8.95 The assessment of susceptibility of visual receptors is based on the approach set out in the GLVIA3, which notes that:

“The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- *The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations.*
- *The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.”*

8.96 Judgements on the susceptibility of a visual receptor to change are broadly based on the descriptions of susceptibility set out in **Table 8.10**:

Table 8.10 Susceptibility of Change of Visual Receptors

Susceptibility	Description
High	Receptors for whom the view and visual amenity is of high importance to the experience or activity including people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views e.g. waymarked walks through the landscape; and visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience.
Medium	Receptors for whom the view and visual amenity is of moderate importance to the experience or activity including: travellers on most road or rail routes
Low	Receptors for whom the view and visual amenity is of low importance to the experience or activity including people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; and people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work, not on their surroundings, and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.

- 8.97 A judgement on the overall sensitivity of each visual receptor (ranging from High to Negligible) is made (**Table 8.11**). This is based on the combined evaluation of susceptibility and value attached to the receptor, together with informed professional judgement and guidance provided in GLVIA3. For example, a visual receptor that has a High Sensitivity is likely to have a High Value and a High Susceptibility to change, a visual receptor that has a Low Sensitivity is likely to have a Low Value and a Low Susceptibility to change.

Table 8.11 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	Susceptibility to Change		
Value	High	Medium	Low
High	High	Medium-High	Medium
Medium	Medium-High	Medium	Low-Medium
Low	Medium	Low-Medium	Low
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Magnitude of Effect

- 8.98 The magnitude of visual effect considers the size or scale, geographical extent, and the duration and reversibility of the effect. Judgements on the magnitude of visual effect are broadly based on the descriptions of magnitude set out in **Table 8.12**.
- 8.99 Consideration is also given to the Type of Effect in terms of whether it is Adverse, Beneficial or Neutral. Often, effects will include a combination of both beneficial and adverse effects. However, a judgement is made on the nature of the overall effect which is based on the following terms:
- Adverse: overall harm to the character / quality of the view and loss of visual amenity.
 - Beneficial: overall improvement to the character/quality of the view and improvement of visual amenity.
 - Neutral: no overall harm or improvement to the view or visual amenity.

Table 8.12 Defining Magnitude of Change for Visual Receptors

Magnitude of Change	Description
Large	Permanent loss of all or most of the key characteristics of a view and/or addition of major new elements which would be dominant features. Changes would substantially alter the character of the view.
Medium	Permanent partial loss or change to some of the key characteristics of the view and/or addition of new elements which would be prominent features. Changes would result in a large change to the character of a small part of the view or a noticeable change to a larger part of the view.

Magnitude of Change	Description
Small	Permanent limited/localised loss or change to a view and/or addition of new elements which would be noticeable features but largely in keeping with the existing character of the view. Changes would result in a small change to the character of a large part of the view or a noticeable change to a small part of the view. Also includes temporary and/or reversible changes of larger scale or extent within the view.
Negligible / None	No, or barely discernible, change to the view.

Defining the Effect:

Townscape and Visual

- 8.100 The assessment of townscape and visual effects considers the likely significant effects of the completed development only. These effects would all be permanent effects. Temporary construction effects are not normally considered separately, although the construction effects are briefly summarised. This is due to the temporary nature of construction effects, in the context of an urban area undergoing change through use and development or regeneration, and professional experience and judgement. It is not expected that effects during the construction phase would be any greater than those when the Development is complete. The influence of the construction phase on townscape character and visual amenity is briefly summarised within this Chapter. The completed development effects consider the Development at the opening year, which represents a worst-case scenario in terms of the maturity of any landscape proposals.
- 8.101 The overall townscape and visual significance of effect for each receptor is determined by combining the assessment of sensitivity with the assessment of predicted magnitude of effect for each identified receptor and broadly follows the matrix set out in **Table 8.13**. Finally, a judgement is made on whether the predicted effect is significant or not significant. Major and Moderate to Major effects are normally considered to be significant and those of between Minor to Moderate and Negligible are not normally significant. Moderate effects are also usually considered to be significant, but a final decision is made based on professional judgement. These effect categories are defined in **Table 8.14**. Where the magnitude of change falls between two levels it is described as such e.g. minor to moderate or moderate to major.

Table 8.13 Significance of Effects

Sensitivity / Value					
Magnitude of Change		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
	Large	Major	Moderate to Major	Minor to Moderate	Negligible
	Medium	Moderate to Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Minor to Moderate	Minor	Negligible to Minor	Negligible
	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

Table 8.14 Significance Criteria / Categories

Significance Category	Definition
Major	Change to key elements of a townscape or visual receptor, such that the resource is totally altered. Effects at this level are material in the decision-making process.
Moderate	Change to many key elements of a townscape or visual receptor, such that the resource is significantly modified. Effects at this level are likely to be material in the decision-making process and also may be "significant" in EIA terms.
Minor	Change to elements of a townscape or visual receptor, such that the asset is slightly different. Effects at this level can be considered to be material decision-making factors.
Negligible	Slight changes to a townscape or visual receptor that hardly affect it. Effects at this level are not material in the decision-making process.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 8.102 The baseline assessment relies on the accuracy of the data provided by secondary and archive sources. There is always some degree of uncertainty in relation to these sources, however, they are an appropriate basis to assist in understanding the heritage significance of assets, as part of a robust professional assessment.
- 8.103 There has been no access to the interiors of the relevant listed building(s); with an external inspection sufficient for the purposes of assessing the impacts of the Development on their heritage significance through change in part of the buildings' setting.

Baseline Conditions

Introduction to the Site

- 8.104 The Site is defined by its role within the mixed use town centre of Reading and also its accessible location near to key transport routes, including the Inner Distributor Road (IDR) (part of the A329) running east-west, London Street and its continuation Duke Street running north-south into the historic core, the waterways of the River Kennet and Avon Canal, and associated pedestrian / cycle links. The main railway station serving the town is located less than 500m to the north. The Site is now vacant but was formerly in commercial use as part of a purpose-built retail and leisure complex dating from the late 20th century. The two development parcels straddle the river – to its north and south sides – and both comprise large scale (up to 9 storeys in height) and format modern buildings and urban blocks, albeit employing a mix of more traditional cladding materials. These buildings are orientated to address the riverside and also London Street, with more inactive frontages to the service yard at Yield Hall Place and also the IDR. Site context photographs are included in the **Built Heritage Statement at Appendix 8.1** for reference.
- 8.105 Historically the Site forms part of the former industrial area along the river and canal. This Site is immediately to the west of the ancient north-south route of London Street / Duke Street through the historic core of Reading, which crosses the Kennet at High Bridge and also leads into the Market Place. It was in the later 20th century that the greatest degree of change occurred to this past layout and character. The post war development of the IDR along the south side of the river and a new bridge crossing along the line of Yield Hall Place established a new pattern of movement and also a generally larger grain and scale of built form, infrastructure and spaces. Older buildings on both sides of London Street at its north end were cleared away, and the comprehensive development of The Oracle Shopping Centre complex (i.e. The Oracle) in 1999 has further established a new mix of uses and character for the area. As found today, the Site integrates poorly with the older street pattern and activity, although the wider complex has embraced the river to create new public realm along the water. The Oracle itself has become the focus of leisure and retail uses not only for this town but also as a centre of regional importance, although this role is now changing in response to wider national trends.
- 8.106 The **Built Heritage Statement at Appendix 8.1** provides further description of the historical development of the Site within the context of its local area, and as related to the identified heritage assets, which is not repeated in this part of the Chapter.

Emerging Context

- 8.107 Reading is a town centre that is experiencing significant growth and regeneration. This is in large part due to the constraints that affect large parts of the Borough, including the Metropolitan Green Belt and areas covered by other environmental restrictions. The cumulative schemes identified in the Assessment Methodology Section of this Chapter, continue the recent process of transformational change in the town centre to the west and east of the Site and also within the area of the Railway Station further to the north. Those cumulative schemes will deliver a range of taller buildings, which will continue to change the mix and intensity of uses, scale and density of built development, and also the skyline of Reading, as well as introducing further residential uses alongside the prevailing civic and commercial character of the centre.

Evolution of Baseline Scenario

- 8.108 There are no anticipated projects that will bring forward development and change within the Site in the absence of the Development. However, the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 does identify Yield Hall

Place 2 within the Site as part of a larger Site Allocation, which is referred to as “CR14g: Other Sites For Development In Central Reading - The Oracle Extension, Bridge Street and Letcombe Street”. This policy outlines that the site is allocated for retail development (approximately 1,600 – 2,000 sqm of retail or town centre uses) with the use of the site at Letcombe Street for public parking.

Built Heritage

Informal Scoping the Heritage Assets

- 8.109 The Site does include any statutory listed buildings, nor does it contain any buildings or structures that have been identified to be of heritage interest at the local level (i.e. local listing or non-designated heritage assets for the purpose of the NPPF). The eastern part of the south area of the Site does, however, fall within the boundary of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset for the purpose of national policy. The proposed redevelopment of that part of the Site would then directly affect the significance of this conservation area. However, the boundary for this designated area as it currently crosses this part of the Site is in our view appears somewhat arbitrary as it pre-dates the development of The Oracle scheme. No buildings or spaces within the Site have been identified in the relevant published Conservation Area Appraisal dating from 2007 as making any positive contribution to the significance or setting of this heritage asset.
- 8.110 The Development would have the potential to affect the significance of this conservation area, and a number of other heritage assets within the local and wider townscape area of the Site indirectly through change to the character and appearance of part of their shared settings and some local views. These receptors include other designated heritage assets such as statutory listed buildings, conservation areas and a scheduled monument, and also potentially non-designated heritage assets. The following built heritage assets have been scoped in as relevant to the contextual analysis in **Tables 8.15-8.17**. The methodology used for the informal scoping process has been described above accordingly.
- 8.111 To further assist the scoping in and scoping out process of these heritage asset receptors, the visibility of the Site and height, scale and massing of emerging proposed built development (as provided in model format by the Development architects) within the surrounding townscape area was assessed at that stage using a computer-generated ZTV. This analysis is further described in relation to visibility and likely visual effects in a later section of this report. This analysis has been further confirmed by an on-site review. A HAP is also provided as a figure in **Appendix 8.2B**.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 8.112 In summary, the listed buildings and or structures that are identified as having the potential to be affected by the Development on Site are identified in **Table 8.15** (and also on the HAP at **Appendix 8.2B**). Some of these have been grouped together for the purposes of this assessment due to close similarities in their location, building type / style, use, and or age / history.

Table 8.15 Heritage Receptors: Listed Buildings

Type	Name
Listed building	Nos.2-4 London Street (Grade II)
Listed building	Coroner's Court, London Street (Grade II)
Listed building	High Bridge (Grade II)
Listed building group	London Street: Nos.33, 35, 37-39, 41, 49-53, 44-46, 48-52, 54-58, 62.66, 68, 70, 72, 74-76, 80, 86 & 88 London Street (all Grade II)
Listed building	Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent (Grade II)
Listed building group	The George Hotel, King Street (Grade II) Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place (Grade II)
Listed building group	Nos.48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place (including No.10 High Street) (all Grade II)
Listed building	Church of St Laurence (Grade I)

Landmark	
Listed building	Telephone Exchange, Minster Street (Grade II)
Listed building Landmark	Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I)
Listed building Landmark	Church of St Giles, Southampton Street (Grade II)

- 8.113 Part of the Site is located within the designated area of one conservation area, which is called Market Place / London Street, and the wider Site also within the local and wider setting of this and a number of other conservation areas that have been designated by the local planning authority. The conservation areas that are identified as having the potential to be affected by the development of the Site are identified in **Table 8.16**.

Table 8.16 Heritage Receptors: Conservation Areas

Type	Name
Conservation Area	Market Place / London Street
Conservation Area	St Mary's Butts / Castle Street

- 8.114 The Site is located within the local setting of one designated scheduled monument, although it has been on of the outcomes of our survey work and analysis to exclude other such designations from our scope; as not having the potential to be affected by the Development. This is set out in **Table 8.17**.

Table 8.17 Heritage Receptor: Scheduled Monument

Type	Name
Scheduled monument	High Bridge

- 8.115 As described above, there are a larger number of other designated, and also potential non-designated, heritage assets within the wider surrounding area of the Site however, these have been scoped out from further assessment as informed by both desktop analysis and on site survey, in light of the screening and/or filtering effects on visibility of distance, street pattern, intervening built form and or mature vegetation, and also in terms of the particular heritage significance of the asset and its relationship (or lack of) within its wider townscape setting and the Site itself.

Heritage Significance and Setting

- 8.116 This informal scoping exercise for built heritage asset / receptors is further described in our **Built Heritage Statement** at **Appendix 8.1** to this report, which is in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF 2021 (paragraphs 194-195) and also best practice guidance and advice published by the DCMS and HE. This appended report also forms part of our description of the baseline conditions for the Site and Study Area in relation to built heritage, which includes Statements of Heritage Significance proportionate to the importance of each of the built heritage assets, and that provides a sufficient level of description to understand and appreciate the historic and heritage context, and the potential impacts of Development on Site. The description of the particular heritage significance and interests of each asset is provided, including any contribution of setting (including the Site itself) and views to that significance.
- 8.117 As informed by baseline analysis, it is our assessment that the existing condition of the Site do not contribute to the understanding or appreciation of the significance of any of the heritage assets identified within the defined Study Area. This assessment is further described for each heritage asset receptor in the statements of heritage significance. The past development of the Site has connections to the historic industrial use of the local area along the waterways of the river and canal from the 19th century. However, this link is no longer legible on Site, and the existing large scale modern buildings and spaces are of no particular architectural and or historic interest. As found today, the Site no longer integrates with, nor

positively addresses or activates, London Street. However, The Oracle mixed use development itself has embraced the river to create new public realm along the water.

Built Heritage Receptors' Value

- 8.118 Statements of Heritage Significance (and setting) for each of the heritage assets are not repeated in this section of the Chapter, although a summary the relative value and sensitivity to change of these receptors is set out in **Table 8.18**, which is based on the findings of this part of baseline analysis. and also have regard to guidance set out in **Table 8.1**.

Table 8.18 Value / Sensitivity of Built Heritage Receptors

Type	Name	Value / Sensitivity
Listed building	Nos.2-4 London Street (Grade II)	Medium
Listed building	Coroner's Court, London Street (Grade II)	Medium
Listed building	High Bridge (Grade II)	Medium
Scheduled Monument	High Bridge	Medium
Listed building Group	London Street: Nos.33 / 35 / 37-39 / 41 / 49-53 / 44-46 / 48-52 / 54-58 / 62-66 / 68, 70 / 72 / 74-76 / 80 / 86 & 88 (all Grade II)	All Medium
Listed building	Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent (Grade II)	Medium
Listed building Group	The George Hotel, King Street (Grade II) Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place (Grade II)	Both Medium
Listed building Group	Nos.48-49 / 50-51 / 52 Market Place (including No.10 High Street) (all Grade II)	Medium
Listed building Landmark	Church of St Laurence (Grade I)	High
Listed building	Telephone Exchange, Minster Street (Grade II)	Medium
Listed building Landmark	Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I)	High
Listed building Landmark	Church of St Giles, Southampton Street (Grade II)	Medium
Conservation Area	Market Place / London Street	Medium
Conservation Area	St Mary's Butts / Castle Street	Medium

Baseline Conditions: Townscape Character

Published Characterisation Studies

Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008 (including Update Note 2018)³²

- 8.119 Appendix 1 to the Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD (2008) is referred to as a Townscape and Visual Assessment. This baseline analysis (section 02: townscape assessment) provides detailed descriptions for each identified character area within the town centre area, and also their relative sensitivity in townscape terms to the development of tall buildings. Twenty-six character areas have been defined. The SPD outlines that they have been defined due to similarities in the following criteria: architectural style; urban grain and townscape scale; presence of townscape designations; townscape condition; and key views. The geographical extent of each character area is illustrated at **Figure 8.1** (extract from Appendix 1).

³² Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD (including Update Note 2018)

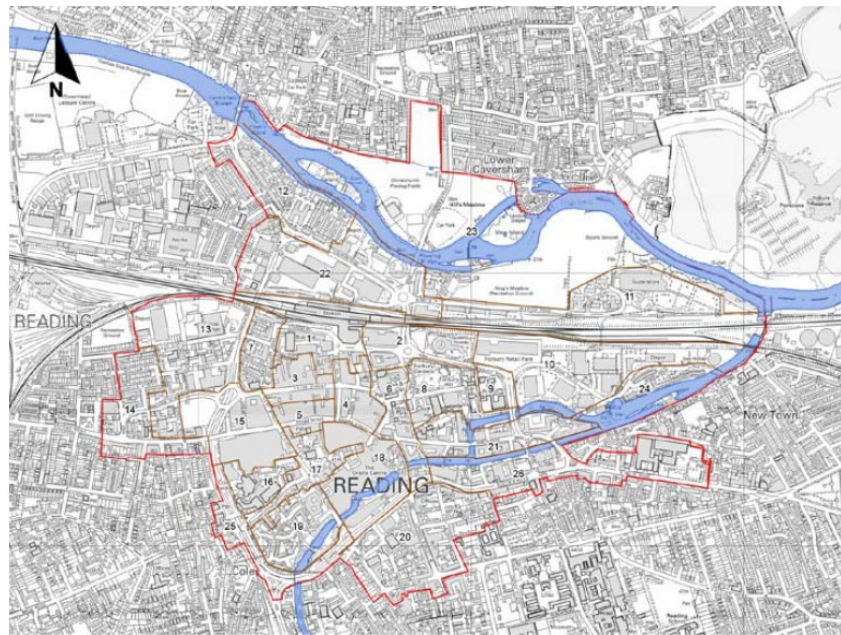


Figure 8.1 Townscape Character Areas (extract Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008)

- 8.120 Appendix 1 identifies that the Site is entirely located within the defined “The Oracle Character Area” (no.18). The townscape characteristics, and also key views and landmarks, of this character area within the central area of Reading are described in the 2008 SPD (and also its 2018 Update) - included in full at **Figure 8.2**.

Land Use	The Oracle is a single development that fills the space between Broad Street, Mill Lane, Bridge Street and Duke Street. It provides a major shopping centre for Reading town centre, with the main access from Broad Street. The Kennet and Avon canal flows through the centre of the development. It is a key feature of the site and forms the focus of a civic space which includes seating, play spaces and cafes.
Historical significance	Ecclesiastical Town; AD1121-1539 Post-Dissolution Reading: AD 1539-1840 Railway town and growth of manufacturing and commerce post 1840 Adjacent to the Russel Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area
Architectural style	Late 20th century. Buildings materials are variable including concrete, brick and glass.
Urban grain and townscape scale	The large expanse of covered shopping centre and occasionally tall structures creates a large scale townscape.
Townscape condition	Although the design of the Oracle building is unexceptional, the public realm along the River Kennet is an attractive and well used resource which is in good condition.
Key views within the character area	Views along the Kennet and Avon canal eastwards
Key views into the character area	Buildings within the character area contribute to the skyline visible from Oxford Road when approaching Reading from the west. From the elevated position of Caversham Park, Balmore Park and Horse Close, built form within the character area contributes to the view of central Reading.
Landmark structures and existing tall buildings	The general roofline of this character area is 3/4 storeys, with occasional taller buildings up to 9 storeys. The rooflines of these taller buildings are designed in such a way that their design, as well as their height stands out from the surrounding roofscape. For example the angular, glass structure which is located on the roof above the Oracle on the south side of the Kennet and Avon Canal.
Tall buildings planning applications	-
Townscape sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings	Low: The large block size and existing landmark structures (e.g. spire on the car park) create a high capacity for the development of tall buildings. However, consideration should be given on a case by case basis to how the development would impact on the skyline above St Mary's church and the surrounding Conservation Area.

Figure 8.2 The Oracle Character Area (no.18) (extract Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008)

- 8.121 Appendix 1 of the SPD uses this townscape assessment (alongside wider views analysis) to judge the capacity of the town centre to accommodate tall buildings. Accordingly, **Figure 8.3** below demonstrates those character areas which are judged to have a “low sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings”, and therefore have some capacity for buildings over 10 storeys - indicated by a brown wash on this plan. This includes the TCA that incorporates the Site (i.e. no.18 The Oracle).
- 8.122 The subsequent Reading Tall Building Strategy Update Note (2018) re-examined each of the previous character area assessments in light of changes to the townscape condition within Reading over a ten year period. One of the conclusions of this re-examination was that TCA no.18 The Oracle (which includes the Site) continued to have townscape capacity / low sensitivity (paragraph 3.21-3.22). The Update set out that “*The suitability as a location for tall buildings remains moderate.*”

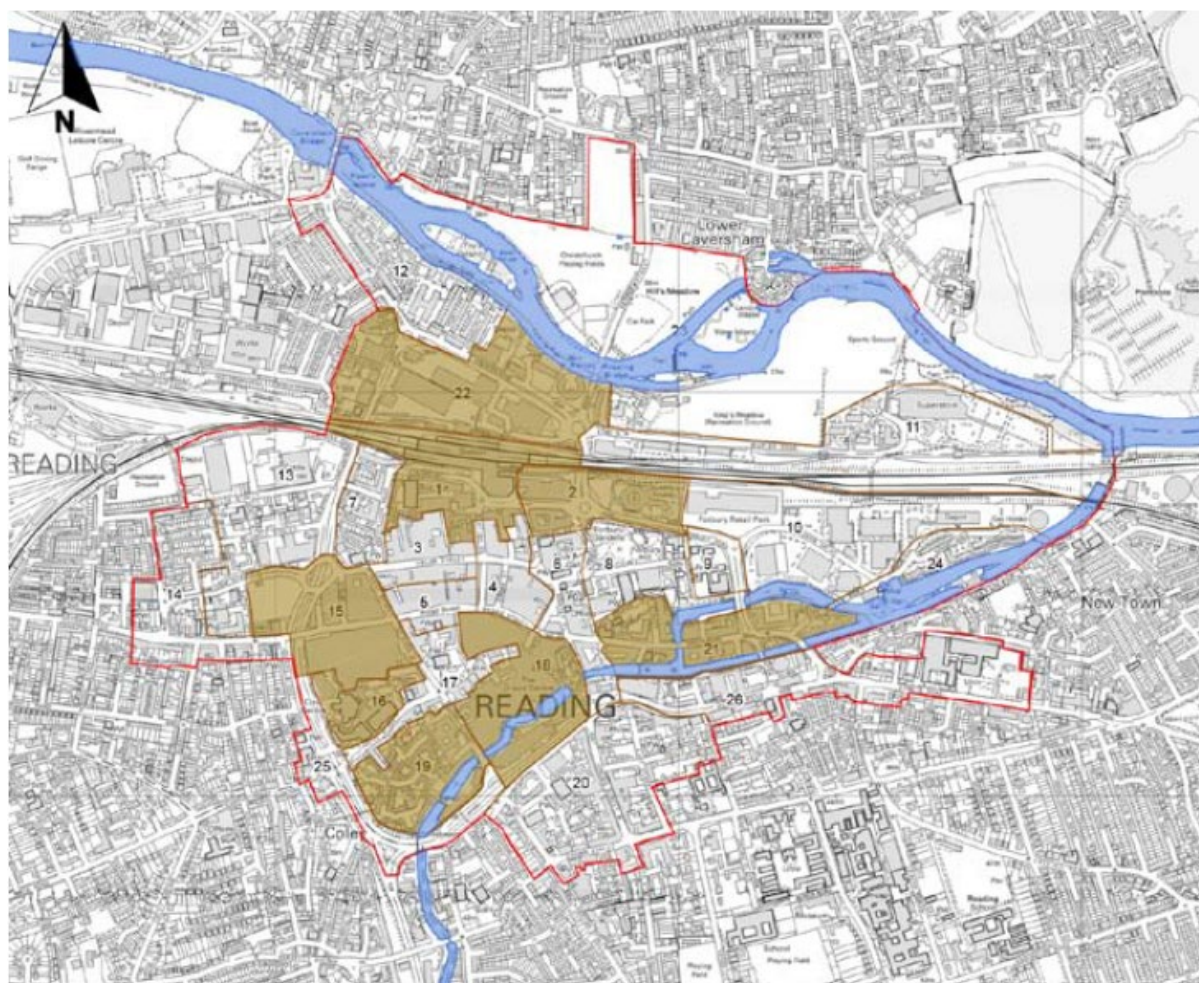


Figure 8.3 Townscape capacity for tall buildings (extract Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008)

*City Centre Framework 2008*³³

- 8.123 The City Centre Framework (2008) was first prepared as a supporting document to the former Reading Central Area Action Plan. This framework provides a spatial and design overview for the central area of Reading both to guide forth coming developments and to provide reference in the consideration of planning applications, and further informs our own study. It is important to note that this document is considered at two levels:
- *the central core: this includes the long-established and historic town centre, the civic centre district, the station area extending along the Thames and*

³³ Reading Borough Council (2008) City Centre Framework

Riverside, Forbury Gardens, and The Oracle, including the area to the south of the Kennet; and

- *the wider central area: this includes three major opportunity areas identified in the Reading Central Area Action Plan as areas for long-term expansion of the central core.*

8.124 **Figure 8.4** is an extract from the framework illustrating these key areas. The Site is not located within one of the defined opportunity areas, although the area of the 'central core' includes The Oracle as one of its 'key landmarks' and also as part of the envisioned focus for future development and intensification for Reading.

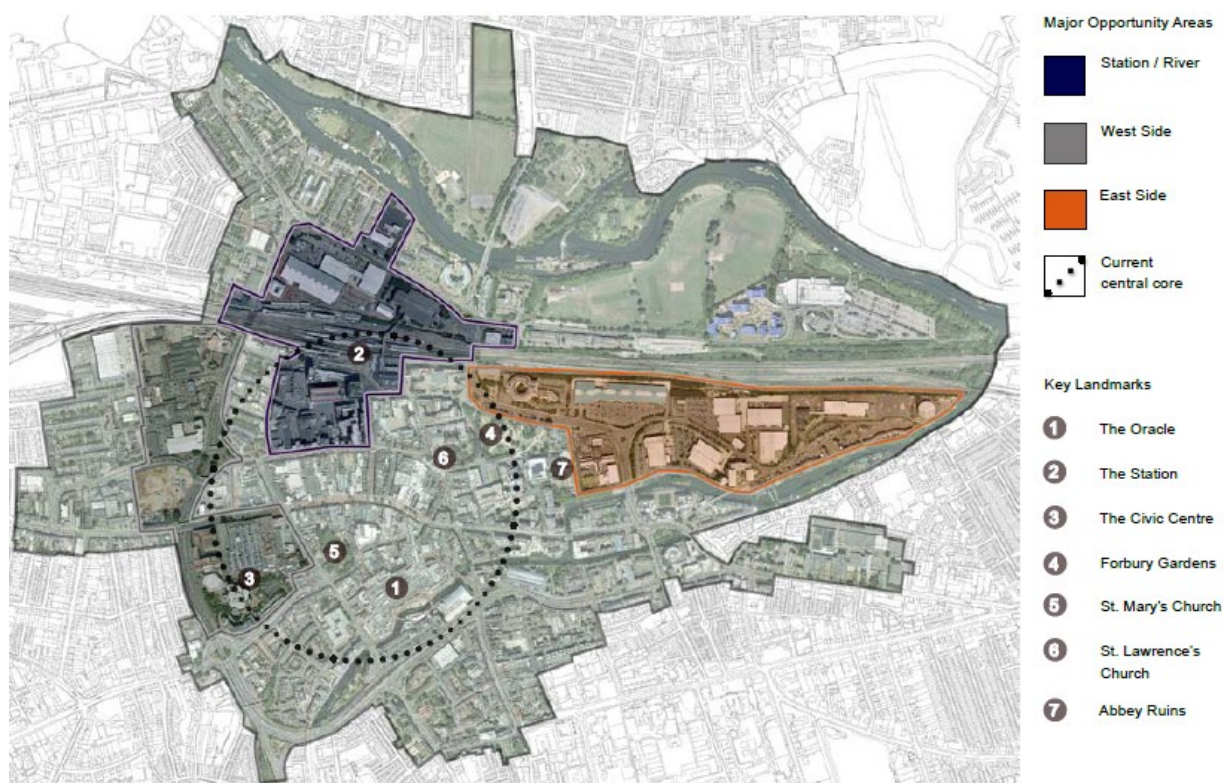


Figure 8.4 The Wider Central Area and Central Core (extract City Centre Framework 2008)

8.125 The framework reiterates the findings of its contemporary Tall Building Strategy SPD. This indicates the locations within the central area that have been determined to be most suitable for the location of taller buildings. It sets out that the primary location for the development of very tall buildings is the area around the station, which best meets a number of the key criteria used in the assessment for suitable locations. These criteria include:

- *proximity to sustainable transport access;*
- *capacity of the area to meet demand for social infrastructure;*
- *impact on townscape and historic character;*
- *short and long range visual impact;*
- *visual impact on open spaces;*
- *topography and flood risk;*
- *market demand; and*

- *flight path and telecommunications constraints*

8.126 A secondary category, or general guidance, is also introduced by the relevant figure within the framework. This applies to other areas outside the defined tall building zones, including the Site, and states that the “*height of new buildings to reflect surrounding building heights.*”. For tall buildings the key design principles are set out to include creating a positive relationship to surrounding streets, creating positive visual impact, optimising sustainability and minimising environmental impact. Alongside the key considerations of height, scale and massing, the framework provides further and broader design objectives for the town centre, which include responding the established urban structure and grain, including matters of character, ease of movement and permeability, continuity and enclosure, and legibility, and also the diversity and mix of uses. Improving access and public transport is a further key consideration, including as particularly relevant to the Site itself an objective to reduce the barrier created by the IDR. It is set out that:

“All future developments should seek to address the problems of the IDR by following urban design principles that treat the IDR as a place and not simply a traffic corridor:

- *link city centre activities into neighbouring areas;*
- *create space for environmental enhancement of the public realm through the creation of quality streets and places; and*
- *plan new development and public spaces to create a strong urban grid with active frontages along the IDR.”*



Figure 8.5 Photograph of Site as seen from Queens Road / IDR back from the east (2022)

Site and Local Area – Key Townscape Features

Historical Development

8.127 Historically the Site forms part of the former industrial area along the river and canal. This is immediately to the west of the ancient north-south route of London Street / Duke Street through the historic core of Reading, which crosses the Kennet at High Bridge and also leads into the Market Place. It was in the later 20th century that the greatest degree of change occurred to this past layout and character. The post war development of the IDR along the south side of the river and a new bridge crossing along the line of Yield Hall Place established a new pattern of movement and also a generally larger grain and scale of built form, infrastructure and spaces. Older buildings on both sides of London Street at its north end were

cleared away, and more recently the comprehensive development of The Oracle complex has further established a new mix of uses and character for the area. As found today, the Site integrates poorly with the older street pattern and activity, although the wider complex has embraced the river to create new public realm along the water. The Oracle itself has become the focus of leisure and retail uses not only for this town but also as a centre of regional importance, although this role is now changing in response to wider national trends.



Figure 8.6 Photograph looking north along London Street towards the town centre, dated 1878, prior to post war redevelopment and severance by the IDR³⁴

Land Uses

- 8.128 The current land use of the Site is commercial (both retail and leisure uses), which relates to the prevailing character of the local area as part of the landmark The Oracle complex within this part of the town centre and riverside. The wider area surrounding is characterised by a mix of land uses; the key feature being the major infrastructure element of the IDR that effectively runs east-west along the southern edge of the central commercial and civic core of the town, and acts as part of its modern ring road system. Across the IDR to the north The Oracle centre is a major commercial focus for the town – predominantly in retail use, which also straddles and encloses part of the canalised River Kennet. The Oracle presents a largely inactive frontage to the IDR, including servicing routes and car parking. Along this section of the IDR (and on both sides) there are other commercial uses, including offices and the Premier Inn hotel further to the south west of the Site. The historic route of London Street is to the east of the Site, which runs north over the river crossing as Duke Street, and south away from the centre and to higher ground. This other key route has a mixed-use character, including commercial retail and offices acting in some way as a traditional high street. To the south of the Site residential uses dominate within a mix of historic and more modern properties north and south of the older established route of Church Street within that larger urban block.

³⁴ *Historic England Archives*



Figure 8.7 View looking towards the Site along the River Kennet from the east

Topography

- 8.129 The Site sits within an area of relatively flat topography as both development parcels address the key feature of the canalised River Kennet at the centre of The Oracle complex. The local topography is determined largely by rising land to the south away from the basin / valley of the River Kennet and also rising land northwards to the historic core of the town centre.

Movement and Urban Structure

- 8.130 The Site is defined by its role within the mixed use town centre of Reading and also its accessible location near to key transport routes, including the IDR (part of the A329) running east-west, London Street and its continuation Duke Street running north-south into the historic core, the waterways of the River Kennet and Avon Canal, and associated pedestrian / cycle links. The main railway station serving the town is located less than 500m to the north.
- 8.131 Historically, the urban structure of Reading has evolved as a grid of north-south and east-west routes, deriving from the original river crossing points. This grid of streets and creation of blocks has defined the urban structure of the town centre, which has otherwise been successively redeveloped within this framework to create a highly diverse townscape in terms of its use and also the form and character of built form. The imposition of the east-west rail corridor through the town in the 19th century has had a significant influence on that structure, and also in the more modern period the IDR has resulted in fragmentation of that older established grid. Near to the Site the key historic north-south routes of London Street / Duke Street (to the east) and Southampton Street / Bridge Street (to the west) remain legible, and also allow the flow of both transport and pedestrian movement and permeability, albeit to a degree severed by later transport interventions. There is a finer network of streets, lanes and spaces within the urban blocks. The west to east flow of the River Kennet along what is now the southern edge of the commercial centre remains as an historic element and key route for pedestrians and cyclists in particular. The Oracle complex itself has a generally inward-looking character, which beneficially concentrates activity and interest within the central enclosed riverside area, but otherwise provided poor connections and permeability within this part of the town.



Figure 8.8 View looking south along Yield Hall Place and bridge to the east side of the Site

Built Form and Scale

- 8.132 The Site, and its two development parcels straddle the river and both comprise large scale and format modern blocks that were purpose-built as part of the larger retail and leisure complex of The Oracle, dating from the late 20th century. These buildings are orientated to address the riverside public realm and also London Street at the corner, albeit with more inactive frontages to the shared service yard at Yield Hall Place and also the IDR. Although large scale and grain in form and articulation, these buildings employ a mix of more traditional cladding materials.



Figure 8.9 View looking north at the pedestrian crossing of the IDR and gateway / conjunction of High Bridge Yield Hall Place bridge

- 8.133 Within the wider local area, the scale and form of built development tends to reflect the relative importance and proportion of the roads, streets and spaces that are addressed. Along the IDR, the blocks of The Oracle effectively range from 6-8 typical storeys in height. Around the Bridge Street roundabout further

west and elevated section of the IDR to the south west of the Site existing commercial buildings rise up from 4 to 7 storeys, and then across to the north east of the Site other commercial blocks are predominantly 4-6 storeys in height. Along the converse north-south route of London Street historic buildings congregate to the south of the IDR junction and enclose the street as continuous terraces between 2-4 storeys in height across the rhythm of plots. To the south of the line of the IDR and also either side of London Street secondary streets and more intimate spaces are defined by a lower scale and also generally finer grain of buildings of 2-3 storeys.

Architecture and Materiality

- 8.134 The local area of the Site comprises a diverse mix of building materials and features, which reflects the multi-phase character of the long development and also more recent redevelopment of this area. To the south of the IDR the more historically intact urban blocks retain a range of buildings that often share the use of red brick as a characteristic, including those coupled with some more targeted use of render and or stone. More modern material and architectural styles predominate along the IDR and also as part of the dominant The Oracle development. Historical local landmark buildings, such as the former Methodist Church at No.33 London Street tend to employ more powerful architectural styles and or use of high-quality materials (such as stone) to communicate their status within the townscape. The modern The Oracle development itself has also sought to landmark itself through the addition of a visually distinctive sculptural feature atop the main car park block.

Public Realm and Green Elements

- 8.135 The Site includes areas of hardstanding, and vehicular and pedestrian accesses, which are integrated with the wider public realm and servicing areas of The Oracle complex. There is limited greenery within the immediate area, with the exception of groups of street trees along the riverside walkways. This is a very hard urban area reflective of the town centre location and history of modern redevelopment. This makes the waterscape of the River Kennet / Avon Canal all the more important as part of the open space and visual relief within this dense built urban context. Key elements of public realm within the local area include the active riverside space at the heart of The Oracle, although connections to and permeability through this complex and the wider network of street and spaces is generally poor. Other key spaces include the historic Market Place further to the north, and the churchyards of St Mary (to the north west) and St Giles (to the south west).



Figure 8.10 View looking west along The Oracle Riverside and across the water to the shopping centre

Local Townscape Character Areas

- 8.136 The townscape character of the wider area surrounding the Site comprises a mix of different uses and diversity in age, form, scale and architectural character of existing buildings and spaces. To define townscape character receptors, which include all parts of the townscape - both ordinary areas and any of those of heritage significance, such as conservation areas - and at a scale appropriate to the Site and Study Area, local Townscape Character Areas (TCAs) have been identified as a HTVIA figure at **Appendix 8.2C**.
- 8.137 For the purposes of contextual analysis, and how that informs the proposed future development for the Site, we have identified that the following defined TCAs (receptors) are of the greatest relevance. This has been based on an initial 500m radius study area from the Site, which then has been further refined based on the findings of our desktop and subsequent site survey work. **Table 8.19** identifies each of these six TCAs and also provide a summary description of key characteristics.
- 8.138 A summary of the local townscape character areas and their Value is provided at **Table 8.20**. This analysis has been guided by our established methodology (and criteria) in relation to townscape character assessment as set out in **Table 8.5**, and professional experience and judgement..

Table 8.19 Townscape Character Areas

Name	Value
TCA18: The Oracle	Low
TCA6: St. Lawrence and Market Place	Medium
TCA20: London Street	Medium
TCA17: St Mary's and Castle Street	Medium
TCA21: Forbury South	Low
TCA26: King's Road	Low

Table 8.20 Description of Townscape Character Areas (TCAs)

TCA18 – The Oracle	
	Few or no heritage asset designations
	Comprehensive commercial development, coarse grain and large-scale modern buildings
	Enclosed Kennet side public realm along River Kennet
	Mixed use, albeit predominantly retail
	Prevailing building heights of four to nine storeys
	Variety of architectural styles and use of materials
Townscape character sensitivity: Low ³⁵	

³⁵ As described by Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

TCA6 – St. Lawrence and Market Place	
	Concentration of built heritage assets, including Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and listed buildings
	Historic street pattern and fine urban grain, including focal public spaces such as Market Place and High Bridge crossing over River Kennet. Main transport route north-south
	Landmark buildings include Town Hall and St Lawrence’s Church
	Mix of land uses
	Prevailing building heights of three to five storeys
	Diversity of building types, architectural styles and use of materials
Townscape character sensitivity: High ³⁶	

³⁶ As described by Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

TCA20 – London Street	
	Concentration of built heritage assets, including Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and listed buildings
	Elements of historic street pattern and fine urban grain, with coarser grain to north and south edges representing more modern redevelopment along main transport routes
	Landmark building St Giles's Church
	Predominantly residential land use
	Prevailing building heights of three to six storeys
	Relatively consistent typology of terraced blocks, some variety of architectural styles and prevailing use of red brick
<i>Townscape character sensitivity: High³⁷</i>	

³⁷ As described by Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

TCA17 – St Mary’s and Castle Street	
	Concentration of built heritage assets, including St Mary’s Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area and listed buildings
	Historic street pattern and fine urban grain, including focal public space St Mary’s Churchyard. Main transport route east-west
	Landmark building St Mary’s Church
	Mix of land uses
	Prevailing building heights of two to four storeys
	Diversity of building types, architectural styles and use of materials
<i>Townscape character sensitivity: High³⁸</i>	

³⁸ As described by Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

TCA21 – Forbury South	
	Few heritage asset designations
	Predominantly coarse grain and large-scale modern buildings. Main transport route east-west (Kings Road))
	Waterside association with River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal
	Mixed use, albeit predominantly offices
	Prevailing building heights of four to fifteen storeys
	Variety of architectural styles and use of materials
	<i>Townscape character sensitivity: Low³⁹</i>

³⁹ As described by Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

TCA26 – King’s Road	
	Modest number of heritage asset designations
	Elements of both historic finer grain and coarse grain representing redevelopment of larger scale modern buildings
	Dominating major modern vehicular transport route east-west (IDR, including Queen’s Road and King’s Road)
	Landmark feature twin spires of St. John’s and Methodist Church
	Waterside association with River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal to north edge
	Mix of land uses, including higher education campus
	Prevailing building heights of three to ten storeys
	Variety of architectural styles and use of materials
Townscape character sensitivity: Low ⁴⁰	

⁴⁰ As described by Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

Baseline Conditions: Visual Amenity Baseline

Extent of Visibility

- 8.139 Visual analysis commenced by establishing the area in which the Site may be visible; the different groups of people who may experience the views of the Site (defined as visual receptors); and the areas where views can or are likely to be possible; and the nature and extent of these views. These factors interrelate accordingly.
- 8.140 The visibility of the Development on Site has then been assessed using aerial imagery and the computer generated ZTV, also included as a HTVIA figure at **Appendix 8.2A**. The ZTV mapping utilises LiDAR data with 1m grid resolution, incorporating available information on existing topography, built form and mature vegetation (2019). The ridge heights of the Development blocks were provided by the appointed scheme architects at the time of the original application and utilised in the production of the ZTV. For the comparable Development the maximum height of new built form is described in Chapter 3 of the ES as 106.1mAOD.. The blue colour wash indicates where in the surrounding townscape the Development would potentially be visible from with the darkest blue indicating the highest potential visibility. The grey / white areas demonstrating parts of the townscape where the Development is likely to be not visible.
- 8.141 The ZTV was produced for an area within both a 1km and also wider a 2km radius of the Site. There may to be some more distant viewpoints beyond this from which the Development would be visible, but it would appear as a minor feature in the background of the view, in the context of the scale and character of the urban skyline of Reading and its wider landscape setting. As such, visual impacts from this distance would not be significant or material to the decision-making process.
- 8.142 As demonstrated by the initial ZTV, and also as confirmed during our subsequent site survey, the principal areas where the Site and Development would be visible include the main roads running past the Site boundary (including the IDR (Queens Road), London Street and Yield Hall Place), vantage points from a number of streets and public realm / open spaces within the local area of the Site (including the riverside area of The Oracle development), river crossings and also the riverside / canalside walkways (including High Bridge, Bridge Street Bridge and others over the River Kennet and Avon), and other longer distance views from the higher ground of The Mount to the south (i.e. the continuation of London Street south to meet Southampton Street and Whitley Street), as well as open spaces to the south. The established street pattern / orientation, density of surrounding built development, all serve to limit or otherwise control the number and extent of views within the more local study area however.
- 8.143 As part of the early design process, the project architects also employed 3D computer modelling of the emerging scheme within an accurate model of the local Reading townscape context, which has also been used to further test the likely visibility of built form from various vantage points. A further benefit of this exercise has been to re-confirm the location and also orientation of our recommended representative viewpoints, in relation to the scheme.

Key Visual Receptors

- 8.144 Visual receptors are defined as the groups of people who may be affected by changes in views and visual amenity. They include people passing through publicly accessible places e.g. by foot, car, bicycle or public transport, people working in an area and people visiting or engaged in recreational activities. The key visual receptors which have been identified within the Study Area with the potential to be affected by the Development on Site are set out below:
- Road users on main routes, such as London Street, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, Kings Road and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet;
 - Users of other local or secondary roads, streets and spaces within the town centre area, including the pedestrianised riverside area of The Oracle development;
 - Users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridges;

- Users of public open spaces, such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard, and the Mapledurham Estate; and
- Existing local residents within established housing areas to the south of the Site (beyond the IDR).

8.145 Although surrounding residential properties form a further receptor group, only the receptors identified above are considered within the HTVIA, as views from private properties are not a material planning consideration⁴¹ unless the impact of the proposals is likely to be so great ('overbearing' or 'inescapably dominant') that it would harm the residential visual amenity of the property.

Local Views

8.146 To further assist the informal scoping process with regard to the visibility and views of the Site and Development, the Local Plan and its supporting SPD / SPG have been reviewed in relation to any protected or otherwise 'significant / local views' identified through the plan making process. This review is summarised in the section following.

Reading Local Plan 2019⁴²

8.147 The Reading Local Plan (2019) identifies a number of "Significant Views with Heritage Interest" that would merit special protection (Policy EN5) (extract at **Figure 8.11**). Of the nine views identified, "View 2: View northwards down Southampton St from Whitley St towards St Giles Church, St Mary's Church and Greyfriars Church" is orientated towards the town centre and also the local area of the Site (but not directly towards the Site itself) from higher ground and the wider residential suburban area to the south.

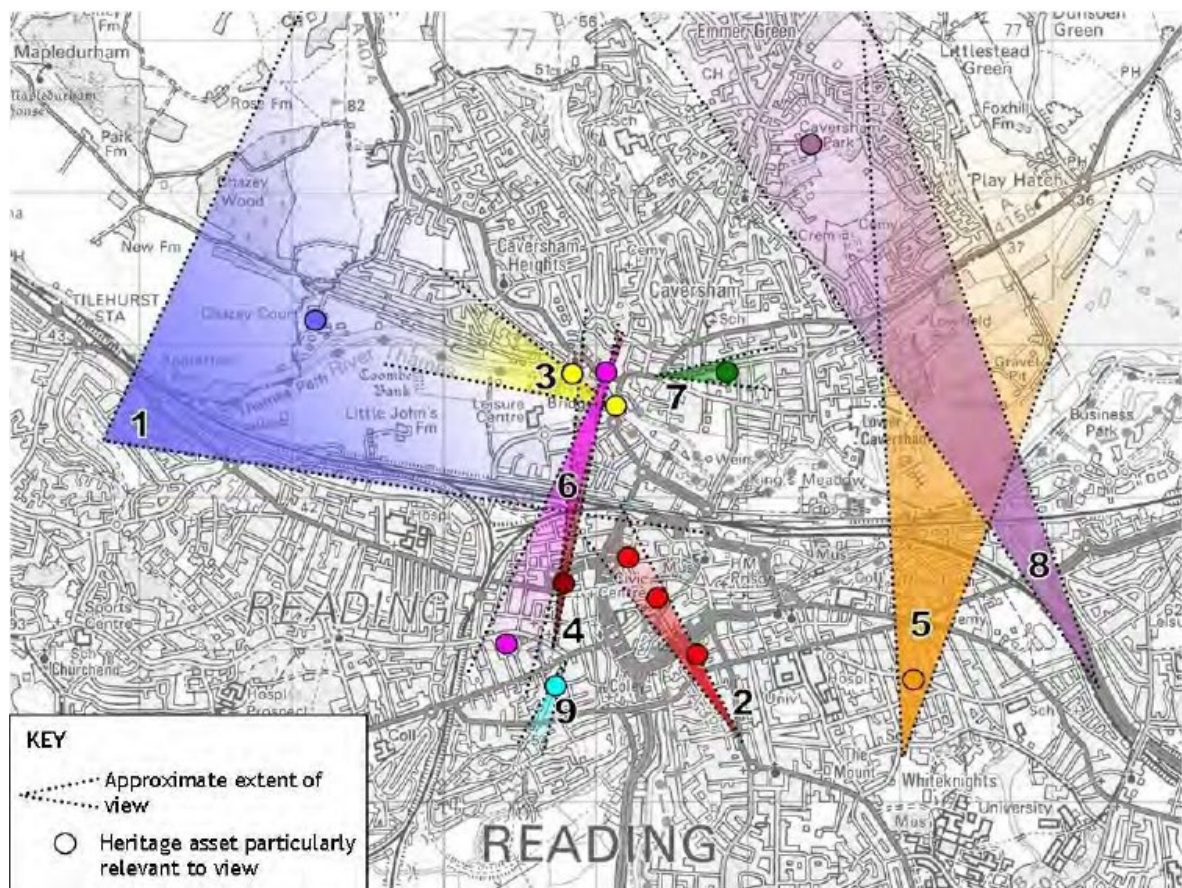


Figure 8.11 Significant Views with Heritage Interest (Extract Local Plan 2019)

⁴¹ Aldred's Case in 1610 established the principle that private individuals do not have a legal right to a view.

⁴² Reading Borough Council (2019) Reading Local Plan

- 8.148 The Assessment of Significant Views with Historic Environment Background Paper (2018) includes further detailed information on the importance and defining characteristics of View 2 and also its viewing place. As captured in **Figure 8.12**, the Site is not aligned with the key viewing corridor for this long view directed north-westwards along Southampton Street. This is further confirmed on the ZTV, where the Development would not be experienced from this vantage point.



Figure 8.12 Detail plan of Southampton Street showing Viewing Place / View 2 (Extract from Assessment of Significant Views with Heritage 2018)

Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008⁴³

- 8.149 As a starting point, Appendix 1 to the Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD (2008) is referred to as Townscape and Visual Assessment. In addition to an assessment of townscape character for the town centre, this baseline analysis (section 03: views and visual experience) provides a study of “key views” that contribute. This has identified a number of key views (1) within central Reading, (2) mid-range views into central Reading, and also other (3) long range views into central Reading.
- 8.150 With regard to key views within the central area itself, “*Viewpoint 1: view along the Kennet and Avon Canal from Duke Street [i.e. High Bridge] westwards*”, is the most relevant to the Site (extracted at **Figure 8.13**). The key features of this view to be protected as set out in this SPD are described as the “*framed views along the canal*”. This is also identified in this SPD as a view which is judged to have the potential to be improved by the inclusion of tall buildings. Further guidance for this view states that:

“Views along the canal form a localised area of open views; the view is flanked on either side by a well-defined edge, created by the tall, blocky structures within the Oracle development. Long range views along the canal are restricted by a bridge in the foreground. The view has a low sensitivity to the introduction of tall buildings.”

⁴³ Reading Borough Council (2008) Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD

A key characteristic of the view is the manner in which it is framed by tall buildings with a large block size; further tall buildings would enhance this characteristic.”



Figure 8.13 Viewpoint I (Extract from Appendix 1 of Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008)

- 8.151 With regard to mid and long-range views into central Reading from within the wider townscape / landscape area (extract at **Figures 8.14 and 8.15**), there are a number of identified viewpoints with the potential to be affected by the Development of a taller building on Site. These are discussed below.



Figure 8.14 Mid-range views into central Reading (Extract from Appendix 1 of Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008)

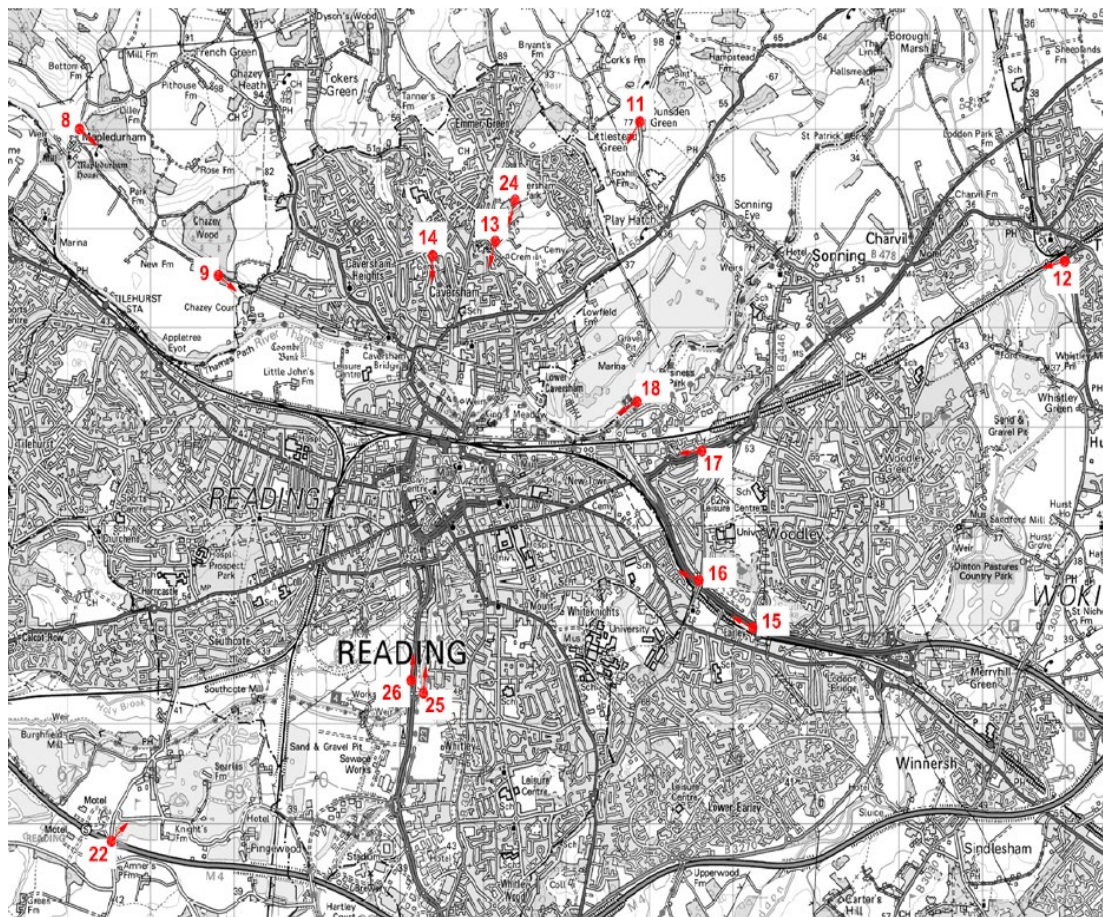


Figure 8.15 Long range views into central Reading (Extract from Appendix 1 of Reading Tall Building Strategy SPD 2008)

- 8.152 Viewpoint 5 (From the A327, south of central Reading) is located at the junction of Mount Pleasant, Southampton Street and Whitley Street within the suburban area of The Mount. The SPD describes that:

“The A327 and adjacent residential development creates a framed and tunnelled view towards central Reading. The sloping road facilitates views down to the Oracle buildings which are a visible feature at the end of the road and form the focal point of the view. Although the buildings in the foreground are residential and low rise, the existing visibility of buildings in central Reading as a focal point creates a low sensitivity to further tall building developments.”

- 8.153 This view is orientated towards the Site at a distance of c.825m, and has also been judged to have the potential to be improved by the inclusion of tall buildings in this SPD. The 2018 Update to this SPD did recognise however that:

“The feature which is now most apparent at the background of the view is The Blade, which is clearly higher than other surrounding elements of Central Reading, although Three Forbury Square is also visible to its left ...”

- 8.154 The ZTV demonstrates that there is likely to be no visibility of the scheme from this viewpoint location.

- 8.155 Viewpoint 8 (From rural road north of Maple Durham) is 5.7km to the north west of the Site. This is described in the SPD as:

“The view is of a pastoral landscape interspersed with parkland trees and woodland clumps. Maple Durham House is the only visible built form. The rural character of the view and the undeveloped nature of the skyline results in a high sensitivity to the introduction of tall buildings to the view. Although tall buildings

within central Reading would be a background feature of the view, the block size, height and architectural style would be at odds with the rural character."

- 8.156 Viewpoint 9 (From footpath east of Maple Durham) is 3.7km to the north west of the Site. This is described in the SPD as:

"Views across the sloping pastoral fields in the foreground are to a wooded skyline. The roofline of housing at the western end of 'The warren' is visible in the middle distance. In the background of the view more extensive built form on the slopes of the southern River Thames valley sides (Purley on Thames) is visible. Although occasional built form is a feature, the built form is residential and low rise. The rural view has a high sensitivity to the development of tall or very tall buildings."

- 8.157 The character of the viewpoint has changed substantially since the SPD was published. The view is restricted to the footpath itself due to dense foliage and tree planting. Visibility of the pastoral fields and woodland in the far distance is not experienced.

- 8.158 Viewpoint 11 (From Dunsden Way, south of Dunsden Green) is 4.3km to the north east of the Site. This is described in the SPD as:

"Gently undulating, large arable fields form the dominant feature of the view. The fields are interspersed with overhead power lines and electricity pylons. The skyline is occasionally wooded, but the woodland does not significantly contain view which are long ranging. The wind turbine at Green Park is a feature of the view in the far distance. Although large scale man made features are a feature of the view, a strong rural character remains. The introduction of further built form, particularly tall, large blocks would further erode the rural character. The view has a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings to the skyline."

- 8.159 Viewpoint 14 (View from Balmore Park) is located 2.15km to the north of the Site and is described as:

"This is a long range panoramic view of central Reading. Views down the grassy slope, across the residential roofline, to central Reading are possible. Thames Tower, Western Tower and Fountain House are visible on the skyline, while other tall commercial buildings in the east of Reading town centre are screened by existing vegetation. Views of Reading from this position are panoramic and are experienced from a recreational resource. It is judged that the viewpoint has a high sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings. They would draw further attention to the central area and further detract from the tranquil nature of the view. Consideration should be given to how any proposed tall buildings respond to the existing tall buildings, and to how the skyline would be viewed as a whole. Although true of all viewpoints, this is particularly true in this instance due to the elevated and panoramic nature of the view."

- 8.160 Viewpoint 17 (From the A4 west of Reading) is located 3.1km to the east of the Site and is described as:

"The A4 slopes downwards into central Reading, facilitating long range views over the rooftops to the gas cooling towers in eastern central Reading. The foreground of the view is suburban in character; semi detached and detached housing along the A4 being the dominant visual feature. However, as large structures within central Reading are an existing feature of the view, there is a low sensitivity to the introduction of further tall built form."

- 8.161 Viewpoint 23 (From the A4155, adjacent to Coley Hill) is located c.1km to the west of the Site, and is described as:

"The view is framed by built form and boundary vegetation on both sides of the A4155. The A4155 is a key route into Reading and this shot is representative of views experienced at a key gateway into the town. The road slopes downwards towards central Reading, and buildings within central Reading, including the gas storage structures in eastern central Reading are a focus to the view. The view

has a low sensitivity to the inclusion of further tall structures and could benefit from the addition of a tall structure to further focus the view."

- 8.162 Nearby, Viewpoint 27 (View from Coley Place towards central Reading) allows for panoramic views of the skyline of the town, including the distinctive spire of the Church of St Giles and the roof of The Oracle (c.500m to the west of the Site). It is described that this:

"... view has a medium sensitivity to the addition of a tall structure. The roofline is currently of variable height and further variety in itself would not have an adverse effect. However consideration should be given to how specific tall building proposals would respond to the surrounding roofline context. This is particularly true in this instance as a result of the panoramic nature of the view."

- 8.163 Viewpoint 24 (from Caversham Park) is located 3.1km to the north of the Site and is described as:

"The elevated position of Caversham Park and the open aspect provided by the sloping topography and parkland land use, facilitate long range views across to the southern side of the Thames Valley. Views into central Reading are also a feature; St. Giles' Church and the Chatham Place development are visible. Although views of central Reading are already a feature, due to the distance of the receptor, central Reading does not appear a significantly different scale to the surrounding residential development. However, should tall structures with a significantly larger block size, be developed then they would become a highly visually intrusive and uncharacteristic feature of the view. As panoramic views across the whole of central Reading are possible, the receptor would also be highly sensitive to a cumulative visual effect resulting from experiencing views of tall buildings in various locations. Due to the tranquil, parkland character of the view, it has a high sensitivity to the inclusion of further tall buildings within central Reading."

- 8.164 However, Caversham Park is no longer accessible to the public. Whilst acknowledged within this HTVIA, an assessment of the effects arising to the view looking towards Reading town centre as a result of the Development has not been possible.

- 8.165 The 2018 Update to the SPD further describes that:

"The original view analysis notes the variety in the skyline, and new developments have resulted in greater variety. The Blade provides a modern counterpoint to the spire of St Giles Church (appearing to be of a similar height from this point). The new building under construction at Kings Point is also prominent halfway between the two. Other visible changes are the Premier Inn at Letcombe Street and the Q2 building (both under construction at the time of the original analysis and with cranes visible) and 80-82 Kings Road ..."

- 8.166 The subsequent Reading Tall Building Strategy Update Note (2018) re-assessed each of the views previously identified, in light of changes to the townscape condition and also visual context of Reading over a ten year period. It was recognised that a number of newer tall buildings have since come into view, however this did not affect the overall value or sensitivity of any key views identified in this document in relation to the Development of the Site itself (paragraphs 3.30-3.32).

Conservation Area Appraisals (various)

- 8.167 It is also noted that there are a number of other views in the Borough that may be identified in relation to key heritage or townscape characteristics. These include views specifically identified within the published Conservation Area Appraisals by RBC.
- 8.168 The Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal from 2007⁴⁴ highlights the importance of the High Bridge as a key viewing place (both east and west along the river), as well as the view of Kennet side and The Oracle development from the modern Yield Hall Place bridge. The Conservation Area Appraisal describes that:

⁴⁴ Reading Borough Council (2007) Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

“Views along the River Kennet are pleasing and a distinctive feature of the conservation area. From High Bridge looking eastwards, there is a restful though not spectacular view of the river and modern riverside developments. From the new bridge in Yield Hall Place there is an exciting view westwards of modern commercial development outside the conservation area.” (page 9)

- 8.169 This Appraisal document highlights a number of additional key views in its text and also mapping that are considered to be important to the character and appearance of this designated area (**Figure 8.16-8.17: Townscape Analysis Map - blue arrow symbols**). Consideration for the potential effects on the quality and character of these longer views channelled north along London Street towards the historic bridge crossing has been carried out during the design development stages and included as Representative Views within the HTVIA where relevant. As existing, the south flank of the Vue Cinema on Site presents a rather bulky and uninteresting termination to this view north. There is potential for new built form, scale and architectural design to address that issue in a more positive manner, including creating a new townscape marker, interest and activity for this key gateway into the town centre.
- 8.170 To the south east of the Site across the IDR No.33 London Street is a listed building identified in this Appraisal document as a local landmark within views (Figures 5.6-7 – black asterisk symbol). At the south west end or branch of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, and to the south west of the Site, the listed building Church of St Giles (Southampton Street) is also recognised as a local landmark in both longer and local views looking north / south along Southampton Street / Bridge Street.

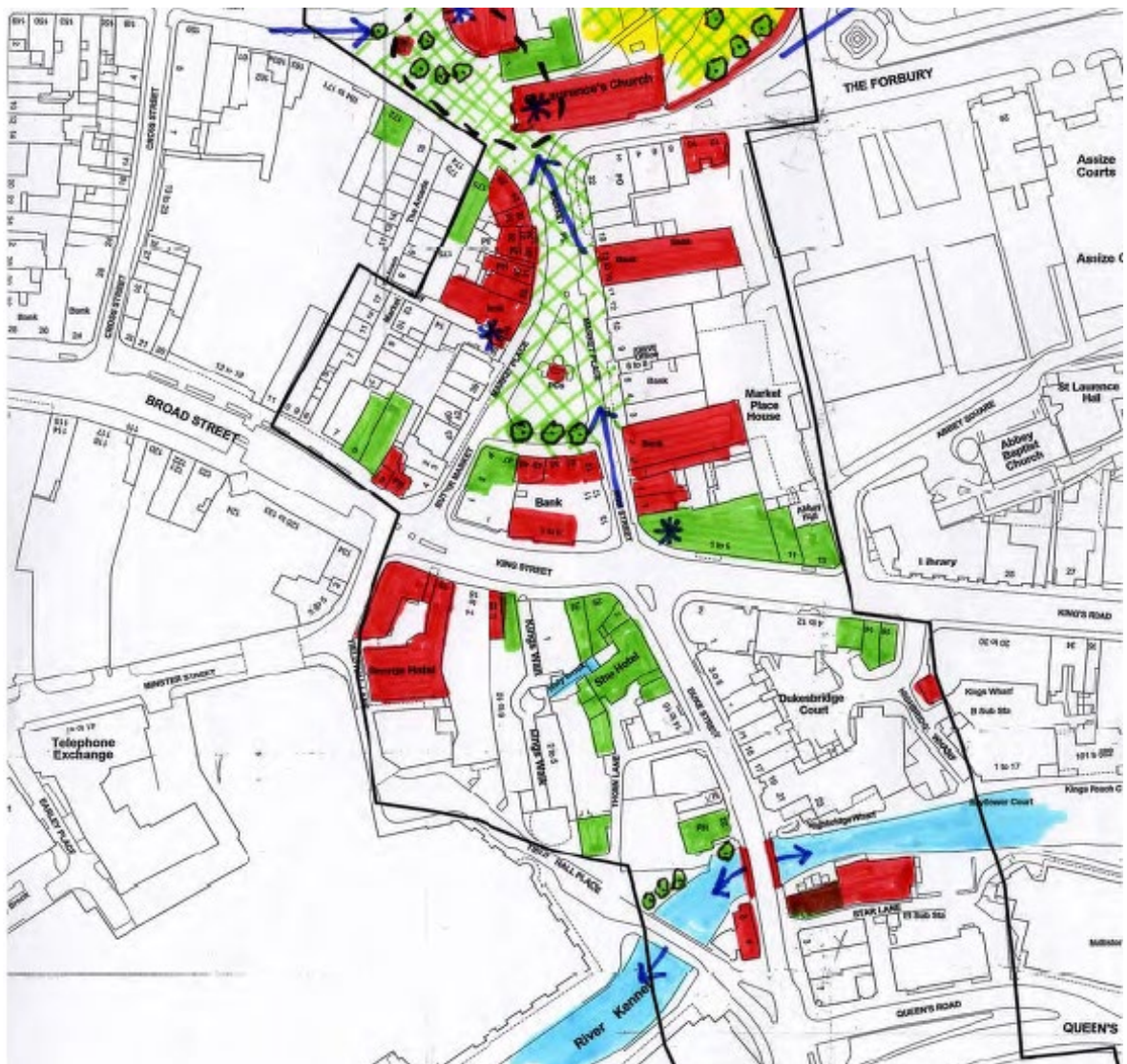


Figure 8.16 Townscape Analysis Map (extract from Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007 (Part 1 North / Part 1 North))



Figure 8.17 Townscape Analysis Map (extract from Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007 (Part 2 South))

- 8.171 The St Marys Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area is located to the west of the Site. The relevant Appraisal document dating from 2007⁴⁵ highlights the importance of the listed building St Marys Church at the heart of this area and its role as a local landmark in views. Local views looking east to the tower of the church from Hosier Street and across St Marys Butts, and also more general townscape views looking east / north east along Castle Street, are considered to contribute to the character and appearance of these heritage assets (**Figure 8.18**: Townscape Analysis Map - pink arrow symbols). However, the Conservation Area Appraisal itself recognises the constraints on any such visual effects in relation to nearby development schemes, in stating that: "... views of St Mary's Church are not readily apparent until one is quite close to it" (page 11).

⁴⁵ Reading Borough Council (2007) St Marys Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal



Figure 8.18 Townscape Analysis Map – extract from St Marys Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007

Representative Viewpoints

- 8.172 In order to recognise and assess the likely effects of the Development on the identified visual receptors, 18 Representative Views (RV) from these visual receptors have been identified and agreed with officers at RBC as part of pre-application discussions. The locations of the viewpoints are set out on the RV Plan as a HTVIA figure at **Appendix 8.2D**. The representative views are also listed in **Table 8.21** with brief commentary on why they have been selected, the visual receptors they represent and the type of visualisation that has been prepared to inform the assessment provided within this HTVIA. The selection of these views has also been informed by further consideration of the townscape character areas and the significance and disposition of nearby heritage assets that help to define the nature and value of the surrounding area.
- 8.173 In order to demonstrate the likely effects of Development on the identified visual receptors, different visualisation types have been provided as Accurate Visual Representations (AVR). The type of visual representation (as also identified in **Table 8.21**) has been guided by the Landscape Institute's Technical Information Note 06/19 and GLVIA3, which recommends a proportionate approach to assessment in relation to the scale of development proposed and the sensitivity of the visual receptors. Due to the scale of the Development and sensitivity of the Site and its townscape context, a combination of photomontage (i.e. rendered) and photowire / chalk massing Type 4 visualisations have been prepared. The photomontage or fully rendered views demonstrate the materiality of the Development and its relationship with the existing street scene and neighbouring buildings, and so are most helpful for closer distance views. The photowire / chalk massing views illustrate the massing of the Development and demonstrate how it sits in the wider townscape and in relation to other built form, and so are most helpful for longer distance views.

Table 8.21 Representative Viewpoints

No. / Location and orientation	Reason for inclusion	Type of visualisation
RV1 - View from Crane Wharf (footbridge), looking south west	To demonstrate views experienced by users of River Kennet and Crane Wharf Footbridge (TCA21 & TCA26)	Type 4 Photomontage
RV2 - View from Watlington Street Bridge, looking west	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Watlington Street (IDR) and River Kennet (TCA26)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV3 - View from Market Place (St Laurence Church), looking south	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Market Place, and also views from within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and the context of listed buildings (TCA6)	Type 4 Photomontage
RV4 - View from St Marys Butts / Hosier Street, looking east	To demonstrate views experienced by users of St Marys Butts / Hosier Street, and also views from within Castle Street / St Marys Butts Conservation Area and the context of listed buildings (TCA17)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV5 - View from Coley Place (footbridge over IDR), looking north east	To demonstrate views experienced by users of IDR and Coley Place Footbridge (TCA25). Viewing place associated with Key View 27 (Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV6 - View from Bridge Street bridge, looking north east	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Bridge Street bridge, and River Kennet (TCA19 & TCA18)	Type 4 Photomontage
RV7 - View from Southampton Street / IDR, looking north east	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Southampton Street, and also views from within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and the context of listed buildings (TCA20)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV8 - View from Church Street/St Giles Close, looking north	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Church Street, local residential community, and also views from within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area (TCA20)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV9 - View from London Street / South Street, looking north	To demonstrate views experienced by users of London Street, and also views from within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and the context of listed buildings (TCA20)	Type 4 Photomontage
RV10 – View from London Street/London Road, looking north	To demonstrate views experienced by users of London Street, and also views from within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area and the context of listed buildings (TCA20)	Type 4 Wireline/Chalk massing
RV11 – View from the IDR (Queens Road) / Sidmouth Street, looking west	To demonstrate views experienced by users of the IDR, and also views from within the context of listed buildings (TCA26)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV12 - View from Whitley Street / Mount Pleasant looking north	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Whitley Street / Mount Pleasant. Viewing place associated with Significant View with Heritage Interest 2 and also Key View 5 (Reading Local Plan 2019 & Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline/Chalk massing
RV13 - View from Castle Hill / Tilehurst Road / Coley Avenue looking east	To demonstrate views experienced by users of Castle Hill / local residential area Viewing place associated with Key View 23 (Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV14 – View from A4, looking west	To demonstrate views experienced by users of the A4. Viewing place associated with Key View 17 (Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV15 – View from Dunsden Green, looking south	Viewpoint 11 from Reading Tall Building Study	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV16 – Mapledurham Estate / AONB	Viewing place associated with Key View 8 and 9 (Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV17 – Mapledurham Estate / AONB	Viewing place associated with Key View 9 (Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing
RV18 - Balmore Park viewpoint	Viewing place associated with Key View 14 (Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008)	Type 4 Wireline / Chalk massing

Future Baseline

8.174 There would be no change to the baseline conditions in the absence of the Development.

Likely Significant Effects

Construction Phase

Built Heritage Effects

- 8.175 The potential significant effects on the heritage significance of built heritage assets during the demolition and construction phase would vary according to the nature of the construction works over time. However, as described in the Assessment Methodology Section, any likely significant demolition and construction effects would be focussed on the heritage significance of the Market Place / London Road Conservation Area only, i.e. direct impacts through works within part of the designated boundary of this heritage asset. As temporary and short-term effects, the groundwork excavations, including construction of foundations, movement of heavy plant and material to and from the Site and erection of construction infrastructure e.g. scaffolding, fixed tower crane, mobile cranes, hoarding, lighting and construction of new built form and public realm are not likely to cause significant effects on the heritage significance of the conservation area.
- 8.176 The demolition of existing buildings within the Site will have a permanent, long-term effect on the heritage significance of the conservation area. The past development of the Site has connections to the historic industrial use of the local area along the waterways of the river and canal from the 19th century. However, this link is no longer legible on Site, and the existing large scale modern buildings and spaces are of no particular architectural and or historic interest. As found today, the Site no longer integrates with, nor positively addresses or activates, London Street. The Site therefore makes no positive contribution to the heritage significance of the conservation area, and demolition of these existing buildings would not themselves be likely to result in any adverse effects.
- 8.177 Overall, there are likely to be direct, local, both permanent (long term) and or temporary (short-term) adverse effects on the heritage significance of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area as a result of construction works following the initial stage of demolition of the existing modern buildings on Site. The value / sensitivity of the conservation area is **Medium**. The magnitude of impact is **Minor Adverse**. The overall significance of effect is **Slight**. The effect is not significant.

Townscape Effects

- 8.178 In townscape terms the direct impacts of demolition and construction works would be focussed within the Site itself and its role as one element or area within the larger TCA18 – The Oracle. The demolition of existing modern buildings of no particular architectural or townscape qualities would have a permanent, long-term effect on the townscape character of the Site and this TCA, albeit in itself such change would not likely be adverse in nature. As later temporary and short-term effects, the groundwork excavations, and erection of construction infrastructure to facilitate new built form and public realm, are unlikely to cause significant effects on the character of the Site or the later TCA receptor.
- 8.179 Overall, there are likely to be direct, local, both permanent (long term) and or temporary (short-term) adverse effects on TCA18 as a result of construction works following the initial stage of demolition. The value of this TCA is **Low**, and it is a receptor with a **Low** susceptibility to change and also a **Low** sensitivity. The magnitude of these impacts is **Small Adverse**. The overall significance of effect is **Minor**. The effect is not significant. Accordingly, the effect of the construction phase for the Site itself is also unlikely to be significant, and also would not be significant for all other areas of this TCA.

Visual Effects

- 8.180 As confirmed previously in the Assessment Methodology Section, there are not likely to be any Significant effects on the characteristics or quality of the visual receptors caused by the demolition and construction phase of the Development on Site.

Operational Phase

Built Heritage Effects

- 8.181 The effects of the completed Development on Site on the heritage significance (and setting) of identified built heritage asset receptors have been considered in detail within the companion **Built Heritage Statement** at **Appendix 8.1**. This assessment is not repeated in this Chapter.
- 8.182 The potential significant effects on the heritage significance of built heritage assets during the operation phase would be caused by change to the current use and character of the Site through the erection of substantial new buildings, creation of new public realm, and introduction of a range of new uses within the Site.
- 8.183 The Development will have a permanent and long-term impact on the heritage significance of the relevant built heritage assets. Those impacts will be direct in the case of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area (through works within a part of its designated boundary) and also indirect where the Site falls outside this designated area but within its setting. In the case of all other built heritage assets the effects will be indirect through change to the character and appearance of a part their settings, including through new and changed views. This has been confirmed by the preparation of a technical ZTV in order to test the likely visibility of proposed new built form on Site now at application stage within our Study Area, and also preliminary on-site survey work by our team.
- 8.184 **Table 8.22** provides a summary description of the nature and extent of the likely effects of the Development on the significance (and setting) of each of the heritage asset receptors. Again, this should be read in conjunction with the companion **Built Heritage Statement** at **Appendix 8.1**, and also our methodology set out previously in this Chapter.

Table 8.22 Assessment of Effects on Built Heritage Receptors

Name / Address Heritage Asset Type Grade	Summary of Effects
Nos.2-4 London Street Listed Building II	The Development on Site will have both adverse and beneficial effects on the significance of the listed building that are to be weighed in the overall balance. The resultant greater visual contrast in height and scale of the Development relative to the nearby diminutive listed building has the potential to have a distracting effect on the current experience of the heritage significance of this heritage asset within its townscape and riverside setting. Conversely, such an impact could be moderated to some degree by improvements that include the introduction of a new and richer mix of uses on Site that would complement and contribute to those existing locally and also historically, creating more active and interesting street frontages and quality architectural design along Yield Hall Place and the west side of London Road nearby, and wider public realm improvements along both sides of the river. Overall, there are likely to be indirect, local, permanent long-term adverse effects on the heritage significance of the listed building. The value of this heritage asset is Medium. The magnitude of impact is Minor and type of effect Adverse. The significance of effect is Slight. This is not a significant effect.
Coroner's Court, London Street Listed Building II	Overall change as a result of the Development to the existing character or appearance of its setting or shared local views would not serve to detract from our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of this asset. Key views of its frontage are orientated away from the Site, and the existing visual and historic relationship between this listed building and the nearby Nos.2-4 and High Bridge would remain clearly appreciable within local townscape views. Although the scale and character of part of its local townscape setting would change, improvements to the Site in terms of the quality and contextual response of new architecture and public realm would also be appreciable. There are likely to be no overall adverse and no overall beneficial effects on the heritage significance of this listed building through such indirect impacts. The value of this heritage asset is Medium. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.
High Bridge Listed Building & Scheduled Monument II & N/A	Overall change as a result of the Development to the existing character or appearance of its setting or shared local views would not serve to detract from our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of this asset, in particular its historic relationship with the river and as a crossing point carrying traffic north and south. In addition, the existing visual and historic relationship between this listed structure and nearby historic buildings would remain appreciable. Again, and on balance, improvements to the Site in terms of the quality and contextual response of new architecture and public realm would also be appreciable within some local views from the bridge. There are likely to be no overall adverse and no overall beneficial effects on the heritage significance of this listed building and scheduled monument. The value of both of these heritage asset designations is Medium. There is no magnitude of such as indirect impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.
London Street: Nos.33 / 35 / 37-39 / 41 / 49-53 / 44-46 / 48-52 / 54-58 / 62-66 / 68 / 70 / 72 / 74-76 / 80 / 86 & 88 Listed Buildings All II	The effects of the Development, in terms of changing and increasing height and scale in contrast to the existing relationship of the historic townscape with the Site, would prove distracting in some shared views looking north along London Road. Where experienced, this would detract from our understanding and or appreciation of the heritage significance of each of these designated heritage assets and their group value. However, such adverse effects would be moderated to some degree by the design approach for this Development, which seeks to break up the massing of new built form visually into a series of defined blocks and elements. The articulation of elevations and roof form further assists in breaking down the appearance mass and bulk of these blocks, and also the use of quality cladding materials and detailing with a positive contextual reference. Overall, there are likely to be indirect, local, permanent long-term adverse effects on the heritage significance of each of these listed buildings, and as experienced as a group. The value of each of these heritage assets is Medium. The magnitude of impact is Minor Adverse. The significance of effect is Slight. This is not a significant effect.
Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent Listed Building II	Change as a result of the Development to the existing character or appearance of the listed building's setting and any shared views would overall integrate with the wider diverse townscape context, and so not serve to detract from our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of this asset. Overall, there are likely to be no adverse or beneficial effects on the heritage significance of this listed building. The value of this heritage asset is Medium. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.
George Hotel, King Street & Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place Listed Buildings Both II	Although change would occur to the character and appearance of the townscape setting of both these listed buildings, the existing street pattern and orientation, and also density and scale of surrounding buildings, constrains intervisibility with the Development on Site. Such change would not effect our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of either of these heritage assets or group value.

Name / Address Heritage Asset Type Grade	Summary of Effects
	Overall, there are likely to be no effects on the heritage significance of either listed building. The value of both these heritage assets is Medium. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral for both assets. This is not a significant effect.
Market Place: Nos.48-49 / 50-51 & 52 (including No.10 High Street) Listed Buildings All II	The effects of the Development, in terms of introducing new built form of a greater height to the backdrop / skyline of these historic buildings in views looking south from within the Market Place, would prove distracting within the townscape. Where experienced, this would detract from our understanding and appreciation of the heritage significance of each of these designated heritage assets and their group value. However, such adverse effects would be moderated to some degree by the design approach and qualities for this scheme architecturally. Overall, there are likely to be indirect, local, permanent long-term adverse effects on the heritage significance of each of these listed buildings, and also as experienced as a group. The value of each of these heritage assets is Medium. The magnitude of impact is Minor Adverse. The significance of effect is Slight. This is not a significant effect.
Church of St Laurence Listed Building I	Although change would occur to the character and appearance of the wider townscape setting of both this listed building, the existing street pattern and orientation, and also density and scale of surrounding buildings, all highly constrain intervisibility with the Development on Site. The landmark status of the church in both local and longer distance views would not be undermined by the Development. Such change would not detract from our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of this heritage asset. Overall, there are likely to be no effect on the heritage significance of this listed building. The value of this heritage asset is High. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.
Telephone Exchange, Minster Street Listed Building II	Although change would occur to the character and appearance of the townscape setting of this listed building, the existing street pattern and orientation, and also density and scale of surrounding buildings, constrains intervisibility with the Development. Such change would not effect our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of this heritage asset. Overall, there are likely to be no effects on the heritage significance of the listed building. The value of this heritage asset is Medium. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.
Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts Listed Building I	The effects of the Development, in terms of introducing new built form of a greater height to part of the far sky backdrop to some views of this historic building from the west, could prove slightly distracting within this historic townscape context. In this way the heritage significance of this heritage asset would be diminished, although its local landmark status would remain unchallenged overall. Such an adverse effect would be moderated to some degree by the design approach and qualities for this scheme architecturally as seen in these longer views. Overall, there are likely to be indirect, local, permanent long-term adverse effects on the heritage significance of this listed buildings. The value of this heritage asset is High. The magnitude of impact is Negligible. The significance of effect is Slight. This is not a significant effect.
Church of St Giles, Southampton Street Listed Building II	The existing street pattern and orientation, and also density and scale of surrounding buildings, constrains intervisibility between this listed building and the Development on Site. Although change would occur to the character within the wider townscape setting of this heritage asset, the landmark status of the church in both local and longer distance views would not be undermined by the Development. Overall, our understanding and appreciation of the heritage significance of this listed building would not be detracted from. Overall, there are likely to be no effects on the heritage significance of the listed building. The value of this heritage asset is Medium. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.
London Street / Market Place Conservation Area N/A	The Development on Site will have both direct and indirect impacts on this designated heritage asset; through the introduction of new uses, built form and spaces to replace existing modern elements of no historic or architectural interest, and also change to the character and appearance of local and some longer distance views in conjunction with the conservation area. Development would result in both adverse and beneficial effects on the significance of the conservation area, which are to be weighed in the overall balance. Within the immediate townscape and also some longer distance views from within the conservation area, such as looking north along London Road and from part of the Market Place to the north, the greater visual presence and contrast in height and scale of the Development relative to the existing historic buildings and spaces is likely to have a detrimental effect on the current experience of its heritage significance. Conversely, such an impact could be moderated by improvements that include the introduction of a new and richer mix of uses on Site that would complement and contribute to those existing locally and also historically, creating more active and interesting street frontages, and the quality and also contextual responsiveness of new architecture and wider public realm replacing that existing along both sides of the river.

Name / Address Heritage Asset Type Grade	Summary of Effects
	Overall, there are likely to be both direct and indirect, local, permanent long-term adverse effects on the heritage significance of the conservation area. The value of this designated heritage asset is Medium. The magnitude of impact is Minor Adverse. The significance of effect is Slight. This is not a significant effect.
St Marys Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area N/A	Overall change as a result of the Development to the existing character or appearance of the wider setting and views out from this conservation area would not serve to detract from our understanding or appreciation of the heritage significance of this heritage asset. Although change would occur to the sky backdrop of some longer distance views looking out from this designated area towards the east, the well-considered design approach and architectural qualities of the taller elements of this scheme would be appreciable in these views and to the skyline. In overall terms, there are likely to be no adverse or beneficial effect on the heritage significance of the conservation area. The value of this heritage asset is Medium. There is no magnitude of impact. The significance of effect is therefore Neutral. This is not a significant effect.

*Townscape Effects**Effects on Site Character*

- 8.185 The existing Site buildings and layout do not relate to the historic condition or positively contribute to the townscape character of this part of the town centre and its waterside. Through the demolition of the eastern extent of The Oracle shopping centre and the Vue cinema building, the Development presents the opportunity to enhance the Site's contribution to the townscape and visual amenity and reenvision the Site to better relate to its surrounding context and introduce a comprehensive scheme. This includes a scheme which enhances its contribution to the setting of nearby heritage assets and contribution to the London Street / Market Place Conservation Area.
- 8.186 The introduction of new, high quality residential buildings with ground floor commercial space across two principal blocks either side of the River Kennet would enhance the townscape character in this location and add interest to the city skyline in both short-range and long-range views. This would be reaffirmed by the variation of height within each block which includes stepped up massing south-north and east-west, with the tallest building located at the north-western extent of the Site.
- 8.187 Added interest is further achieved by the varied use of the material palette to articulate the elevations and establish a vertical emphasis to the taller blocks and make them slenderer in appearance. The choice of material palette and architectural detail references the industrial heritage of the Site and also takes precedent from the surrounding townscape, which enables the new buildings to better integrate into the existing townscape character. This includes the use of masonry and terracotta for the taller blocks towards the western / northern part of the Site. A light buff coloured brick is applied to parts of the building facing the river and seeks to establish an architectural relationship with the colour palette of The Oracle. Copings and horizontal banding at ground floor level presents a horizontal emphasis, establishing a human scale to the development and grounding the building. A red brick is used on the lower storey buildings and blocks that face the outer edges of the scheme; better relating the scheme to its immediate surroundings and materials found within the London Street / Market Place Conservation Area. For these blocks, the regular rhythm of punched openings as well as the use of pitched roof forms with a differentiated material treatment represents an architectural response to more traditional local building characteristic, including an industrial aesthetic reflecting the history of this waterside location.
- 8.188 The external composition of the building also enhances its contribution to the townscape character and adds interest to the streetscape. This takes precedent from the history and historic character of the Site and local area, such as the window proportions which express industrial characteristics in parts, and the use of 'heavy' materials at ground floor such as the black powder coating architraves to the windows and door opening, reflective of the buildings and or spaces of the past industrial heritage. This helps articulate the building at ground floor and establish a base. The change in material cladding and regular fenestration rhythm to the upper storeys help to establish a 'middle' to these buildings. For the taller blocks, the detailed articulation of elevations, a use of varied materials and order / grouping of window openings again emphasises their verticality, and with a clearly expressed 'crown' element to each where the massing of the uppermost storeys reduce and also the elevation detail further enriched. For the lower storey blocks towards the eastern edge of the Site and conservation area, a change in material and distinctive pitched roof forms to the uppermost storeys satisfactorily completes their form and also adds further visual interest and variety to the scheme. Overall, this design approach helps reduce the potentially perceived prominence of the buildings due to the increase of building height and mass in this location and allows the building profile to appear slenderer for the taller elements. The lower scale blocks towards the outer edge are clearly differentiated visually and so better mediate with the existing townscape locally.
- 8.189 A positive aspect of The Oracle scheme in 1999 was the way it created new active public realm along both sides of the river. The Development takes advantage of this and enhances its contribution to the public realm and visual amenity. The introduction of a new active frontages on to new and improved public realm including a new pedestrian route through the Site, widened pavements with dedicated cycleways, and new street tree planting and landscaping would improve the vibrancy of the local area and help to integrate the Development in the surrounding townscape. The Development also improves the permeability of the Site and better connects the existing Kennet side routes and spaces. It also better defines the building frontages towards Yield Hall Place and London Street which, in turn, enhances the heritage significance of this part of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, and immediate setting / views to and from the listed buildings Nos.2-4 London Street, Coroners Court and High Bridge.

- 8.190 The high-quality architecture and improved public realm will enhance local townscape views. This includes views along the primary vehicular route of Queens Road as it passes through the conservation area; in particular at a key gateway location at the crossing of London Street and entrance into the town centre across the river from the south. Further, the taller building development will establish wayfinding towards Reading town centre in longer distance views and presents the opportunity to create a new landmark. This is important for a Site that is positioned at a key historic crossing of the Kennet, at an entrance into a leading retail destination (The Oracle), and also at a southern gateway area for the town centre.

Effects on Townscape Character Areas

- 8.191 **Table 8.23** provides our assessment of the likely effects of the Development on each of the relevant visual TCA receptors identified during our appraisal of the baseline conditions for the Site and Study Area.

Table 8.23 Assessment of Effects on Townscape Character Area Receptors

TCA	Sensitivity	Commentary
TCA18 – The Oracle	The description of the baseline conditions for the townscape of the Site and Study Area considers this TCA to be of Low value, and it is a receptor with a Low susceptibility to change and also a Low sensitivity.	The Development is likely to be experienced from many of the primary thoroughfares within TCA18 given the scale of the Development and the River Kennett which presents long-range open views along the river corridor. Direct changes to this TCA would therefore arise. The scheme would introduce development of greater scale, height and massing by comparison of the existing buildings. It would introduce two buildings of varying building heights, adding interest to the streetscape and enhancing visual amenity. The ground floor active frontage would positively contribute to the townscape character and public realm. In close distance views from along the River Kennett, the Development would form a new prominent feature and would replace views of the low-quality shopping centre building and the Vue cinema with commercial units at ground floor and contemporary residential development above. Tall buildings are not completely uncharacteristic of the character area which includes buildings rising up to 9 storeys, and the proposed stepping of levels would help mediate the change in scale between nearby lower scale buildings to the north and south. Where experienced, the proposal would introduce a high-quality architecture to the streetscape and improve wayfinding to Reading town centre and The Oracle. The varied use of materiality and the articulation of elevation treatment will add further interest to views experienced within the TCA. Overall, the Development would result in a Large magnitude of change due the change of uses and densification of buildings in this location and the scale, height and massing which is larger than that existing. There would likely be a direct, permanent, long-term effect comprising positive changes in terms of townscape character, which overall is considered to be a Beneficial effect of Minor to Moderate significance. The effect of the Development for the Site itself and also other areas of TCA18 is therefore likely to be Significant.
TCA6 – St. Lawrence and Market Place	This TCA includes the Market Place / London Road Conservation Area and is considered to be of Medium value. It is a TCA with a Medium susceptibility to change and therefore a Medium sensitivity.	There would be no direct change to the characteristics of TCA6 as a result of the Development. Awareness of change arising from the development will predominantly be experienced within the southern portion of the TCA when looking west, as well as to the north of the High Street where the upper storeys of the new development will rise above the existing buildings. Where experienced, the new buildings would introduce an abrupt change in building scale and height and would reduce visibility of open sky, having an adverse impact on parts of the townscape. However, where seen it would introduce new architecture of high-quality and add interest to the skyline due to the varied building heights, materiality and articulated elevation treatment. The Development would also establish wayfinding towards the historic core of Reading town centre and the southern gateway location of The Oracle. Overall, the Development would result in a Small magnitude of change due the change of uses and intensification of built form that would be experienced indirectly within the wider surrounding area of this TCA and in some shared views. There would likely be an indirect, permanent, long-term effect, which overall is considered to be a Neutral effect in terms of the balance of both adverse and beneficial impacts, and of Minor significance. This is not a significant effect.
TCA20 – London Street	This TCA includes a smaller part of a conservation area and is considered to be of	There would be no direct change to the characteristics of TCA20 as a result of the Development and its visibility would be limited to part of the TCA, as demonstrated by the ZTV. Awareness of change arising from the Development is most likely to be experienced on London Street itself where the upper storeys of the built development would be experienced rising above the roofscape of the existing buildings. Where experienced, the new buildings would introduce an abrupt

	Medium value. It is a TCA with a Medium susceptibility to change and therefore a Medium sensitivity.	change in building scale and height by comparison to the buildings experienced within the townscape character and visibility of open sky in distanced views would be reduced, having an adverse impact on parts its townscape character. However, and conversely, it would also introduce high-quality architecture and add interest to the skyline due to the varied building heights, materiality and articulated elevation treatment. The Development would also establish wayfinding towards Reading town centre and The Oracle. Overall, the Development would result in a Small magnitude of change due the change of uses and intensification of built form that would be experienced indirectly within the wider surrounding area of this TCA and in some shared views. There would likely be an indirect, permanent, long-term effect, which overall is considered to be a Neutral effect in terms of the balance of both adverse and beneficial impacts, and of Minor significance. This is not a significant effect.
TCA17 – St Mary's and Castle Street	This TCA includes the St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area and is considered to be of Medium value. It is a TCA with a Medium susceptibility to change and therefore a Medium sensitivity.	There would be no direct change to the characteristics of TCA17 as a result of the Development. There would be very limited awareness of change arising from the development due to interposing buildings and tree planting, even in winter views. Where experienced, visibility would be limited to glimpsed views through foliage. Overall, the Development would result in a Negligible magnitude of change. There would likely be an indirect, permanent, long-term effect, which overall is considered to be a Neutral effect of Negligible significance. This is not a significant effect.
TCA21 – Forbury South	This TCA is considered to be of Ordinary value. It is a TCA with a Low susceptibility to change and therefore a Low sensitivity.	There would be no direct change to the characteristics of TCA21 as a result of the Development. Awareness of change arising from the development is most likely to be experienced on the main thoroughfares such as King's Road and Abbey Square London Street itself where the upper storeys of the built development would be experienced rising above the roofscape of the existing buildings. Where experienced, the new buildings would add interest to the skyline and establish wayfinding towards Reading town centre. Overall, the Development would result in a Negligible magnitude of change. There would likely be an indirect, permanent, long-term effect, which overall is considered to be a Neutral effect of Negligible significance. This is not a significant effect.
TCA26 – King's Road	This TCA is considered to be of Ordinary value. It is a TCA with a Low susceptibility to change and therefore a Low sensitivity.	There would be no direct change to the characteristics of TCA26 as a result of the Development. Awareness of change arising from the development is most likely to be experienced on Queen's Road and on the south bank of the River Kennett. This is likely to be limited to the upper storeys of the built development, with glimpsed views of improved public realm to the eastern extent of the Site. Overall, the Development would result in a Negligible magnitude of change. There would likely be an indirect, permanent, long-term effect, which overall is considered to be a Neutral effect of Negligible significance. This is not a significant effect.

Visual Effects

- 8.192 The assessment of visual impacts likely to arise from the Development on Site comprised initially, an assessment of the likely extent of visibility of the Development and the visual receptors likely to be affected, and secondly an assessment of the impacts on the views from each of the selected representative viewpoints associated with those receptors. Accordingly, our supplementary and supporting Representative Views Assessment is included as part of this Chapter at **Appendix 8.3**. This assessment should be read in conjunction with the AVRs of the Development prepared by the appointed visualisers, which are also contained in full within **Appendix 8.4**, and also Computer Generated Images (CGI) of the scheme prepared by the scheme architects contained within the DAS.

Extent of Visibility of the Development

- 8.193 The visibility of the Site would increase with the implementation of the Development due to increased height when compared to the existing buildings. The extent of visibility is demonstrated by the computer generated ZTV provided at **Appendix 8.2A**. This identifies where in the surrounding townscape area the Development would potentially be visible. The ZTV identifies high visibility in the immediate context along London Street to the south, Queen's Road to the east, and the A329 to the south west. Visibility of the upper storeys of the Development are likely from other nearby streets although this is limited due to the densely built-up streets. This includes visibility from the bank of the River Kennett and the north of Market Place Square. Other more distant areas, where it is anticipated the Development would be visible from, include the A33 to the south.

Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptors

- 8.194 **Table 8.24** provides our assessment of the likely effects of the Development on each of the relevant visual receptors identified during our appraisal of the baseline conditions for the Site and Study Area. This is again informed by the Representative Views Assessment provided in **Appendix 8.3** and the full size AVRs also provided in **Appendix 8.4**. The effect on visual receptors takes account of the extensive amount of development being constructed in the townscape surrounding the Site. AVRs to demonstrate the massing of the consented and under construction schemes and how the Development sits within the evolving context are also provided in **Appendix 8.4** for each of the representative views where relevant.

Table 8.24 Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptors

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Commentary
Road users on main routes, such as London Road, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet.	Views orientated towards the Site are not identified or protected in policy, however some receptors are located within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area or would experience the Development alongside listed buildings. Whilst some of the view are relatively unremarkable, others are of heritage significance. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to pedestrians and road users. The visual receptor has a Medium value. This visual receptor has a Medium susceptibility to change and therefore an overall Medium sensitivity.	Pedestrians and motorists along London Street, Southampton Street, Whitley Street would experience the upper storeys of the Development when travelling north towards the Site and Reading town centre. Glimpsed views of the Development would first become visible at the southern extent of Southampton Street and Whitley Road from the relatively elevated topography where the upper storeys of the taller elements would be experienced amongst the existing urban townscape in the distance. Similarly, interspersed visibility of the upper storeys of the scheme would be experienced from Queen's Road, beyond existing mid-rise buildings. Visibility of the Development would increase when experienced from London Street due to the close proximity, the change in topography and the contrast in building heights. The Development would add a new layer of high-quality built form and add interest to the views experienced by this receptor. The varied building heights and articulated façade design with an established base, middle and crown would introduce a landmark feature within the townscape and would establish wayfinding to The Oracle and Reading town centre from the south. Some of the views that represent the visual receptor has the potential to be affected by a mix of adverse and beneficial effects and therefore, on balance, the effect has been concluded to be Neutral in such instances. Magnitude of Change: varies from Medium close to the Site and at the crossing of the river to Small at greater distance along these primary routes. Type of Effect: varies from Beneficial in some close and also more distant locations; where the quality of the architecture and landscape design and wayfinding role of new taller elements can be appreciated, to Neutral elsewhere along these routes. Representative Views: 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 Significance of Effect: varies from Moderate to Minor in relation to proximity to the Site and also visibility of the Development for the primary routes. This is likely a significant effect for part of this visual receptor, in particular that part of London Road, the IDR and crossing of the river closest to the Site.
Users of other local or secondary roads, streets and spaces within the town centre area, including the pedestrianised riverside area of The Oracle development.	The views are not identified or protected in policy but do capture views from designated heritage assets or the views include designated heritage assets within their townscape setting. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to pedestrians and road users. Therefore, the visual receptor has a Medium value. The visual receptor has a Medium susceptibility to change, and an overall Medium sensitivity.	Study of the ZTV indicates that users of these local and / or secondary roads within the town centre are likely to experience the upper storeys of the Development in closer proximity to the Site, but otherwise only from more limited locations in relation to these town centre receptors as a greater distance away. Lower levels are likely to be obscured from view owing to screening by existing buildings, street pattern and density of development from larger area of the town centre. Where visible, the Development would introduce a contrasting building height to the earlier established townscape, although conversely would also introduce new architectural quality and interest to local views, active frontages to the riverside, and also establish a new landmark feature and wayfinding benefit towards The Oracle and southern gateway into Reading town centre in some longer distance views. Magnitude of Change: overall varies from Medium to Small depending on distance from the Site and also relative visibility at locations along these secondary routes. Type of Effect: varies from Beneficial in some closer locations where the quality of the new architecture and landscape design can be appreciated, to Neutral elsewhere along these routes. Representative Views: 1, 3, 4, 6 Significance of Effect: varies from Moderate to Minor in relation to proximity to the Site and also visibility of the Development. This is likely a significant effect for part of this visual receptor, in particular for the Kennet waterside area.

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Commentary
Users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridges	The views are not identified or protected in policy, however, capture views along the River Kennet and associated waterways. Views are relatively unremarkable, although notable exceptions include views of nearby heritage assets. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low to moderate importance to users of the waterway and towpaths. Therefore, the visual receptor varies in value from Negligible to Medium. The visual receptor has a Low susceptibility to change and an overall Low sensitivity.	Receptor would largely experience the middle and upper storeys of the Development. It would introduce a landmark feature in views and establish wayfinding towards Reading town centre and The Oracle along the routes of these waterways. Although the scale of development would increase its visual presence along the waterside, the quality and new interest of architecture of built form and public realm enhancements would also be experienced by this receptor within closer proximity to the Site as a benefit. Magnitude of Change: overall varies from Medium to Small depending on distance from the Site and also relative visibility at locations along these waterways. Type of Effect: varies from Beneficial in some closer locations where the quality of the new architecture and landscape design can be appreciated, and also from where the landmarking role of taller elements can be best appreciated, to a balance of Neutral elsewhere along the waterside. Representative Views: 1, 2, 6 Significance of Effect: varies from Moderate to Minor in relation to proximity to the Site and also visibility of the Development. This is likely a significant effect for part of this visual receptor, in particular for the towpath and bridges close by.
Users of public open spaces, such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard, and the Mapledurham Estate	The views are a mix of those identified within Reading Tall Building Strategy (Viewpoint 16 and 17 from Mapledurham estate) to those from public open space locations that include designated heritage assets within their townscape context or setting. Both churchyard and marketplace are within conservation area designations. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of high to moderate importance to the users of these spaces. Overall the visual receptor has a Medium value. The visual receptor has a Medium to High susceptibility to change, and an overall Medium to High sensitivity.	Visibility of the Development would be limited for this visual receptor of public open spaces or landscape areas within the town centre or its fringe. This includes the view from St Mary's Churchyard where the scheme is likely to be largely obscured from view by interposing buildings and dense vegetation, taller elements from a smaller part of this public space. Elsewhere, the Development would appear in the background or skyline of views in the further distance, or fully obscured from view from vantage points such those identified within the Mapledurham Estate. Magnitude of Change: varies from Small where taller elements of the Development are seen from particular vantage points as part of the wider backdrop to the urban spaces, to Negligible or None for other locations. Type of Effect: where Development is seen; varies from either Beneficial to Neutral overall on a balance of distracting change to a small part of the sky backdrop of views from these space, and the positive impacts on townscape legibility through new architecture and visual interest. Representative Views: 3, 4, 16, 17, 18 Significance of Effect: varies from Minor where visible to within a more limited area of these spaces, to for other areas Negligible. This is not a significant effect.
Existing local residents within established housing areas to the south and west of the Site (beyond the IDR).	The views from these outer residential areas from the town centre are not generally identified or protected in policy, although some do capture views within or of designated heritage assets of greater townscape value. The experience of views and visual amenity for these established communities is likely to be of high to moderate importance. Therefore, the visual receptor has an Low value in overall terms. The visual receptor has a Medium to High susceptibility to	Visibility of the Development would be limited to the upper storeys of the taller elements and at a greater distance from these fringe or suburban areas to the town centre, but would noticeably increase the visual presence of town centre uses and development for these communities. Lower levels of new built form and also public realm changes are likely to be obscured from view owing to screening by existing buildings and the street pattern and density of the development of the town centre, and also the more divided relationship of the Site from the west / south suburbs created by the major infrastructure line of the IDR. Where visible to the skyline, the Development would otherwise establish a landmark feature and also assist wayfinding towards Reading town centre at the Site's southern gateway and riverside location (including key The Oracle complex). Magnitude of Change: varies from Small to Negligible from within these outer residential areas.

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Commentary
	change, and an overall range of Low to Medium sensitivity.	Type of Effect: varies from Beneficial on the basis of the positive impacts on townscape legibility, to Neutral overall recognising limited change to views towards the town centre from these more distant established residential communities. Representative Views: 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 Significance of Effect: varies from Minor to Negligible depending on the visibility and also distance from the Site within this receptor group. This is not a significant effect.

Mitigation Measures

Construction Phase

Built Heritage Effects

- 8.195 The assessment of construction effects considers the use of construction commitments, to be secured via planning conditions, such as the installation of hoarding around the Site to minimise visual impacts of demolition and construction activities; the use of industry standards to monitor the impacts of vibration on the structural stability of relevant built heritage assets, as well as the implementation of control measures, such noise and dust management measures as stipulated within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP).
- 8.196 Following incorporation of the embedded mitigation measures in the scheme design, no further mitigation has been identified as being necessary during the demolition and construction phase. On that basis, the residual effects of the demolition and construction phase on the heritage significance of the relevant built heritage asset receptors remain unchanged from those assessed in the previous Likely Significant Effects Section.

Townscape Effects

- 8.197 The Development is a result of a robust and considered design development process, including pre-application engagement with RBC officers and their advisers from an early stage in the pre-application process. Full details relating to the design rationale and considerations can be found within the DAS and Planning Statement, which accompanies the planning application. Potential effects on the townscape character have been assessed and mitigation has been embedded into the Development through the iterative design process. As such, no further mitigation measures have been identified.

Visual Effects

- 8.198 Again, potential effects on the visual receptors, including representative views, have been assessed and mitigation has been embedded into the Development through the iterative design process. As such, no further mitigation measures have been identified.

Operational Phase

Built Heritage Effects

- 8.199 There is no mitigation and monitoring considered necessary during the completed development stage, as it is built into the design process and secured within the approved planning documents.

Townscape Effects

- 8.200 Again, no mitigation is considered necessary during the completed development stage, as it is built into the design process and secured within the approved planning documents.

Visual Effects

- 8.201 There is no mitigation and monitoring considered necessary during the completed development stage.

Residual Effects

Construction Phase

Built Heritage Effects

- 8.202 Following incorporation of the embedded mitigation measures, no further mitigation has been identified as being necessary during the demolition and construction phase. Accordingly, the residual effects of the completed Development on the heritage significance of the heritage asset receptors remains unchanged from those assessed in the completed development assessment.

Townscape Effects

- 8.203 The residual effects of the completed Development on townscape character and the TCA receptors remains unchanged from those assessed in the completed development assessment.

Visual Effects

- 8.204 The residual effects of the completed Development on the visual receptors, including representative views, remains unchanged from those assessed in the completed development assessment.

Operational Phase*Built Heritage Effects*

- 8.205 The residual effects of the completed Development on the heritage significance of the heritage asset receptors would again remain unchanged from those assessed in the completed development assessment.

Townscape Effects

- 8.206 Again, the residual effects of the completed Development on townscape character and the TCA receptors remains unchanged.

Visual Effects

- 8.207 The residual effects of the completed Development on the visual receptors, including representative views, remains unchanged.

Cumulative Effects**Construction Phase***Built Heritage Effects*

- 8.208 When the nature, scale, and relative disposition of the identified cumulative schemes relative to the Site are considered, their temporary demolition and construction effects would not change any of the identified residual effects on the relevant built heritage asset receptors. Accordingly, there would be no Significant or additional residual effects arising from cumulative schemes during the demolition and construction phases.

Townscape Effects

- 8.209 Similarly, when the nature, scale, and relative disposition of the identified cumulative schemes relative to the Site are considered, their temporary demolition and construction effects would not change any of the identified residual effects on townscape character or the TCA receptors.

Visual Effects

- 8.210 The temporary demolition and construction effects would not change any of the identified residual effects on the visual receptors, including representative views.

Operational Phase*Built Heritage Effects*

- 8.211 The identified cumulative schemes illustrate the ongoing pattern of change within Reading town centre. The identified cumulative schemes would not change any of the identified residual effects on the relevant built heritage asset receptors arising from the completed development, because of their nature, disposition relative to the Site and interposing townscape.

Townscape Effects

- 8.212 Impacts from the committed developments would likely have indirect effects on the townscape character of TCA18 – The Oracle, as a result of change to aspects of the character and appearance of views shared with the wider surrounding area. The identified cumulative schemes illustrate the ongoing pattern of change within Reading town centre, including the introduction of new buildings of contemporary architectural character and the overall densification of the town centre, improved public realm and activity that are likely to result in positive changes to this and other TCA receptors. Notwithstanding, given the existing varied and urban character of the town centre, the identified cumulative schemes would not change any of the identified residual effects on any of the relevant TCA receptors arising from the completed development.

Visual Effects

- 8.213 The in-combination visual impacts are illustrated within the representative views assessment at **Appendix 8.3**. There are only a few of the representative views within which the Development would be seen within the context of other, committed developments. However, in each of these cases the visible committed developments would not obscure or otherwise change the conclusions of the assessment of the Development in isolation. The committed developments would add additional buildings within a town centre context and would be either consistent with the prevailing character of the townscape context or would illustrate the ongoing patterns of growth and change in Reading town centre. In overall terms, while there will be some changes arising from the in-combination visual effects, the identified cumulative schemes would not change any of the identified residual effects on the visual receptors.

Summary

Built Heritage

- 8.214 An assessment of the effects of the Development on the significance (and setting) of the identified built heritage assets / receptors has been carried out by Turley in accordance with best practice guidance and is set out in full in this Chapter of the ES, which is supported by an appended Heritage Statement (**Appendix 8.1**), and informed by the full application material including DAS, CGIs and a comprehensive selection of AVRs. This is founded on a thorough study of the Site and its context, including a proportionate understanding and appreciation of both the Development and the historical development, heritage interests, and characteristics of the Site.
- 8.215 During the demolition and construction phase, the Development will demolish several buildings within the Site, a small part of which is included within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, in addition to temporary construction works. The existing built form and spaces on Site do not however contribute to the heritage significance of any heritage assets. With time, the construction effects would transition to the operational phase effects as the Development nears completion. The demolition and construction phase is likely to cause an adverse effect on the heritage significance of the conservation area during this period. However, with the embedded and additional mitigation in place, the effects on this designated heritage asset, and also all other identified heritage asset receptors, during this phase is not likely to be significant.
- 8.216 The operational phase of the Development would directly (and also indirectly) affect the significance of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area through works on that part of the Site within this designated area, such as the erection of new buildings (including tall buildings), public realm improvements, and delivery of a mix of town centre uses. There will also be indirect visual or other experiential effects on the significance of other heritage assets within the surrounding area through an awareness of the large scale and or taller elements of the Development, as well as through a new mix and greater intensity of uses. The Development would have a range of beneficial, neutral and adverse effects on the heritage significance (and setting) of the relevant built heritage assets. The scale of effects of the Development during the operation phase on the significance of these heritage asset receptors would range from Slight Adverse to Neutral. These would not be significant effects.
- 8.217 The wider vision and approach for the new mix of uses and overall layout, scale and massing of new built form and spaces for the reanimation of this Site have through the design process sought where possible to minimise and or mitigate harm to the significance and setting of heritage assets, in balance with

optimising the development potential of this key site at the southern gateway to the town centre, historic river crossing and waterside, and also as part of the larger The Oracle scheme. The contemporary architectural and landscape design has also looked to respond positively to the history and heritage of the Site and local area, in order to create a place with identity that also that reflects local character and distinctiveness.

- 8.218 However, aspects of the Development would likely result in adverse impacts on the heritage significance of a number of the identified designated heritage assets. The heritage asset receptors comprise the listed building Nos.2-4 London Street nearest to the Site, the group of listed buildings at Nos.33, 35, 37-39, 41, 49-53, 44-46, 48-52, 54-58, 62-66, 68, 70, 72, 74-76, 80, 86 & 88 London Street to the south, the group of listed buildings Nos.48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place to the north, the landmark listed building Church of St Mary to the north west, and also the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. This would principally be as a result of the visually distracting effects of an increase in the overall height, scale and massing of new built form on Site within the setting of, and also some shared views to and from, these heritage assets. Such harm to heritage significance we have assessed to fall within the category of “less than substantial” for the purposes of the NPPF (paragraph 202), and towards the lower end of scale within that category, in each case. For the purposes of EIA the significance of these effects would likely be Slight Adverse for each receptor, which would not be significant effects.
- 8.219 The Planning Statement describes in full the public benefits (also including heritage benefits as defined by NPPG) that will be delivered by the Development on Site, and concludes the overall planning balance.
- 8.220 We have also assessed that the heritage significance (and setting) of the number of other identified designated heritage assets, which have been scoped in as relevant to the Development for the Site, would likely either be sustained or otherwise unaffected by the envisioned change brought about by the Development at the operational phase. These would be effects of neutral or no significance.
- 8.221 The ES identifies the embedded mitigation measures proposed to prevent, reduce or offset any adverse effects that may arise from the Development. These include the proposed disposition of taller building elements within the Development and scale and massing as relates to the surrounding townscape and longer views, and also design quality for both new architecture and public realm / landscape with a contextual response. Having regard to those embedded mitigation measures, no further mitigation measures are proposed at the operational phase.

Townscape and Visual

- 8.222 A complementary assessment of the effects of the Development on townscape character and visual amenity has been carried out by Turley in accordance with best practice guidance and is set out in full in this Chapter of the ES, and again informed by the full application material including DAS, CGIs and a comprehensive selection of AVRs. A **Representative Views Assessment** is also included as **Appendix 8.3** as part of this Chapter, which is in support of, and supplementary to, the wider assessment of the likely significant effects of the Development on Site on built heritage assets, townscape character, the visual amenity of visual receptors and views within the Study Area.
- 8.223 During the demolition and construction stage, the Development is likely to cause an adverse effect on the townscape character of the Site itself and also the surrounding Townscape Character Area (TCA) 18 – The Oracle during this initial phase. However such effects are unlikely to be significant for TCA18.
- 8.224 As a modern commercial complex, TCA18 has been identified as a townscape receptor of Low value and Low sensitivity to change. This TCA would be impacted directly as a result of the introduction of new built form (including tall buildings), public realm and mix of uses. For the purposes of EIA the significance of these effects would likely be Minor to Moderate Beneficial for this receptor, which would be a significant effect for the characteristics and quality of the Site and surrounding TCA18. Such effects would be brought about by the replacement of existing modern buildings of no particular historic or architectural interest with more active and interesting frontages to surrounding streets and spaces, new architecture of high quality with a positive contextual response, wider public realm improvements, a richer mix of town centre uses, and also a positive townscape role for the taller elements of the scheme as marker, a new and interesting skyline feature, and in improving wayfinding for this key riverside (The Oracle) and gateway location from the south.

- 8.225 There would also be indirect effects on the townscape character of a number of other TCAs as a result of change to some local and also other longer distance views from these areas of the centre, principally through an awareness of the taller elements of the Development. The Development would have a range of potentially beneficial and also adverse effects on their established townscape character. This would be a balance of the positive aspects of a new mix of uses, architectural quality and public realm on Site, and also in improving townscape legibility more widely, and then the contrasting impacts of larger scale / taller built form for those TCAs that retain a much more traditional or historic townscape character within a finer grain and scale of streets and buildings.
- 8.226 The proposed variation of height within each built element of the Development, including stepped up massing south-north and east-west away from the outer edges of The Oracle complex, with the tallest building located deeper within the block and at the north western part of the Site, assists in mediating the transition with neighbouring TCA6 - St Laurence and Market Place to the east and TCA20 – London Street to the south. A further visual breaking down of the scale of the Development, as well as adding interest, is achieved by the articulation of elevations and roof forms, varied use of material palette, and vertical emphasis of the taller elements to improve their profile and proportions as seen in longer distance views. The significance of effects of the Development during the operation phase on the character of these other TCAs would range from Moderate to Minor for those in closer proximity or shared visibility, to Minor or Negligible for the other receptors identified. In overall terms such effects would be Neutral for each of these other TCAs. These would not be significant effects.
- 8.227 Key visual receptors with the potential to be affected by the Development have been identified. These include road users on main routes, such as London Street, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet; users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridge; and open space users such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard within the town centre. These visual receptors range from having a Medium to Low sensitivity to change. The Site appears in the background of some views identified within Reading Tall Building Strategy as well as local views where the Development has the potential to be experienced alongside designated heritage assets within their settings.
- 8.228 The assessment of visual effects identifies that there would be changes to local views arising from the Development. The quality of local streetscape views in close proximity to the Site is likely to improve as views of the existing building, which are of low quality and make a poor contribution to the townscape character, would be replaced with views of a new building of high-quality design and construction with improved active frontages. The Development would provide added visual interest to views along the River Kennet, Market Place, Coley Place, Church Street, and London Street. In views from further afield the taller element of the Development would be visible on the skyline in the background of views. The variation of building heights and vertical emphasis of elevation treatment would contribute positively to the appearance of the skyline and again establish wayfinding to Reading town centre and The Oracle; experienced amongst an established highly varied urban context.
- 8.229 In summary, the Development on Site would continue to contribute to the wider revitalisation of Reading town centre and present enhancements to the public realm and architectural quality of built form, which would be either Beneficial or overall Neutral effects on the relevant visual receptors. The significance of effects on these receptors would range from Moderate to Minor or Minor to Negligible, depending on proximity and also visibility in relation to the Site and Development, which for several of these receptors are likely to be significant for the purposes of EIA. The supporting Representative Views Assessment (**Appendix 8.3**) for the identified eighteen representative viewpoints within the Study Area of the Site identifies a comparable range of impacts on the quality and character of each of these viewpoints, again ranging from Medium or Negligible in magnitude, and also varying from Beneficial to Neutral overall in type of effect.
- 8.230 Again, the ES identifies the embedded mitigation measures proposed to prevent, reduce or offset any adverse effects that may arise from the Development, in relation to townscape character and visual amenity and views. These include the proposed disposition of taller building elements within the Development and scale and massing as relates to the surrounding townscape and longer views, and also design quality for both new architecture and public realm / landscape with a contextual response. With regard to those embedded mitigation measures, no further mitigation measures are proposed.

- 8.231 Table 8.25 contains a summary of the likely significant effects of the Yield Hall Place 1 Development and Tables 8.26 contains a summary of the likely significant effects of the Yield Hall Place 2 Development. This summary is provided for each of the disciplines relevant to this Chapter: Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual matters respectively.
- 8.232 Table 8.27 then contains a summary of the cumulative effects of the Yield Hall Place 1 Development in combination with the Yield Hall Place 2 Development.
- 8.233 Table 8.28 contains a summary of the Developments in combination with the cumulative schemes identified in Chapter 2 of this ES. This summary is again provided for each of the disciplines relevant to this Chapter: Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual matters respectively.

Table 8.25: Yield Hall Place 1 Development Table of Significance – Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	
				I	UK	E	R	C	L		
Demolition and Construction											
Built Heritage Receptors											
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A							L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Townscape Character Receptors											
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Minor Adverse	N/A							L	Not Significant Minor Adverse
Completed Development											
Built Heritage Receptors											
Listed Building: Nos.2-4 London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A							L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Coroner's Court, London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A							L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building & Scheduled Monument: High Bridge (Grade II & N/A)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A							L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Listed Buildings: Nos.33, 35, 37-39, 41, 49-53, 44-46, 48-52, 54-58, 62.66, 68, 70, 72, 74-76, 80, 86 & 88 London Street (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: The George Hotel, King Street & Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place (both Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: Nos.48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place (including No.10 High Street) (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Laurence (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Telephone Exchange, Minster Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Giles, Southampton Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Conservation Area: St Mary's Butts / Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
<i>Townscape Character Receptors</i>										
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial
TCA6 – St. Lawrence and Market Place	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA20 – London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA17 – St Mary's and Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA21 – Forbury South	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA26 – King's Road	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	
				I	UK	E	R	C	L		
Visual Receptors											
Road users on main routes, such as London Road, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of other local or secondary roads, streets and spaces within the town centre area, including the pedestrianised riverside area of The Oracle development.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridges	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of public open spaces, such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard, and the Mapledurham Estate	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Existing local residents within established housing areas to the south and west of the Site (beyond the IDR).	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; S = Scotland; R = Regional; C = Council; L = Local

Table 8.26: Yield Hall Place 2 Table of Significance – Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Demolition and Construction										
Built Heritage Receptors										
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Townscape Character Receptors										
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Minor Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Adverse
Completed Development										
Built Heritage Receptors										
Listed Building: Nos.2-4 London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Coroner's Court, London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building & Scheduled Monument: High Bridge (Grade II & N/A)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Listed Buildings: Nos.33, 35, 37-39, 41, 49-53, 44-46, 48-52, 54-58, 62.66, 68, 70, 72, 74-76, 80, 86 & 88 London Street (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: The George Hotel, King Street & Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place (both Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: Nos.48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place (including No.10 High Street) (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Laurence (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Telephone Exchange, Minster Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Giles, Southampton Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Conservation Area: St Mary's Butts / Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
<i>Townscape Character Receptors</i>										
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial
TCA6 – St. Lawrence and Market Place	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA20 – London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA17 – St Mary's and Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA21 – Forbury South	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA26 – King's Road	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	
				I	UK	E	R	C	L		
Visual Receptors											
Road users on main routes, such as London Road, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of other local or secondary roads, streets and spaces within the town centre area, including the pedestrianised riverside area of The Oracle development.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridges	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of public open spaces, such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard, and the Mapledurham Estate	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Existing local residents within established housing areas to the south and west of the Site (beyond the IDR).	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; S = Scotland; R = Regional; C = Council; L = Local

Table 8.27: Cumulative Effects of the Yield Hall Place 1 Development and the Yield Hall Place 2 Development in Combination Table of Significance – Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	
				I	UK	E	R	C	L		
Demolition and Construction											
Built Heritage Receptors											
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A							L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Townscape Character Receptors											
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Minor Adverse	N/A							L	Not Significant Minor Adverse
Completed Development											
Built Heritage Receptors											
Listed Building: Nos.2-4 London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A							L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Coroner's Court, London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A							L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building & Scheduled Monument: High Bridge (Grade II & N/A)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A							L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Listed Buildings: Nos.33, 35, 37-39, 41, 49-53, 44-46, 48-52, 54-58, 62.66, 68, 70, 72, 74-76, 80, 86 & 88 London Street (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: The George Hotel, King Street & Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place (both Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: Nos.48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place (including No.10 High Street) (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Laurence (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Telephone Exchange, Minster Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Giles, Southampton Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Conservation Area: St Mary's Butts / Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
<i>Townscape Character Receptors</i>										
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial
TCA6 – St. Lawrence and Market Place	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA20 – London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA17 – St Mary's and Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA21 – Forbury South	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA26 – King's Road	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Residual Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect	
				I	UK	E	R	C	L		
Visual Receptors											
Road users on main routes, such as London Road, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of other local or secondary roads, streets and spaces within the town centre area, including the pedestrianised riverside area of The Oracle development.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridges	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of public open spaces, such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard, and the Mapledurham Estate	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Existing local residents within established housing areas to the south and west of the Site (beyond the IDR).	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A							L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; S = Scotland; R = Regional; C = Council; L = Local

Table 8.28: Cumulative Effects of the Developments in Combination with the Cumulative Schemes Identified in Chapter 2 of this ES – Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects (<i>Developments in Combination</i>) Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Cumulative Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Demolition and Construction										
Built Heritage Receptors										
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Townscape Character Receptors										
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent & Temporary	Not Significant Minor Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Adverse
Completed Development										
Built Heritage Receptors										
Listed Building: Nos.2-4 London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Coroner's Court, London Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building & Scheduled Monument: High Bridge (Grade II & N/A)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/ Temporary)	Likely Significant Effects (Developments in Combination) Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Cumulative Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Listed Buildings: Nos.33, 35, 37-39, 41, 49-53, 44-46, 48-52, 54-58, 62.66, 68, 70, 72, 74-76, 80, 86 & 88 London Street (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Nos.24-52 Queen's Crescent (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: The George Hotel, King Street & Building on south-east corner, Yield Hall Place (both Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Buildings: Nos.48-49, 50-51 & 52 Market Place (including No.10 High Street) (all Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Listed Building: Church of St Laurence (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Telephone Exchange, Minster Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Listed Building: Church of St Mary, St Mary's Butts (Grade I)	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (<i>Permanent/ Temporary</i>)	Likely Significant Effects (<i>Developments in Combination</i>) Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Cumulative Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Listed Building: Church of St Giles, Southampton Street (Grade II)	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
Conservation Area: Market Place / London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Slight Adverse	N/A						L	Not Significant Slight Adverse
Conservation Area: St Mary's Butts / Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Neutral Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Neutral Neutral
<i>Townscape Character Receptors</i>										
TCA18 – The Oracle	Permanent	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Moderate to Minor Beneficial
TCA6 – St. Lawrence and Market Place	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA20 – London Street	Permanent	Not Significant Minor Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Minor Neutral
TCA17 – St Mary's and Castle Street	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/ Temporary)	Likely Significant Effects (Developments in Combination) Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Cumulative Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
TCA21 – Forbury South	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
TCA26 – King's Road	Permanent	Not Significant Negligible Neutral	N/A						L	Not Significant Negligible Neutral
<i>Visual Receptors</i>										
Road users on main routes, such as London Road, Southampton Street and Whitley Street running north-south, and Queens Road (including the IDR) running east-west, also including key crossings of the River Kennet.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of other local or secondary roads, streets and spaces within the town centre area, including the pedestrianised riverside area of The Oracle development.	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Users of River Kennet / Kennet and Avon Canal and other associated waterways / towpaths / bridges	Permanent	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A						L	Significant Varies from Moderate to Minor Varies from Neutral to Beneficial

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/ Temporary)	Likely Significant Effects (Developments in Combination) Significance of Effect Type of Effect	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*						Cumulative Effects Significance of Effect Type of Effect
				I	UK	E	R	C	L	
Users of public open spaces, such as Market Place and St Mary's Churchyard, and the Mapledurham Estate	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A						L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial
Existing local residents within established housing areas to the south and west of the Site (beyond the IDR).	Permanent	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial	N/A						L	Not Significant Varies from Minor to Negligible Varies from Neutral to Beneficial

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; S = Scotland; R = Regional; C = Council; L = Local

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- 1-34 N/A
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- 1-45 Reading Borough Council (2007) St Marys Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal