

APPENDIX 8.3 REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS ASSESSMENT

Representative Views Assessment

Appendix 8.3 to ES Chapter: Built Heritage and Townscape and Visual

Yield Hall Place 1 & Yield Hall Place 2, The Oracle, Reading

February 2024

1. Representative Views Assessment

- 1.1 This Representative Views Assessment has been prepared by Turley to accompany a full planning application for ‘Development’ at former Debenhams store and Vue cinema within The Oracle complex within the town centre of Reading (‘the Site’). This serves as **Appendix 8.3** to Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 8: Built Heritage and Townscape and Visual as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for this application. This assessment forms part of that Chapter and is therefore in support of, and supplementary to, the wider assessment of 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.
- 1.2 The assessment follows the methodology set out in that ES Chapter and includes consideration of how the Development on Site could affect the experience of visual amenity. This Representative Views Assessment also underpins the assessment of effects on visual receptors and local townscape character areas as described in that Chapter. It has also informed aspects of the impact assessment on the significance of heritage assets in the Chapter. The baseline visual appraisal has been established within the HTVIA and ES Chapter, including identifying a number of Representative Views (RVs), which have been agreed with officers at RBC as part of pre-application engagement. A plan of the representative viewpoints within the Study Area is included as a figure at **Appendix 8.2D** of the ES Chapter.
- 1.3 A series of Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) have been prepared for each of these viewpoints by specialist consultants (Ambiente). The detailed methodology document on the production of AVRs is provided along with the full size visualisations at **Appendix 8.4** to this ES Chapter accordingly.
- 1.4 None of the views are static, being kinetic and variable in nature when experienced within the townscape. The visualisations provide two-dimensional representations of a complex scenic experience and, as such, are indicative. However, they have been chosen to give an impression of the maximum effect of the Development in the viewing experience. Whilst the visualisations are provided for appraisal, the image is no substitute for the actual visual experience from a representative viewpoint or experienced by a visual receptor. It is essential when considering these views that the individual is aware of the viewing experience at each location, i.e. to be aware of traffic noise, weather, the surrounding buildings, and any other similar matters. It is, therefore, recommended that this document is taken on site to fully appreciate the nature of the viewing experience in each representative viewpoint location.
- 1.5 In determining the effects of the Development a judgement is made regarding the design quality of the completed scheme. This is informed by the supplied visualisations and the supporting planning application information. Where the type of effect has been identified as beneficial, neutral, or adverse, this is based on a professional judgement made by the assessor. The proposed changes to views because of the new built form are likely to include both beneficial and adverse impacts and will be perceived differently by different individuals. In overall terms, the building design is of high architectural quality, and that the height and form of the building would integrate with surrounding existing or consented future development schemes. Judgements on the appearance of the buildings will depend on the personal preferences of the individual. Where visible, consented schemes in the immediate context have been modelled in the views and are shown in the cumulative views with full size images.

- 1.6 This assessment has also 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 cumulative schemes are listed in the relevant section of the ES (and shown in **Figure 1.1**). and 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.
- 1.7 A summary of the effects on Representative Views is provided in **Table 1.1**.

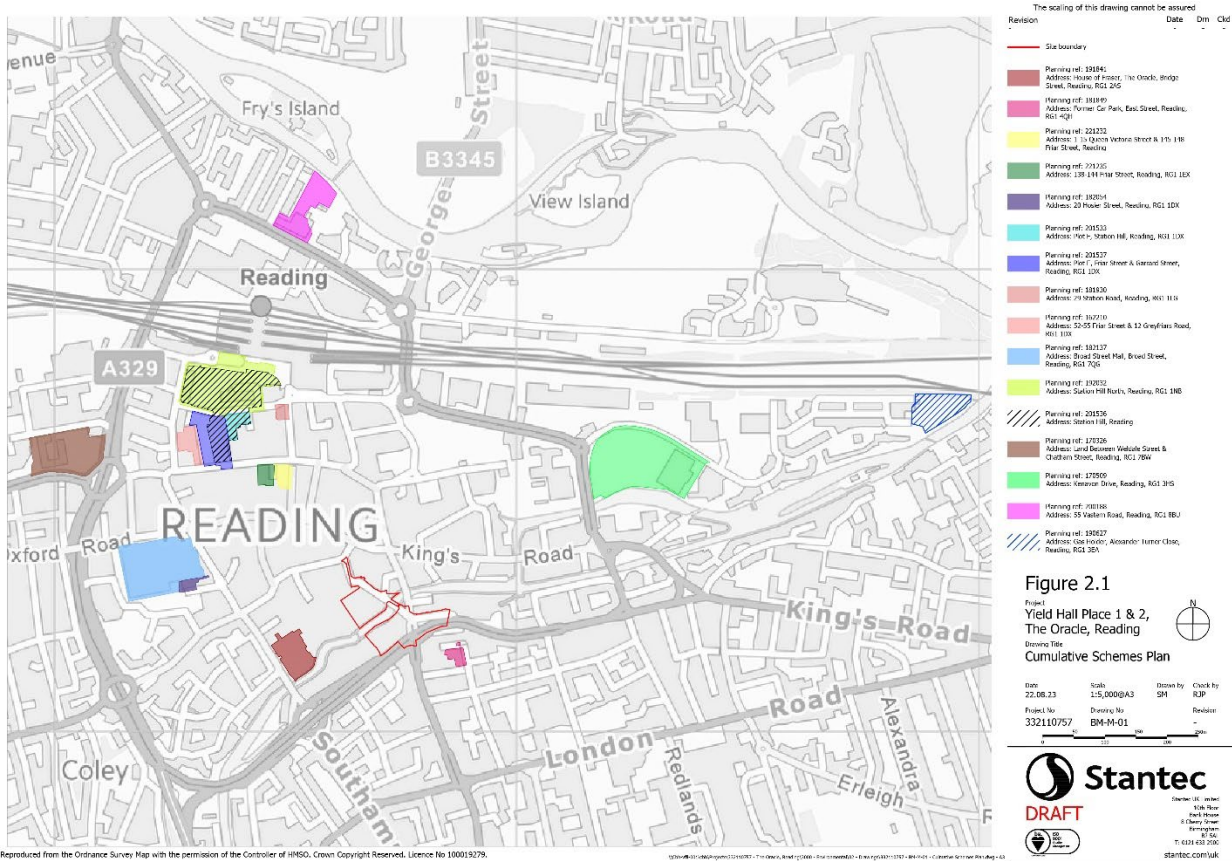


Table 1.1: Summary of Effects on Representative Views

Location	Value	Susceptibility to Change	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Type of Effect	Cumulative Effect
RV1 - View from Crane Wharf (footbridge), looking south west	Low/Medium	Low	Low/Medium	Medium	Beneficial	<i>Medium / Beneficial</i>
RV2 - View from Watlington Street Bridge, looking west	Ordinary	Low	Low	Small	Beneficial	<i>Small / Beneficial</i>
RV3 - View from Market Place (St Laurence Church), looking south	Medium	Medium	Medium	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV4 - View from St Marys Butts / Hosier Street, looking east	Medium/High	Medium	Medium/High	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV5 - View from Coley Place (footbridge over IDR), looking north east	Medium	Low	Medium	Small	Beneficial	<i>Small / Beneficial</i>
RV6 - View from Bridge Street bridge, looking north east	Ordinary	Low	Low	Medium	Beneficial	<i>Medium / Beneficial</i>
RV7 - View from Southampton Street / IDR, looking north east	Ordinary	Low	Low	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV8 - View from Church Street / St Giles Close, looking north	Low/Medium	Low	Low	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV9 - View from London Street / South Street, looking north	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Neutral	<i>Medium / Neutral</i>
RV10 – View from London Street / London Road, looking north	Medium	Medium	Medium	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV11 – View from the IDR (Queens Road) / Sidmouth Street, looking west	Low/Medium	Low	Low/Medium	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV12 - View from Whitley Street / Mount Pleasant looking north	Medium	Medium	Medium	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV13 - View from Castle Hill / Tilehurst Road / Coley Avenue looking east	Medium	Low/Medium	Medium	Small	Neutral	<i>Small / Neutral</i>
RV14 – View from A4, looking west (Viewpoint 17 of Tall Building Strategy (TBS) ¹)	Medium	Low	Low/Medium	Negligible	Beneficial	<i>Negligible / Beneficial</i>
RV15 – View from Dunsden Green, looking south (Viewpoint 11 from TBS)	Medium	Low	Low	Negligible / None	Neutral	<i>Negligible / None / Neutral</i>
RV16 – Mapledurham estate / AONB (Viewpoint 8 of TBS)	Medium	Low	Medium	Negligible / None	Neutral	<i>Negligible / None / Neutral</i>
RV17 – Mapledurham estate / AONB (Viewpoint 9 of TBS)	Medium	Low	Medium	Negligible / None	Neutral	<i>Negligible / None / Neutral</i>
RV18 - Balmore Park viewpoint (Viewpoint 14 of TBS)	Medium	Low	Medium	Negligible	Neutral	<i>Negligible / Neutral</i>

¹ RBC: Tall Building Strategy 2008

Representative Viewpoint 1 – View from Crane Wharf (King’s Reach footbridge), looking south west



Figure 1.2: Representative Viewpoint 1 – Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.8 This viewpoint is located on King’s Reach Bridge which links Crane Wharf and Queen’s Road, approximately 200m to the east of the Site. The view is experienced by pedestrians and cyclists travelling across the bridge.
- 1.9 The view extends along River Kennett and is well contained by built form which comprises four storey residential and office buildings of red brick construction with balconies and windows facing the river. The foreground and middle ground of the view is dominated by the river which is aligned with pathways and the four storey buildings on each side. Stationery cars within an office car park are experienced to the left-hand-side of the view. High Bridge, which crosses the River along London Street is visible in the background of the view. Mature trees to the west of High Bridge partially obscure visibility of the Oracle shopping centre (the northern portion of the Site) in the background of this view which rises above the tree line.

Sensitivity

- 1.10 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy however it does capture views across Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. It is therefore considered to be of **Low/Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to users of the footbridge. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low/Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.3: Representative Viewpoint 1 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.11 The Development would be experienced in the background of this view. It would rise above the existing treeline and roofline of buildings in the far distance. The River Kennett would remain the focal point within the view, however, the Development would introduce a landmark feature in the distance and add interest to the background. In turn, wayfinding towards Reading town centre would be established.
- 1.12 Added interest would be achieved through the proposed massing which comprises buildings of varying heights (rising between 7–19 storeys) and the gable ended roofscape of the 7-storey building to the eastern extent of the Site. This would be reaffirmed through the vertical emphasise applied to the elevation treatment and the composition of windows and balconies which presents a slenderer appearance, further articulated by the varied materiality. The distinction between the two parcels of land either side of the River Kennett is also experienced in this view. The separation of buildings with a sky gap between helps break up the massing in this view and reduces the potentially perceived prominence of new buildings when experienced cumulatively.
- 1.13 The magnitude of change would be **Medium**, and the type of effect would be **Beneficial** through added interest and wayfinding to Reading town centre in this view.
- 1.14 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 2 – View from Watlington Street Bridge, looking west



Figure 1.4: Representative Viewpoint 2 – Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.15 This viewpoint is located on Watlington Street Bridge crossing River Kennett, approximately 500m to the east of the Site. The view is experienced by pedestrians and motorists travelling along Watlington Street.
- 1.16 The foreground and middle ground of the view is dominated by the River Kennett which is aligned by the pedestrian pathway and trees to the left-hand side. The view is well contained by built form to the right-hand side which comprises residential properties of various heights and materials. This includes the residential building Verto, 120 King's Road, which rises 18 storeys. A single storey gable ended former warehouse building and a taller residential building is experienced beyond which rises up to 10 storeys, located on the south bank of the river. The 7 storey residential building Queens Wharf is experienced to the left-hand side. The north side of the river is bordered with pathways and mature trees which extend into the background of the view and screen visibility of built form beyond. The Site is not experienced in this view as it is screened by mature trees and existing interposing buildings.

Sensitivity

- 1.17 Although the view captures mid-range views towards Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, the view is not identified or protected in planning policy so is of **Ordinary Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Watlington Street Bridge. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.5: Representative Viewpoint 2 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.18 The Development would be experienced in the background of this view. It would rise above the existing treeline and roofline towards The Oracle shopping centre in the far distance although remain below the building line of the buildings in the foreground and middle ground of this view which rise up to 18 storeys. The River Kennett would remain the focal point within the view, however, the Development would introduce a landmark feature in the distance and add interest to the background through the stepped building height and articulated elevation treatment. In turn, wayfinding towards Reading town centre would be established and the public realm and visual amenity would be enhanced.
- 1.19 Added interest would be achieved through the proposed massing which comprises buildings of varying heights (rising between 2-19 storeys) and high-quality architecture. This would be reaffirmed through the slender appearance of the buildings which would be achieved through the vertical emphasise applied to the elevation treatment and the composition of windows and balconies, further articulated by the varied materiality. The distinction between the two parcels of land either side of the River Kennett is also experienced in this view. The separation of buildings with a sky gap between helps break up the massing in this view and reduces the potentially perceived prominence of new buildings when experienced cumulatively.
- 1.20 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Beneficial** through added interest and wayfinding to Reading town centre in this view.
- 1.21 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 3 – View from Market Place (St Laurence Church), looking south



Figure 1.6: Representative Viewpoint 3 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.22 This viewpoint is located on Market Place, on the pavement by St Laurence Church, approximately 250m to the north of the Site. The viewpoint is situated within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area, near to a concentration of Grade II and II* listed buildings. The view is experienced by pedestrians and motorists travelling along Market Place.
- 1.23 The view extends along Market Place and is well contained by buildings of various styles and periods, which serve as reminders of the busy urban context. The foreground of the view largely comprises Market Place road which is wide in this location accommodating a bus stop to the left-hand side and car parking to the right-hand side. A pedestrian crossing is also experienced in the foreground, as well as the arcade which sits beneath the curved building on the corner of The Forbury and Market Place. Number 28 and 29 Market Place, the latter being the Coopers Arms pub, are visible to the right-hand side of the view, both listed Grade II. Market Place Square, recognisable by the Simeon Monument standing at its centre, and a bus stop can be seen in the middle ground of the view. Three mature trees partially screen views of buildings around the square which rise four storeys. Red brick buildings which rise 4-5 storeys are also experienced in the background of the view. The Site is not experienced in the view.

Sensitivity

- 1.24 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy, however, does capture views from within Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and the setting of a number of listed buildings. It is therefore of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to road users and pedestrians on Market Place. The visual receptor has a **Medium Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.7: Representative Viewpoint 3 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.25 The Development would be experienced in the background of this view. The new buildings would rise above the existing roofline of the buildings along the south side of Market Place Square, although below the three-four storey buildings either side of this view along Market Place, including 28, Market Place (listed Grade II).
- 1.26 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 to the townscape view. However, it would introduce an architecture of high-quality and add interest to the skyline due to the varied building heights, materiality and articulated elevation treatment. Further, the proposed building heights descend away from the listed buildings along Market Place, appearing as a continuation of the streetscape. The prominence of the new buildings is therefore reduced, adding a secondary layer of architectural interest to the background. This would be reaffirmed by the architectural characteristics and materiality of the new buildings and the vertical emphasis of their façade treatment which expresses a slenderer building profile.
- 1.27 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** overall with the benefits of added interest to the background of this view through the introduction of high-quality architecture remaining a secondary feature in this view that is otherwise experienced as a contrasting change from within the historic Market Place and conservation area.
- 1.28 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 4 – View from St Marys Butts / Hosier Street, looking east



Figure 1.8: Representative Viewpoint 4 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.29 This viewpoint is located at the junction between St Marys Butts and Hosier Street, opposite the Church of St Mary the Virgin (listed Grade I), approximately 350m to the north west of the Site. The viewpoint is situated within the St Marys Butts Conservation Area, near to a concentration of Grade II listed buildings. The view is experienced by pedestrians and motorists on Marys Butts and Hosier Street.
- 1.30 The foreground of the view comprises the road junction between St Mary's Butts and Hosier Street with moving vehicles which emphasises the kinetic nature of this view and its urban context. The town cemetery is visible in the middle ground of the view. The tall monument to the south edge of the cemetery stands as a focal point within the view with mature trees beyond. The tower and south aisle of the Church of St Mary the Virgin is experienced to the left of the view. To the right-hand side, the view is contained by three-four storey terraced buildings, constructed of red brick and articulated by horizontal masonry banding. The Site is not experienced in the view.

Sensitivity

- 1.31 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy, however, it does capture a view from St Marys Butts Conservation Area and views from the Grade I listed church and a number of buildings listed Grade II. It is therefore of **Medium/High Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to users of St Marys Butts and road users and pedestrians on Hosier Street. The visual receptor has a **Medium Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium/High Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.9: Representative Viewpoint 4 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.32 There would very limited visibility of the Development in this view owing to interposing buildings and mature trees to the south of the Church of St Marys Butts, even in winter views. It is possible that the new buildings would be experienced in the background of the view, however, this would be interspersed amongst the dense tree foliage with new buildings remaining below the existing skyline. The Church of St Marys Butts would remain a prominent feature of this view, and the appreciation for the character and appearance of St Marys Butts Conservation Area would be sustained.
- 1.33 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm or improvement to the view.
- 1.34 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 5 – View from Coley Place (footbridge over IDR), looking north east



Figure 1.10: Representative Viewpoint 4 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.35 This viewpoint is located on Coley Place Footbridge over The Inner Distribution Road, approximately 600m to the west of the Site. The view is experienced by pedestrians and cyclists using Coley Place footbridge. The view is open in character and extends along Coley Place Footbridge and beyond. The IDR is visible in the foreground, to the left of the view, as it passes underneath the footbridge which dominates the right-hand side of the view. Three storey buildings are experienced to the right-hand side of the view, mostly accommodating residential use. Mature trees to the eastern end of the bridge obscure visibility beyond.
- 1.36 Taller buildings located within Reading town centre are experienced in the background of this view. These include residential buildings on Mallard Row, Riverside House on Fobney Street, the Oracle and the Blade. The spire of St Giles Church is visible to the right-hand side. The Site is partially visible in the background, though predominantly screened by interposing built form.

Sensitivity

- 1.37 The view is identified as Key View 27 within Reading Tall Building Strategy report (2008) so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to users of Coley Place footbridge. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.11: Representative Viewpoint 4 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.38 The Development would be experienced in the background of this view, rising above the existing skyline. The Development would add interest to the view and establish wayfinding to Reading town centre and The Oracle shopping centre. This would be achieved through the proposed massing and varied building heights (rising 2-19 storeys), reaffirmed by the high-quality architectural characteristics of the new buildings and composition of windows, balconies, and use of materiality which reinforces a vertical emphasise and a slender appearance.
- 1.39 The distinction between the two parcels of land either side of the River Kennett is appreciated in this view, specifically the separation of buildings and ‘sky gap’ which helps break up the massing in this view and reduces the potentially perceived prominence of new buildings when experienced cumulatively. The spire of St Giles Church would remain a landmark feature to the right-hand side of this view.
- 1.40 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Beneficial** through establishing wayfinding with a new layer of high-quality architecture in the background of the view.
- 1.41 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 6 – View from Bridge Street bridge, looking north east



Figure 1.12: Representative Viewpoint 6 – Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.42 This viewpoint is located on Bridge Street bridge, approximately 200m to the west of the Site. The view is experienced by pedestrians and motorists on Bridge Street bridge and, to some degree, users of River Kennett, although at a lower level.
- 1.43 The foreground of the view comprises the bridge, the pavement, and the bollards/balustrade that align it. The middle ground of the view extends along River Kennett and is framed by commercial buildings on each side of the river which accommodate restaurants and retail units at ground floor. The shopping unit House of Fraser, which is part of the Oracle centre, is visible to the left of the view and rises the equivalent of 10 storeys. The coned roof of the entrance building to the Oracle on the south bank of the river stands in the centre of the view in the background. The white antenna of the Vue Cinema is visible to the right-hand side beyond, as well as an office building rising 14 storeys to the left-hand side.

Sensitivity

- 1.44 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy so is of **Ordinary Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Bridge Street bridge. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.13: Representative Viewpoint 6 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.45 The Development would be experienced in the background of this view. It would be experienced in the context of large-scale buildings within Reading town centre. The new buildings would continue to frame the River Kennett and would establish wayfinding towards The Oracle development. Added interest to this view would be achieved through the proposed massing and varied building heights (rising 2-19 storeys) as well as the high-quality articulated elevations of the new buildings. The vertical emphasis would be appreciated in this view, presenting a focal point beyond the less articulated, lower quality buildings in the foreground.
- 1.46 The magnitude of change would be **Medium**, and the type of effect would be **Beneficial** with high-quality architecture experienced in the background of the view.
- 1.47 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 7 – View from Southampton Street / IDR, looking north east



Figure 1.14: Representative Viewpoint 7 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.48 This viewpoint is located on the ring road to the north of Southampton Street, facing the IDR bridge, approximately 250m to the south west of the Site. The viewpoint is situated within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The view would be experienced by pedestrians and motorists travelling on Southampton Street.
- 1.49 The foreground of the view comprises the three-laned vehicular road and the roundabout which is visible to the left-hand side. The view extends along Southampton Street and is framed by the IDR bridge to the left-hand side and the Premier Inn Hotel to the right-hand side which rises 7 storeys. Traffic lights are also experienced in the middle distance of the view, serving as reminders of the urban context. The upper storeys of the southern extent of the Site are partially experienced in the background of the view. The white roof and the southern extent of the site are visible in the background of the view looking north east though partially screened by the IDR bridge.

Sensitivity

- 1.50 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy so is of **Ordinary Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Victoria Street. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.15: Representative Viewpoint 7 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.51 The upper storeys of the Development would be partially experienced in the background of this view, rising above the IDR bridge. The stepped-up massing of the new buildings would be visible, echoing characteristics of the Premier Inn to the right-hand side. The ring road and the IDR bridge would remain as prominent features with the new development establishing wayfinding to The Oracle and the town centre in the distance.
- 1.52 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm or improvement to the view.
- 1.53 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 8 – View from Church Street / St Giles Close, looking north



Figure 1.16: Representative Viewpoint 8 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.54 This viewpoint is located on St Giles Close, at the junction with Church Street, approximately 300m to the south of the Site. The viewpoint is situated within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The view is experienced by local residents, pedestrians and motorists on Church Street and St Giles Close.
- 1.55 The foreground of the view comprises St Giles Close. It is aligned with pavements and dropped curbs which provide access to carparking and gateways to private housing. The view extends along St Giles Close and is well contained by domestic scale residential properties in the middle ground which rise two storeys. Three storey residential buildings are experienced in the background of the view. The Site is predominantly screened by intervening built form although glimpses of the roof are visible in the background.

Sensitivity

- 1.56 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy, however, it does capture views across Market Place/London Street Conservation Area so is of **Low/Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Church Street/St Giles Close. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.17: Representative Viewpoint 8 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.57 The upper storeys of the Development would be partially experienced in the background of this view, specifically the 19-storey element of the northern extent of the Site. The new buildings would be largely obscured from view by the two-three storey buildings in the middle ground, as well neighbouring buildings within The Oracle complex in the background. Where visible, the new buildings would introduce high-quality architecture in the background of the view and would establish wayfinding towards Reading town centre.
- 1.58 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm or improvement to the view.
- 1.59 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 9 – View from London Street / South Street, looking north



Figure 1.18: Representative Viewpoint 9 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.60 This viewpoint is located on London Street at the junction with South Street, approximately 230m to the south of the Site. The viewpoint is situated within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The view is experienced by local residents, pedestrians and motorists on London Street and South Street.
- 1.61 The foreground of the view extends along London Street, where it is possible to see the descending topography of the area. The middle ground of the view is well contained by built form which is of a domestic scale, accommodating both residential and commercial uses. The buildings predominantly rise two-three storeys and have stucco and red brick external finishes. The street is aligned with pavements on each side. Parked cars are also visible. The curved roof of the southern portion of the Site is visible in the background of the view. The low levels of the building are largely screened by trees along the London Street and interposing buildings.

Sensitivity

- 1.62 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy, however, does capture a view within Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and views from the setting of a number of listed buildings so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to road users and pedestrians on London Street/South Street. The visual receptor has a **Medium Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.19: Representative Viewpoint – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.63 The Development would be experienced in the background of the view, rising above the two-four storey buildings along London Street. The stepped-up massing of the southern block rising between 9 and 16 storeys is experienced from this vantage point, with the lower block acting as a transition between the low-rise buildings within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and the tall buildings to the centre of The Oracle. Similarly, the variation of building heights of the northern block is also experienced in this view where the crown of the building is visible, although partially obscured from view by the trees that align London Street.
- 1.64 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 to the townscape view. However, the scheme would introduce a high-quality landmark feature in the background of this view. Although introducing buildings of greater height and density, the vertically articulated elevations will enable the buildings to add interest to this townscape view and reaffirm wayfinding to Reading town centre and The Oracle. This is reinforced by the varied materiality which echoes that found within the conservation area, as well window proportions which echo the character of the former industrial use of the Site and surrounding area.
- 1.65 The magnitude of change would be **Medium**, and the type of effect would overall be **Neutral** with the introduction of high-quality architecture in this view balancing the increase of massing which would otherwise contrast with the two-four storey buildings aligning London Street within Market Place / London Street Conservation Area.
- 1.66 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 10 – View from London Street / London Road, looking north



Figure 1.20: Representative Viewpoint 10 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.67 This viewpoint is located on London Street at the junction with London Road, approximately 400m to the south of the Site. The viewpoint is situated within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The view would be experienced by local residents, pedestrians and motorists on London Street and London Road.
- 1.68 The view extends along London Street. The foreground of the view comprises the vehicular junction with pedestrian islands, bollards and street furniture. The middle ground of the view is contained by built form which is of a domestic scale, accommodating residential and commercial uses. The buildings experienced in this view date to the late twentieth century and have a mix of stucco and red brick finishes, typically rising three-four storeys. The street is bordered with pavements on each side. Thames Tower is experienced in the background of this view, rising 14 storeys. The Site is visible in the background of the view, although largely screened by trees along the street and interposing buildings.

Sensitivity

- 1.69 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy, however, does capture a view within Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and views from the setting of a number of listed buildings so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of moderate importance to road users and pedestrians on London Street/London Road. The visual receptor has a **Medium Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.21: Representative Viewpoint 10 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.70 The upper storeys of the taller elements of the Development would be partially experienced in the background of the view, rising above the two-four storey buildings along London Street. Where experienced, the new buildings would introduce an abrupt change in building scale and height in the distance and would reduce visibility of open sky, having an adverse impact to the townscape view. However, the scheme would introduce a high-quality landmark feature in the background and would reaffirm wayfinding to Reading town centre and The Oracle. It would remain a secondary feature given the distance between the Site and the viewpoint location and would add interest, achieved by the articulated elevations, varied materiality and crowning of the taller elements.
- 1.71 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm or improvement to the view.
- 1.72 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 11 – View from the IDR (Queens Road) / Sidmouth Street, looking west



Figure 1.22: Representative Viewpoint 11 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.73 This viewpoint is located on Queens Road, at the junction with Sidmouth Street, approximately 350m to the east of the Site. The view would be experienced by local residents, pedestrians and motorists on the IDR, Queens Road and Sidmouth Street.
- 1.74 The foreground of the view comprises Queens Road and the central reservation with planting and metal barrier, and an elevated road sign to the left-hand side. The street is bordered with pavements on each side. The middle ground of the view extends along Sidmouth Street, contained by built form on each side of the street which comprises residential properties with stucco and red brick finishes. To the left of the street these comprises Queens Crescent, a Grade II listed 1830s terraced row rising three-storeys with a uniform facade. Residential properties rising four storeys are experienced to the right of the view and in the background. The upper storeys of the Site are visible in the background of the view, although partially screened by trees and interposing buildings.

Sensitivity

- 1.75 The view is not identified or protected in planning policy although does capture a view from the setting of Queens Crescent (listed Grade II) and views across Market Place/London Street Conservation Area so is of **Low/Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on the IDR (Queens Road)/Sidmouth street. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low/Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.23: Representative Viewpoint – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.76 There would be limited visibility of the Development in this view owing to interposing buildings. Visibility would be restricted to the upper storeys of the taller elements of the scheme, and the upper storeys of the 7-storey buildings with the gable ended roofscape to the east. The Development will appear as a subservient feature in the background of this view although would positively establish wayfinding towards Reading town centre and The Oracle. The variation in building height, as well as the roof profile of the 7-storey buildings to the east will add interest, reinforced by the high-quality architecture and the slender appearance of the buildings through vertical emphasis on the elevation treatment. The new buildings will be experienced within an urban context, including modern development and Queens Crescent to the left-hand side which remain a prominent feature in the view.
- 1.77 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm and limited improvement to the view.
- 1.78 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 12 – View from Whitley Street / Mount Pleasant, looking north



Figure 1.24: Representative Viewpoint 12 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.79 This viewpoint is located on Whitley Street between the junction with Southampton Street and the junction with Highgrove Street, approximately 850m to the south of the Site. The viewpoint is situated near to the Significant View with Heritage Interest 2 and Key View 5, as identified in Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (2008) document². The view would be experienced by local residents, pedestrians and motorists travelling along Whitley Street and the Mount Pleasant area.
- 1.80 The foreground of the view comprises Whitley Street which is aligned with pavements either side. The descending topography to the north is experienced from this vantage point. The middle ground of the view is framed by built form, rising one-two storeys with stucco and red brick finishes. The Pheasant public house and associated car park is visible to the left-hand side of the view, bounded by a red brick wall. Sporadically planted trees along Whitley Street partially filter views of built form beyond, although still partially visible in the background as the topography rising in the far distance. The Site is predominantly screened by interposing built form in the background of the view.

Sensitivity

- 1.81 The view is associated with Significant View with Heritage Interest 2 and also Key View 5 in Reading Local Plan 2019 and Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Whitley Street/Mount Pleasant. The visual receptor has a **Medium Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.

² Reading Borough Council, *Reading Tall Building Strategy*, 2008



Figure 1.25: Representative Viewpoint – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.82 The Development would be largely obscured from view due to interposing buildings, changing topography which descends to the north, as well as an evergreen mature tree to the centre of the view. Visibility is limited to the upper storeys and west elevation of the 19-storey block, and a small portion of the building within the western extent of the Site. Where visible, the building would appear as a subservient feature in the background of the view and would be experienced within an urban townscape context, including taller buildings in the background. The Development would remain below the existing treeline and considerably lower than the buildings in the foreground of this view.
- 1.83 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm or improvement to the view.
- 1.84 The upper storeys of the Station Hill North scheme would be visible to the left of the Development in this view. It would not obscure the Development, which would still be experienced as described above. The combination of these new elements of built form would illustrate the pattern of change within Reading Town Centre.

Representative Viewpoint 13 – View from Castle Hill / Tilehurst Road / Coley Avenue, looking east



Figure 1.26: Representative Viewpoint 13 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.85 This viewpoint is located on Castle Hill, at the junction with Tilehurst Road, approximately 950m to the west of the Site. The viewpoint is situated near Key View 23 of Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (2008) document and is located within Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area. The view is experienced by local residents, pedestrians and motorists on Castle Hill and Tilehurst Road.
- 1.86 The view extends along Castle Hill, where it is possible to see the descending topography of the street. The foreground of the view comprises a wide road junction, containing several lanes of traffic. Traffic lights and street lighting are experienced in the middle ground of the view. The view is contained by built form and mature vegetation either side. To the left-hand side, built form comprises residential properties rising 4 storeys, constructed of red brick and white stucco. Properties of similar scale and material are also visible to the right-hand side and in the background of the view although largely obscured by street furniture and tree planting. Metal railings separate the pavement from the vehicular road. Mature trees along Castle Hill screen views of built form to the right-hand side of the view. Glimpsed views of taller buildings are experienced in the background including the residential building Verto, 120 King's Road, which rises 18 storeys. The western extent of the Oracle shopping centre is partially visible in the background of the view though screened by adjoining built form.

Sensitivity

- 1.87 The view is identified as Key View 23 in Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 and also captures a view from within Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Castle Hill/Tilehurst Street/Coley Avenue. The visual receptor has a **Low/Medium Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.27: Representative Viewpoint 13 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.88 Visibility of the Development would be limited to the western extent of the Site and some visibility of the new buildings within the eastern portion, specifically the upper storeys due to changing topography which descends to the north, and interposing buildings and evergreen mature tree planting. Where experienced, the stepped up massing and slender profile of the buildings would be appreciated, reaffirmed by the articulated elevations and varied materiality. The development would be experienced amongst buildings of a similar scale in the background of this view and would reaffirm wayfinding towards Reading town centre in the distance.
- 1.89 The magnitude of change would be **Small**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm and some enhancement to the view.
- 1.90 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 14 – View from A4 West of Reading, looking west



Figure 1.28: Representative Viewpoint 14 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.91 This viewpoint is located on London Road, on the south side of the A4 near the junction with Hilltop Road, approximately 3km to the east of the Site. The view is experienced by motorists on the A4 and London Road and pedestrians in the area.
- 1.92 The foreground of the view is dominated by the London Road and the A4 which are separated by metal railings. The A4 comprises a wide road containing several lanes of traffic with traffic lights and street lighting which accommodate a pedestrian crossing in the middle ground. The road is bordered by built form to the right-hand side which rises two storeys and accommodate residential properties separated from the road by boundary walls. Mature planting is experienced in the middle ground of the view to the left-hand side, extending in the background of the view. The wider townscape of central Reading is visible in the background of the view although difficult to discern the buildings due to distance. The Site is experienced in the view.

Sensitivity

- 1.93 The view is identified as Key View 17 in Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on the A4. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low/Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.29: Representative Viewpoint 14 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.94 The Development would be experienced in the background of this view and would appear as a small element of the existing urban skyline of Reading town centre and in the context of buildings of a similar scale and architectural character. Visibility would be limited to the upper storeys of the scheme. The new buildings would add variation to the skyline of Reading and would add interest, achieved by the stepped building heights and vertical emphasis of elevation treatment, although experienced from a distance.
- 1.95 The magnitude of change would be **Negligible**, and the type of effect would be **Beneficial** with added interest introduced to this distanced view towards Reading town centre.
- 1.96 The uppermost storeys of the Station Hill North, Plot F Station Hill and 138–144 Friary Hill schemes would be visible to the centre right of this view and to the right of the Development. It would not obscure the Development, which would still be experienced as described above. The combination of these new elements of built form would illustrate the pattern of change within Reading Town Centre.

Representative Viewpoint 15 – View from Dunsden Green, looking south



Figure 1.30: Representative Viewpoint 15 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.97 Viewpoint 15 is located from Henley Road, approximately 4.3km to the north east of the Site. The view is experienced by motorists travelling along the road and pedestrians in the area. It captures viewpoint representative of Viewpoint 11 of the Reading Tall Building Strategy.
- 1.98 The foreground and middle ground of the view is dominated by the gently undulating large arable fields, and the hedge to the left-hand side which marks the boundary between the field and Henley Road. 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. Low-rise residential development is experienced in the far distance of this view with taller buildings visible in the background of the view. The Site is not experienced in the view in its current form.

Sensitivity

- 1.99 The view is identified as Key View 11 in Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low importance to road users and pedestrians on Victoria Street. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Low Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.31: Representative Viewpoint 15 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.100 The Development would be a minor element in the far background of this view, seen as part of the backdrop of built form within the centre of Reading. The key aspects of this view would be preserved and therefore no effect would arise.
- 1.101 The uppermost storeys of the Station Hill North and Broad Street Mall schemes would also be visible to the centre left of this view and to the right of the Development. It would not obscure the Development, which would still be experienced as described above. The combination of these new elements of built form would illustrate the pattern of change within Reading Town Centre.

Representative Viewpoint 16 – Mapledurham Estate / AONB



Figure 1.32: Representative Viewpoint 16 - Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.102 Representative Viewpoint 16 is located approximately 5.7km to the north west of the Site. It is experienced by visitors of the Mapledurham Estate and local walkers.
- 1.103 The foreground and middle ground of the view is dominated by pastoral landscape interspersed with parkland trees and woodland clumps. There is distance visibility of low-rise development in the background of this view although the view is very much rural in character. The Site is not experienced in the view in its current form.

Sensitivity

- 1.104 The view is identified as Key View 8 in Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low/moderate importance to visitors of the Mapledurham Estate. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.33: Representative Viewpoint 16 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.105 The Development would not be experienced in this view. There would be no change to this view and therefore no effect would arise.
- 1.106 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 17 – Mapledurham Estate / AONB

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.107 Viewpoint 9 (From footpath east of Maple Durham) is 3.7km to the north west of the Site. It is experienced by visitors of the Mapledurham Estate and local walkers.
- 1.108 Although this view is included within the Tall Building Strategy (Viewpoint 9), the character of this view has substantially changed since the Strategy was published in 2008. Today, the footpath is aligned with dense tree planting and visibility towards Reading town centre is therefore restricted. The foreground is dominated by trees and shrubbery which restricts visibility of the pastoral landscape beyond. The Site is not experienced in the view in its current form.
- 1.109 Photography for this view has not been included due to the restricted visibility.

Sensitivity

- 1.110 The view is identified as Key View 9 in Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 so is of **Medium Value**, although this view has substantially altered since the Tall Building Strategy was published due to tree planting and overgrowth. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low/moderate importance to pedestrians visiting the Mapledurham Estate. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.

Effect on View

- 1.111 The Development would not be experienced in this view. There would be no change to this view and therefore no effect would arise.
- 1.112 There are no cumulative effects.

Representative Viewpoint 18 – Balmore Park, Caversham, looking south



Figure 1.34: Representative Viewpoint 18 – Existing

Existing Baseline Situation

- 1.113 This viewpoint is located within Balmore Park, approximately 2km to the north of the Site. The view is experienced by recreational users of Balmore Park and local residents in the area.
- 1.114 The open character of the view and the descending topography of the park visible in the foreground allows for wide views towards Reading town centre. In the middle ground, the mature tree belts which define the park boundaries largely screen adjoining built form in the view. The wider townscape beyond is visible in the background of the view. Distinctive features in the view are three tall buildings; the Thames Tower, Western Tower and Fountains House, which are prominent features in the background of the view. The Site is currently not experienced in the view.

Sensitivity

- 1.115 The view is identified as Key View 14 in Reading Tall Building Strategy 2008 and captures the skyline of Reading so is of **Medium Value**. The experience of views and visual amenity is likely to be of low/moderate importance to users of Balmore Park. The visual receptor has a **Low Susceptibility to Change** and a **Medium Sensitivity**.



Figure 1.35: Representative Viewpoint 18 – Proposed and Cumulative

Effect on View

- 1.116 There would be very limited visibility of the Development in this view due to changing topography which descends to the south, and interposing buildings and mature evergreen tree planting. Visibility would be limited to the upper storeys of the tallest element of the proposal (rising 19 storeys) which would be experienced amongst an urban context, including taller buildings (Thames Tower) and the emerging context in the distance. The new built form would be a subservient feature in the background of this view, reinforced by the distance between the Site and the viewpoint location (2km).
- 1.117 The magnitude of change would be **Negligible**, and the type of effect would be **Neutral** with no overall harm or improvement to the view.
- 1.118 The taller elements of several schemes (identified on **Figure 1.35**) within Reading Town Centre will be visible to the centre of this view and to the right of the Development. They would not obscure the Development, which would still be experienced as described above. The combination of these new elements of built form would illustrate the pattern of change within Reading Town Centre.

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