

NAPIER COURT READING



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Client



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Curtins, Structural Engineer and Transport Consultant



CPW, Services Engineer



Where buildings come alive

Carney Sweeney, Planning Consultant



Midlands Energy Services, Daylight and Sunlight Consultant



DFC, Fire Consultant



Stantec, Landscape Architects



FCPR, Ecology



Avison Young, Employers Agent



Ryder, BIM and Principal Designer



HCUK, Heritage Consultant



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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Purpose of this Design and Access Statement

This document has been prepared on behalf of Peveril Securities Ltd in support of a detailed planning application for Napier Court following a period of design development and consultation with the local authority, Design Review Panel and Public Consultation event.

It has been prepared by 5plus Architects with input from Carney Sweeney alongside the wider technical team and should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Design and Access Statement contained herein, prepared by Stantec and other technical submittals prepared by the design team.

This application is for the construction of new purpose built BTR (Build to Rent) residential buildings (Use Class C3) providing 576 new dwellings with a mix of 3 bed, 2 bed, 1 bed apartments with associated managed amenity and back of house service spaces, including a new rooftop private amenity space and an external terrace.

The purpose of this document is to detail the rationale and approach that has been undertaken in developing the final design for the Napier Court Residential Buildings within an existing and emerging townscape context.

Planning Description

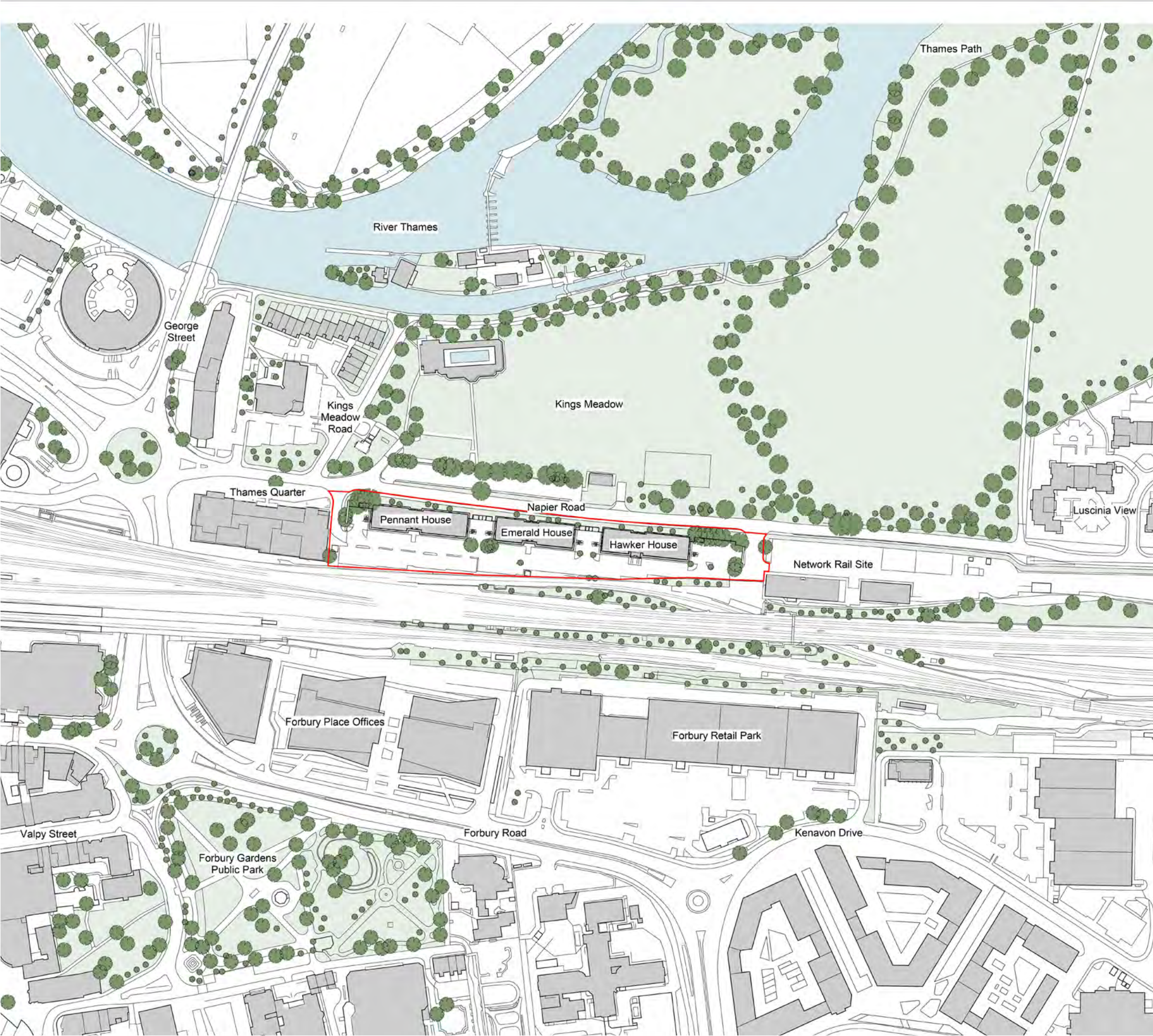
A full planning application for construction of new 11 storey buildings, to provide 576 residential dwellings consisting of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments.

The development will include ancillary facilities for residents, including residents' lounge, gym and communal workspace. The buildings will be set in landscaping in the form of; a courtyard to the rear; a pocket park between buildings; public realm fronting Napier Road; and roof terraces. Parking is proposed for 39 cars and 6 motorbikes. Three internal storage spaces are proposed at ground floor for 289 bicycles and an additional 20 cycle spaces are provided externally for visitors.

The site is 1.26 ha in size and stretches east to west along Napier Road, bound by the railway line to the south, Napier Road and Kings Meadow to the north, Thames Quarter to the west and a Network Rail site to the east. The site is located within the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council and is well connected to the train station, bus services and town centre facilities.

Summary

The design of the Napier Court Residential Buildings has been developed in keeping with the local and national planning policy requirements and in close consultation with Reading Borough Council planning officers and following Public Consultation.



1.2 Brief

Peveril Securities have an aspiration to deliver a high quality residential development at their Napier Court site, providing much needed new homes to support the growth of Reading.

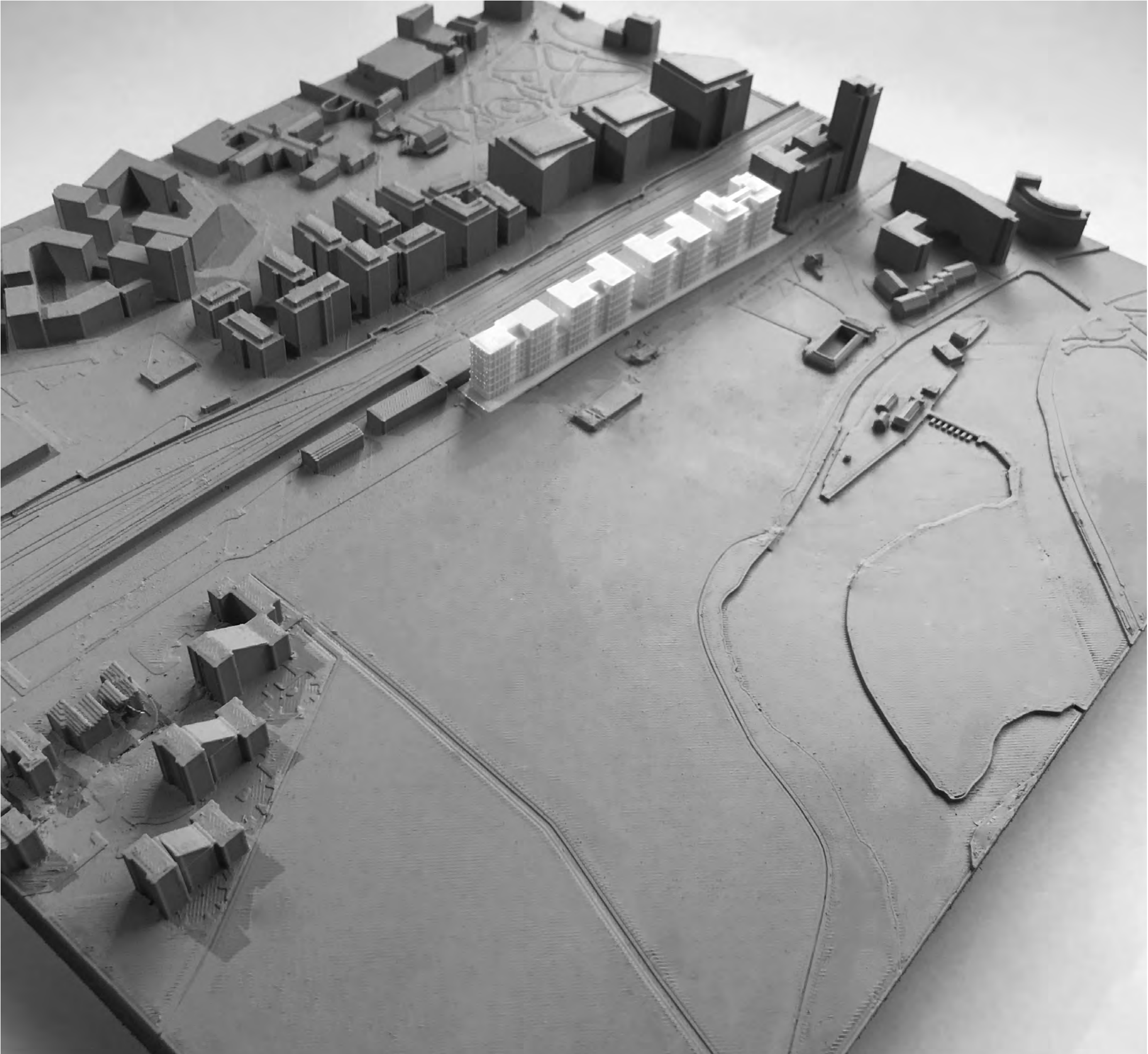
The scheme has been developed in response to the requirements of the Building Safety Act (BSA) and fire safety guidance with the requirement for access to dual escape stairs and evacuation lifts for residential safety.

The brief to the delivery team has been to develop a Build to Rent scheme which is:

- Planning compliant, including delivering the 30% affordable units
- Delivering apartments in line with NDSS and M4(3)
- Future proof, which has led to the inclusion of dual escape and other key fire safety elements
- Energy efficient with fabric first approach to design
- Contributing to the safeguarding of the environment
- High quality design with the asset being best in class
- Single points of entry to maintain residents security
- Providing a high quality private amenity of 2.9% of the net internal area at ground, to facilitate active frontages, and roof levels
- Respectful of Kings Meadow which offers an excellent amenity asset so the design must consider how it can benefit the residents
- Retain TPOs and significantly improve biodiversity net gain

The scheme has set the following parameters;

- Circa 576 units
- Circa 36% x 1 Bedroom Apartments
- Circa 54% x 2 Bedroom Apartments
- Circa 10% x 3 Bedroom Apartments
- 29 M4(3) Accessible Apartments.



1.3 Deliverability

Napier Court – Deliverability

The redevelopment of Napier Court has been in the making for over 3 years with Peveril Securities purchasing the site unconditionally in May 2021 recognising the excellent opportunity to bring forward a Build to Rent residential scheme in line with the planning allocation.

Funding and Operation

Peveril Securities is the property investment arm of Bowmer and Kirkland Group, one of the largest privately owned construction groups in the UK with group turnover in excess of £1.1bn and internal cash reserves in excess of £500m.

Peveril Securities has developed in partnership with Sladen Estates, development partner for Napier Court, over £1bn of schemes across all sectors. The majority of these schemes are sold to investors upon completion and due to the scale of the end investment value for Napier Court, Peveril Securities’ preference has been from the purchase of the site to secure a fund/operator that would commit to purchase the scheme upon development completion.

The purchaser will own and operate the completed development at Napier Court offering a secure and high quality management experience to all residents.

The Delivery Team

The construction works will be undertaken by Bowmer and Kirkland who have been involved with the design development process with the key members of the design team which comprises:

- 5Plus architects, renowned architects who have been involved with the design of many award winning residential schemes as illustrated adjacent and including schemes developed by Peveril Securities such as Bankside, Guildford and West Bar in Sheffield.
- Curtins - civil, structural and highways engineers
- Couch Perry Wilkes – mechanical and electrical engineers
- Design Fire Consultancy – Fire engineers who sit on one of the Government advisory panels related to the development of new fire regulations.
- Ryders – Principal Designer (Building Safety Act and CDM) who sit on a Government advisory panel regarding the Building Safety Act.

The delivery team has considered carefully and as far as possible the impact of the Building Safety Act on the programme and concluded that to achieve a compliant Gateway 2 application the design must be taken to RIBA Stage 4.

However, some packages related to specialist design which would not be undertaken until Stage 5 will be brought forward to ensure that all key impacts are considered and designed prior to submission of the Gateway 2 application.

Peveril’s intention is to progress the design to RIBA Stage 4 in order that the Gateway 2 submission can be made once planning approval is secured. Due to the strength of the team the aim is to submit an exemplar Gateway 2 application which will address key concerns regarding occupants’ safety related to structural stability and fire protection.

Infrastructure

During our due diligence relating to the site we became aware of the lack of available electricity within the Reading network. This information was shared with Reading Borough Council in January 2023 since when the council, Matt Rodda MP and Peveril Securities’ electricity advisor have been working with SSE to resolve this major issue.

In December 2023 confirmation was received that the full electricity load required for Napier Court could be delivered in line with programming requirements.



Crescent, Salford



Crescent, Salford



Bankside, Guildford with Peveril Securities

1.3 Deliverability

Delivery Programme

As with all developments there has been much work in coordinating various strands to get to a point that the redevelopment proposals are deliverable.

This work has been progressed such that Peveril Securities is now in a position to submit the planning application for a 576 apartment Build to Rent scheme in the knowledge that should Reading Borough Council grant the planning permission, which could be by November, then the construction of the redevelopment proposals could start on site in June 2025 with a phased completion between June 2027 and December 2027.

This scheme would therefore deliver 318 apartments of which 95 would be affordable in June 2027 and 258 apartments of which 77 will be affordable in December 2027.

Other delivery factors

There are many other factors which will contribute to the delivery which are considered as part of this application but none of them will prevent delivery.



Angel Meadows, Manchester



West Bar, Sheffield with Peveril Securities



West Bar, Sheffield with Peveril Securities



Blackfriars, Salford



Angel Meadows, Manchester

THE SITE

2.0 Wider Context

Situated approximately 40 miles west of London, Reading is strategically positioned within the dynamic Greater London Urban Area. Its accessibility is underscored by its connectivity through major transportation arteries, including the M4 motorway and a well-established railway network. This proximity to the bustling metropolis of London not only enhances Reading's regional significance but also underscores its role as a thriving hub in the South East.

Key

Railway Line

Crossrail Line

River Thames

Motorway Route

Main (A) Road

Reading

24 mins

Oxford

Reading

55 mins

Oxford

Reading

57 mins

Winchester

Reading

1 hr 5 mins

Winchester

Reading

27 mins

Paddington

Reading

1 hr 10 mins

Paddington

Indicative road and rail travel times.

The map illustrates the wider context of Reading, showing its connectivity to major cities and transport networks. Reading is highlighted as a central hub. Key features include:

- Locations:** Oxford, High Wycombe, Henley-on-Thames, Reading, London, Basingstoke, Woking, Guildford, and Winchester.
- Transportation Arteries:**
 - Railway Lines (Orange):** Connect Reading to Oxford, London, and Winchester.
 - Crossrail Lines (Blue):** Connect Reading to London.
 - River Thames (Teal):** Flows through the region.
 - Motorway Routes (Dashed Black):** M4, M3, M25, and A404.
 - Main (A) Roads (Dotted Grey):** A34, A33, A339, and A404.
- Travel Times (Indicative):**
 - Reading to Oxford: 24 mins (Rail), 55 mins (Road)
 - Reading to Winchester: 57 mins (Rail), 1 hr 5 mins (Road)
 - Reading to Paddington: 27 mins (Rail), 1 hr 10 mins (Road)

5plus

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Napier Court Reading

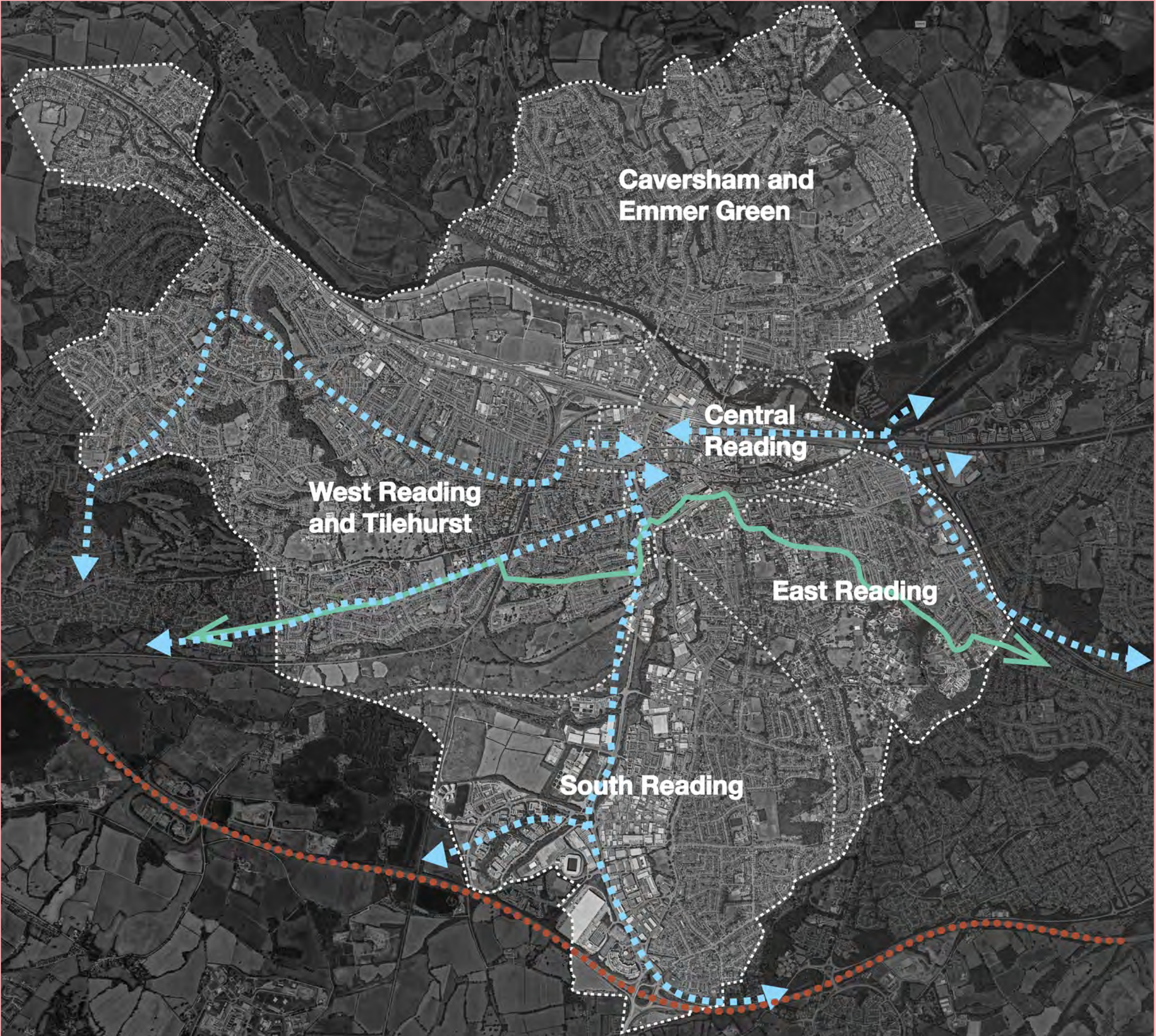
2.1 Town Context

- Key**
- Motorway
 - Mass Rapid Transport Network
 - Cycle Route

Central Reading's location serves as a fulcrum connecting Caversham, Tilehurst, West, East, and South Reading. Along the course of the River Thames, the site benefits from its proximity to this natural waterway, influencing both its aesthetic appeal and recreational potential.

The urban fabric of Central Reading has been planned and developed around the waterways of the Thames and the Kennet with mix of heritage assets such as Reading Abbey and Gaol alongside modern buildings such as Thames Gateway and Reading Station. It is a thriving urban centre well connected to London and other regions.

The Napier Court site sits within the Reading Central ward.



2.2 Urban Grain

The Napier Court site is located within the proximity of many key civic spaces and features of Central Reading.

The historic Forbury Gardens, located in the heart of the town centre, serves as a public space focal point, offering a retreat for residents and visitors from busy streets and roads.

The railway presents a significant barrier to the southern aspect of the Napier Court site however, with the opportunity to knit into the wider townscape somewhat severed by the railway.

In recent years, with the development of a tall building and podium structure at the corner of Napier Road, Thames Quarter has sought to reconnect the Kings Meadow area of the town back into the urban grain.

Thames Quarter has set a development context for the Napier Court site which will enable enhanced benefit to be drawn from the leisure, recreational and wellbeing aspects of being next to the Kings Meadow and Riverside, and also promotes a re-engagement between the urban and suburban spaces.

- Key
- 1

2

3

4

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13

14
- Reading Station

Thames Lido

Reading Abbey Ruins

HM Prison Reading

Forbury Gardens Public Park

Saint Laurence Church

St. James Roman Catholic Church

Reading Museum

Fry's Island

Christchurch Bridge

Reading Bridge

Caversham Lock

View Island

Thames Quarter



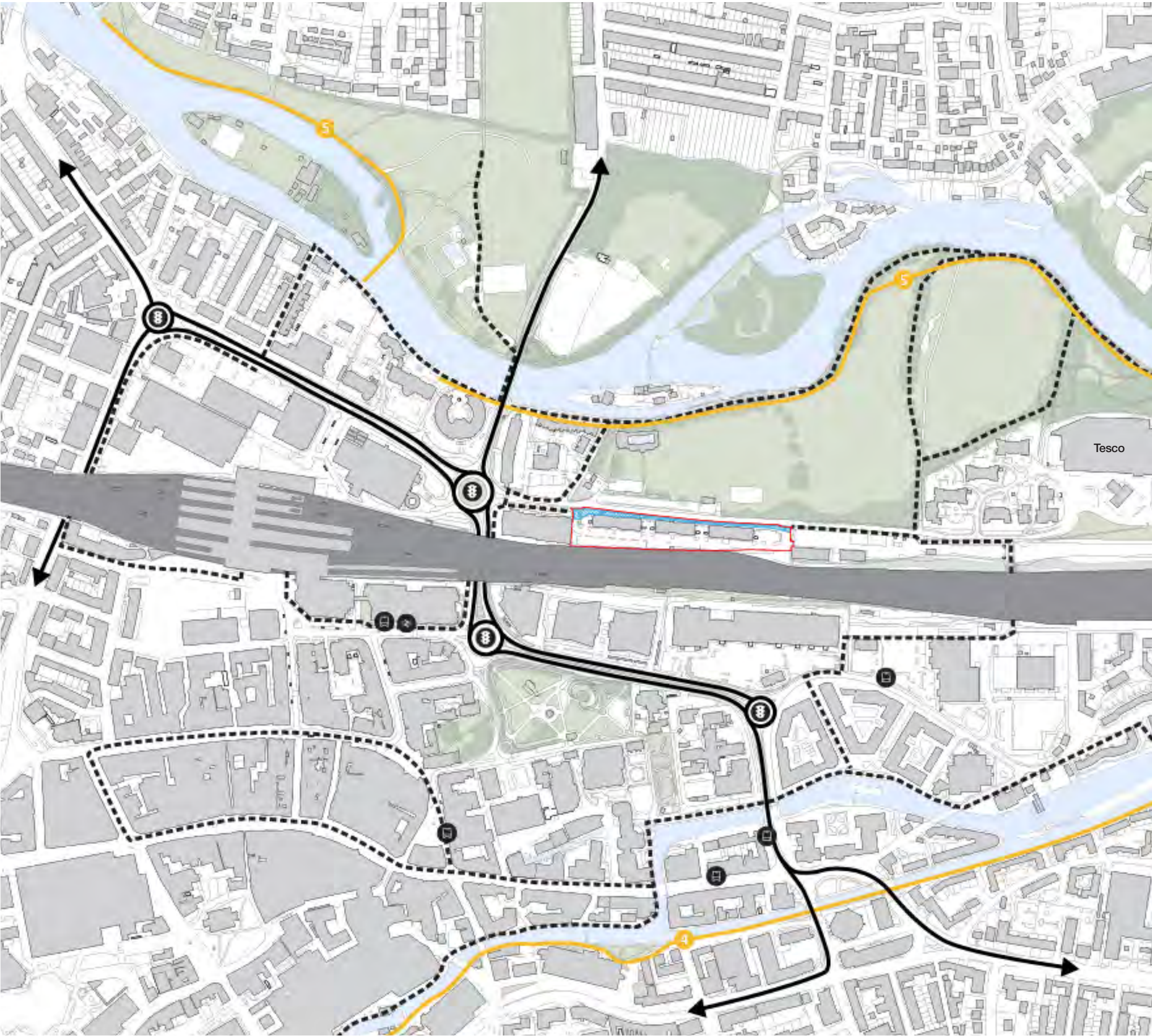
2.3 Connectivity

The site is well connected to Central Reading, offering the ability for residents to walk into Central Reading for shopping, work or leisure.

Napier Road connects the rest of Central Reading to the large Tesco shopping store and petrol station which lies just to the east. A cycle route allows connectivity along the Riverside between east and west and a potential future MRT line on Napier Road itself allows a potential future sustainable public transport route.

Opposite the site is a car park which is used for access to Kings Meadow, the River Thames walk and the popular Grade II Listed Thames Lido.

- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Proposed future Mass Rapid Transport (MRT)
 - Vehicular Route
 - Pedestrian Route
 - Bus Stop
 - Train Station
 - National Cycle Network



2.4 Town Planning Policy

Reading Borough Local Plan

The main Planning Policy Document relevant to this site is Reading Borough Council 'Reading Borough Local Plan' which was adopted in 2019.

The design approach seeks to help redefine the edge to Kings Meadow. The proposal will introduce a positive impact to this Local Green Space as defined in the adopted Local Plan through the introduction of a well considered building line that offers improved visual amenity.

The adjacent diagram is extracted from the Reading Borough Council Local Plan and illustrates the site location in the policy context.

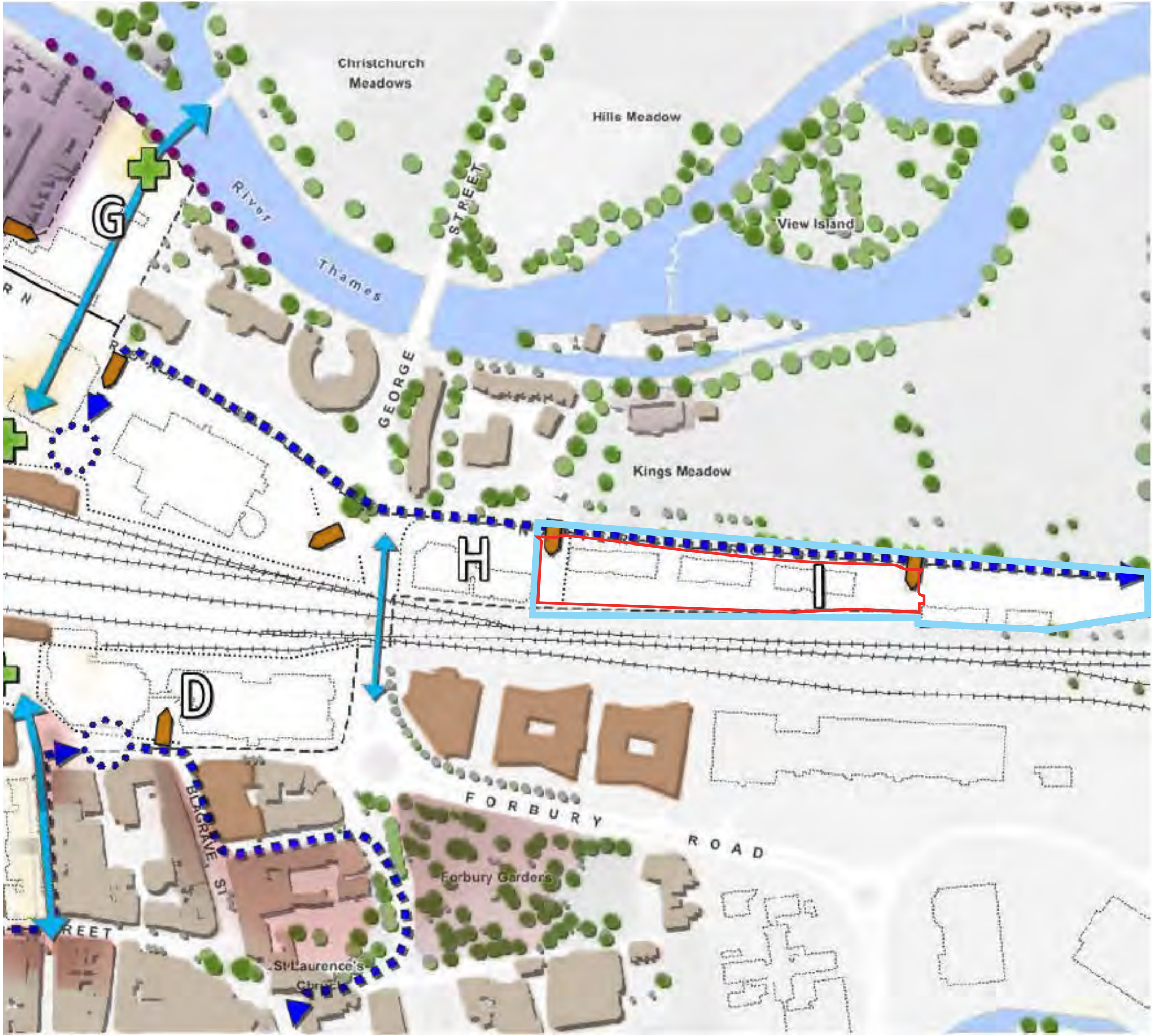
The site forms part of the wider designated policy CR11i site which includes the adjacent Network Rail site.

Policy CR11i covers Napier Court and the neighbouring Network Rail site and envisages that the area will be developed for residential amongst other uses.

CarneySweeney has prepared a Planning Statement submitted alongside this Design and Access Statement which sets out the planning background to the proposed development of Napier Court.



- Key
- Site Boundary (Part of CR11i)
 - Full Designated CR11i Zone



2.5 Emerging Town Context

The diagram adjacent illustrates emerging schemes which will affect the townscape context related to the scale and massing of development that could take place at the Napier Court site.

Thames Quarter, a new Build to Rent residential development located immediately adjacent the Napier Court site responds to recent neighbouring developments, creating a 23 storey landmark and 12 storey shoulder height building to the edge of Napier Road which sets a datum for further development. Existing office developments on Forbury Road further define this massing strategy informing future development scale and massing.

The Napier Court site has the potential, in tandem with existing recent development and the emerging schemes illustrated adjacent, to create a high quality development which complements the existing and proposed townscape along the railway as a key approach into Reading being defined by an established lower shoulder height datum.

Development: 55 Vastern Road
Status: Planning Approved

Development: Reading Station Park
Status: Appeal Made

Development: Reading Metropolitan
Status: Outline Approved

Development: Station Hill North
Status: Under Construction

Development: Forbury Retail Park
Status: Planning Application Made

Development: Kenavon Drive
Status: Under Construction



2.6 Site Photographs Local Character and Assets

The site at Napier Court is defined by its edges with Napier Road to the north and Kings Meadow beyond and the railway to the south. Kings Meadow is a large open green space close to the heart of Reading town centre with footpaths connecting into the Thames Path.

The railway to the south creates a rising retaining wall from west to east as the railway lines pass into Reading Station.

To the west, the new Build to Rent development named Thames Quarter, in tower and podium arrangement defines the landmark position of Napier Road and Vastern Road whilst to the east, a Network Rail depot of two storey construction sits alongside the railway.

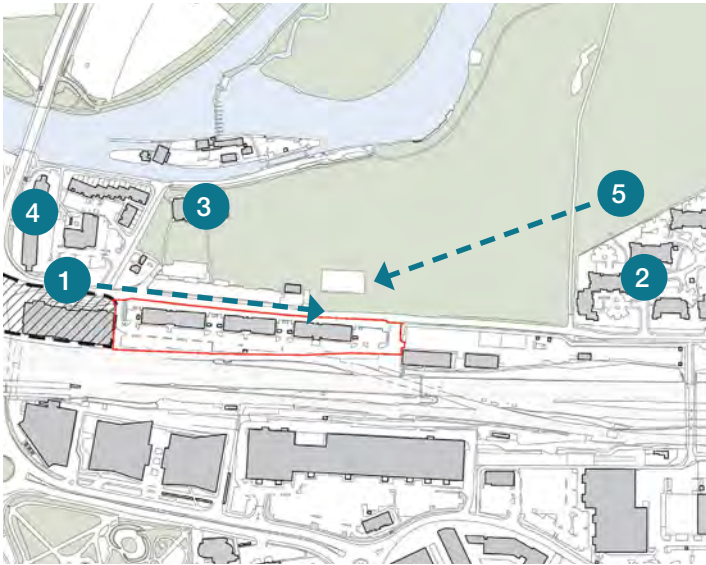
Thames Bridge House and Kings Meadow House, two post modern office buildings cloak Kings Meadow to the west with smaller residential buildings, Kings Meadow Lodge and the Thames Lido arranged around Kings Meadow Road.

Adjacent to these, the frontage of Kings Meadow is characterised by car parking for both Kings Meadow itself and the Lido.

At the eastern end of Napier Road, the blue angled roofs of Luscinia View characterise this end of Kings Meadow with extensive tree lined footpaths and sports pitches.

Key

- 1 Kings Meadow Road
- 2 Luscinia View
- 3 Thames Lido
- 4 Reading Bridge House
- 5 Kings Meadow



2.7 Site Photographs Immediate Site Context

The adjacent photographs (1 and 2) show Napier Court fronting on to Napier Road. These are a trio of small footprint, two storey office buildings which do little to complement the existing and emerging townscape or setting with Kings Meadow.

To the south, a retaining wall to the railway sees a level change (photo 3a) from west to east with office occupier car parking distributed between the existing buildings and retaining wall.

Photo 3b shows the view of the retaining wall in the opposite direction as its gradient diminishes.

To the front of the site along Napier Road, photo 4 shows a green strip to the front of the buildings safeguarding the potential future mass transit land.

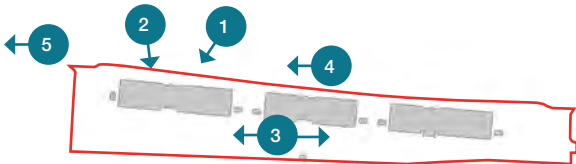
Photo 5 shows the recently completed Thames Quarter scheme (23 storeys with 12 storey lower podium block).

Accesses into the site from Napier Road are shared with Thames Quarter to the west and the Network Rail depot to the east.

Broadly level across its expanse, the developable area of the site is impacted by the MRT land to Napier Road and the railway interface to the south.

Key

- 1 View South from Kings Meadow
- 2 View of existing office buildings from Kings Meadow
- 3 View, East to West across the site (3a and 3b)
- 4 View, East to West across Napier Road
- 5 Thames Quarter, newly completed 23 storey residential



2.8 Site Studies

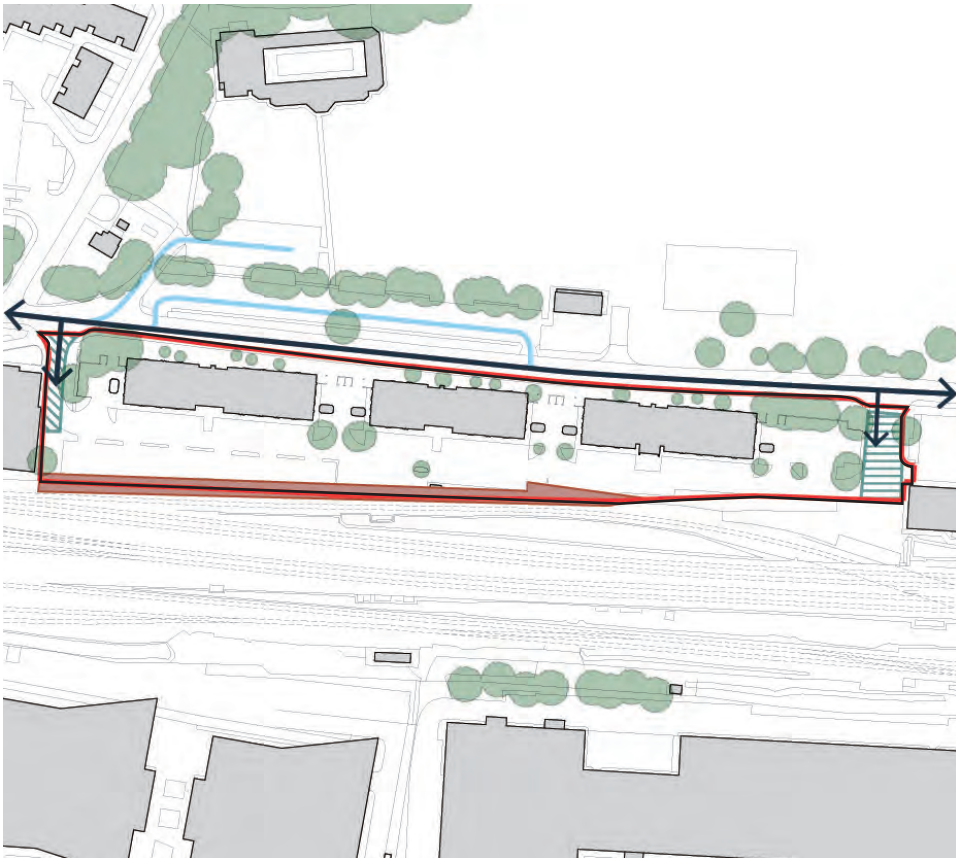
Access

The long narrow site can be accessed by vehicles at either end from the east and west. Both these access points are shared with the adjacent sites.

Along the southern edge of the site, Network Rail have a permanent land access agreement for the access and maintenance of the retaining wall of the railway line. This covers approximately two thirds of the length of the southern boundary.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Primary Vehicular Movement
- Secondary Vehicular Movement
- Shared access with adjacent site
- Network Rail permanent land access



Environmental & Landscape

Due to the proximity to the River Thames, the site sits within flood zones 2 but with parts to the rear of the site within flood zone 3 as illustrated.

A Flood Risk Assessment, Drainage Strategy & SUDS Statement accompanies this planning application.

There are a number of trees on the site, some of which are covered by tree preservation orders.

The adjacent railway line presents a noise and pollution consideration as trains accelerate and decelerate from the nearby station.

The long and narrow proportion of the site, along with its east-west orientation prohibits north-south building orientation preferred for residential typologies.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Sun Path
- Prevailing Winds
- Primary Noise
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3 (1 in 100 year + 35% CC)
- Tree Preservation Order



Constraints

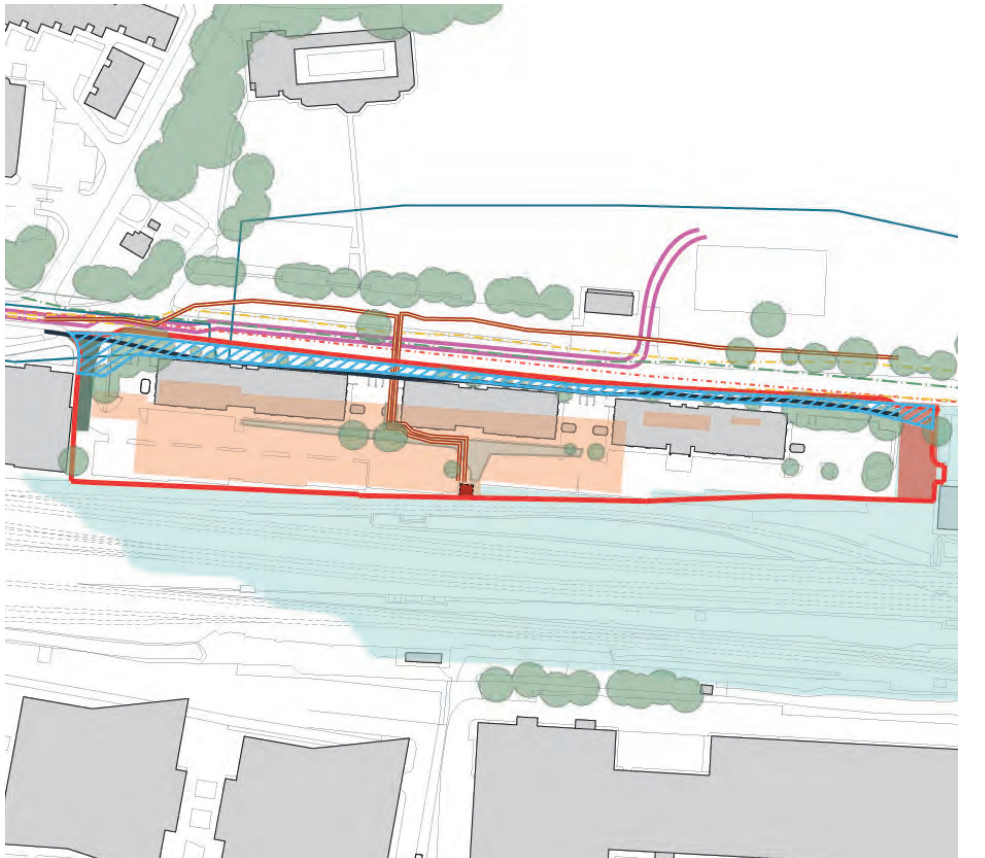
The existing site has a number of existing physical constraints which will require works to mitigate.

An area of land along Napier Road is safeguarded for a proposed future Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) route.

The site was previously used to house a railway warehouse building (now demolished) which may contain remnants of the previous use below ground.

Key

- Site Boundary
- Substation
- Former railway building, now removed
- Mass Rapid Transport safeguarding
- Redundant 132 kV underground cables
- Re-laid 132 kV underground cables
- 11 kV underground cables
- Electricity
- Telecoms
- Gas
- Water
- Cross rail safeguarding rights
- Network Rail Shared Access
- Thames Quarter Shared Access



2.9 Site Studies

Heritage

The site sits within a vast area designated as having potential for archaeological value. It is adjacent to the historic core of Reading.

The Abbey Quarter contains part of the Market Place conservation area.

Key

Site Boundary

Archaeological Potential

Conservation Area

Scheduled Ancient Monument

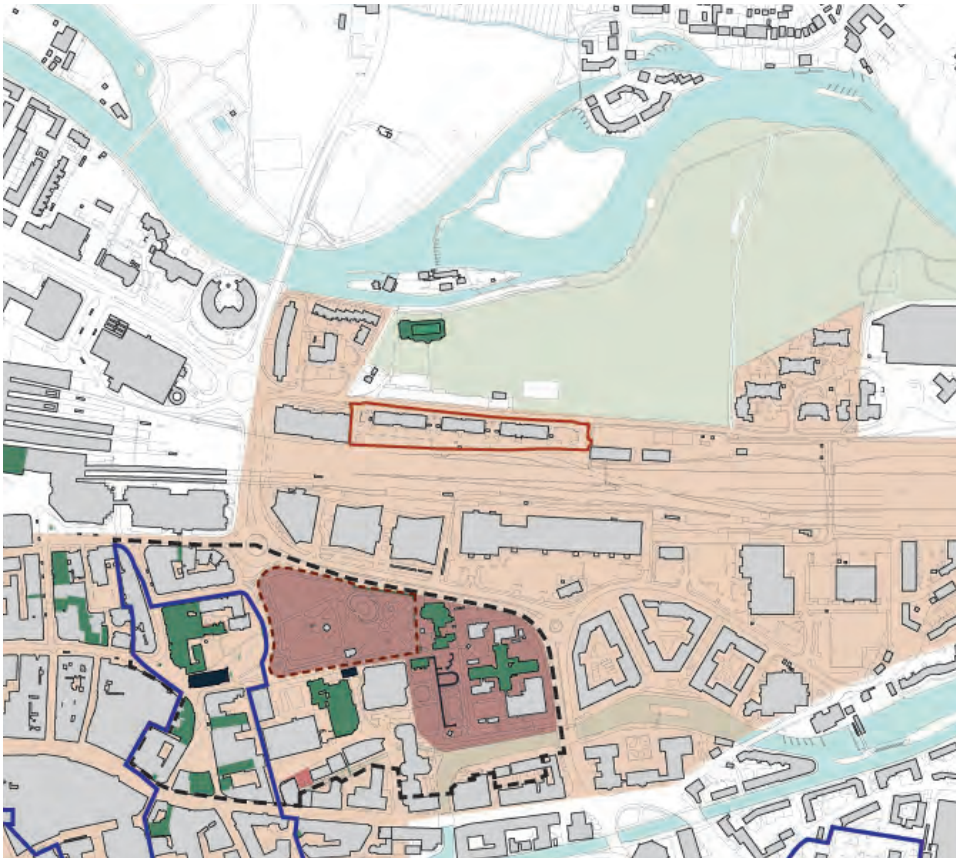
Historic Park or Garden

Abbey Quarter

Grade II Listed Building

Grade I Listed Building

Green Space



Predominate Use

This part of Reading town centre, close to the railway station, has a concentration of large footprint commercial office buildings.

Some of these buildings occupy land previously associated with the railway. Adjacent are numerous large retail type buildings, typical of this type of land reuse.

The historic town centre, south of the site and railway line, hosts a number of alternative uses, such as leisure and religious.

Significant residential use is becoming more prevalent.

Key

Site Boundary

Offices

Residential

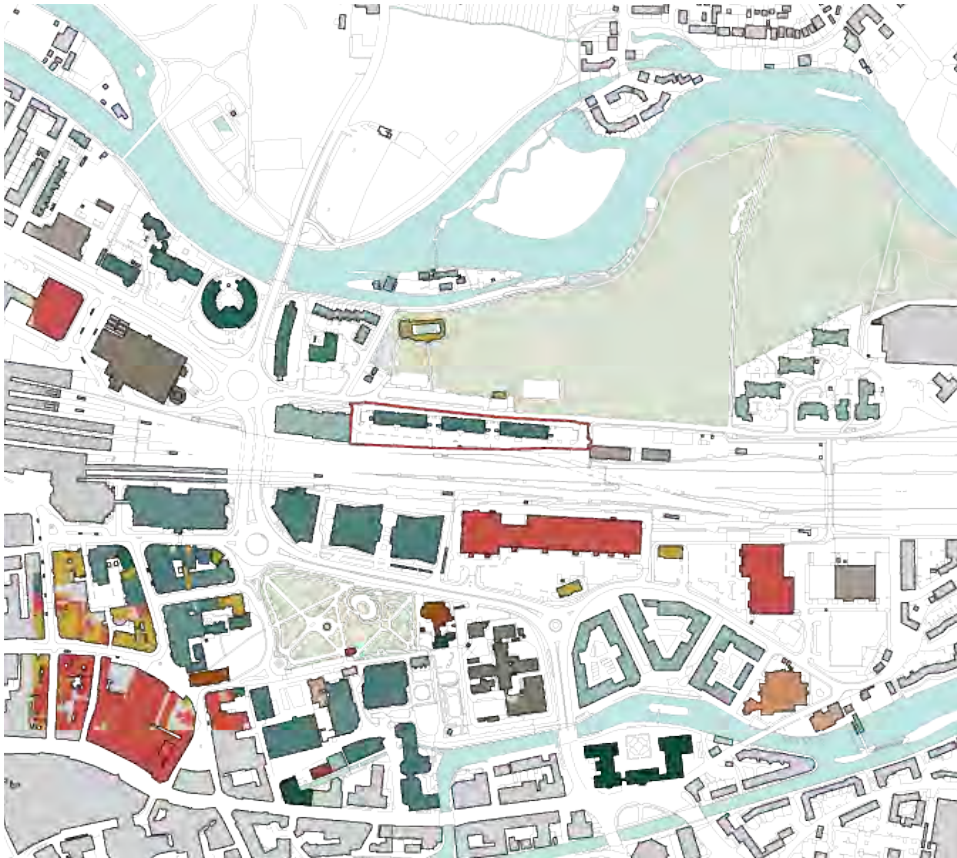
Retail

Leisure

Mixed Use

Car Park

Green Space



Approach

The site is well served and connected by numerous means of transport.

Napier Road sits adjacent to the town centre arterial ring road for access via car and bus.

Dedicated cycle paths pass by Napier Road and close to the site, which connect through Kings Meadow and onto the Thames path.

The site is also within walking distance of Reading Station offering sustainable transport connections further afield.

Train and bus stops are within a 5 minute walking distance from the site.

Key

Site Boundary

Primary Vehicular Movement

Secondary Vehicular Movement

Pedestrian Movement

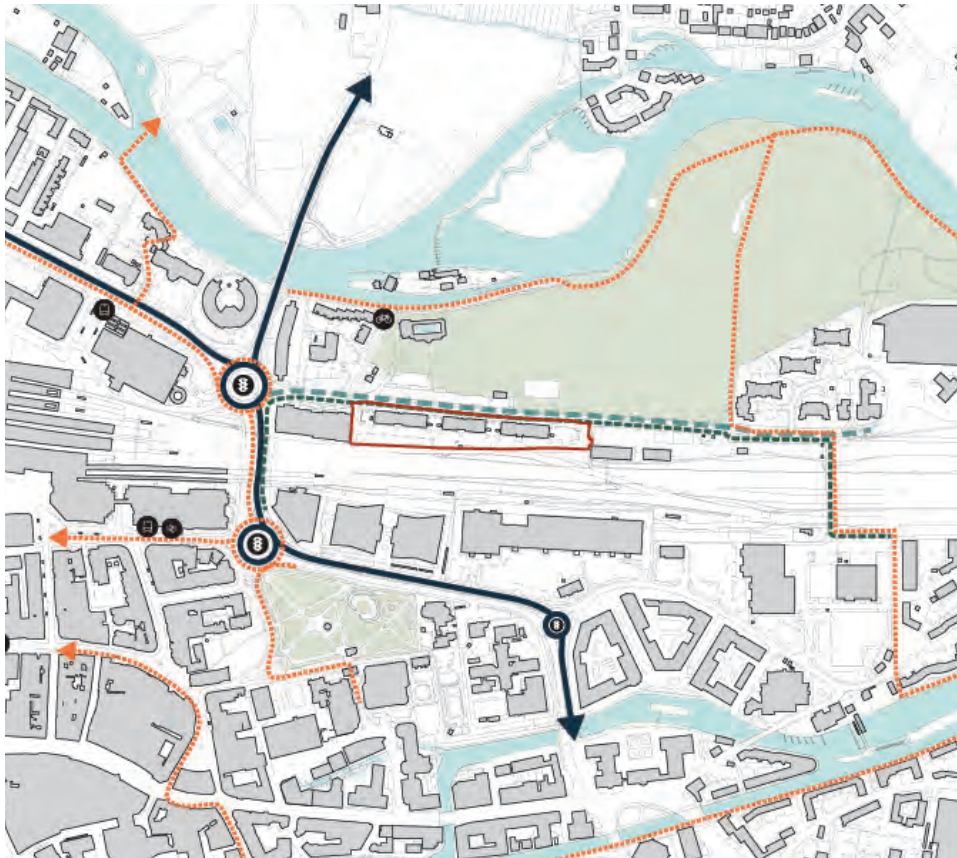
Cycle Lanes

Bus Stops

Major Junction

Train station

Green Space



2.10 Site History

The history of the site is largely defined by both the railway and the adjacent Kings Meadow which both date back to 1840 with the opening of the railway. Between 1840 and the 1980's, the site has functioned as a goods yard for the railway before it was eventually sold for the development of three blocks of offices. These offices currently still occupy the site.

The railway served as a piece of infrastructure which brought industry to the area, allowing the iron works and brewing trades to flourish. The town's population growth from 9400 in 1801 to 21500 in 1851 is largely attributed to the growth of industry that the railway catalysed.

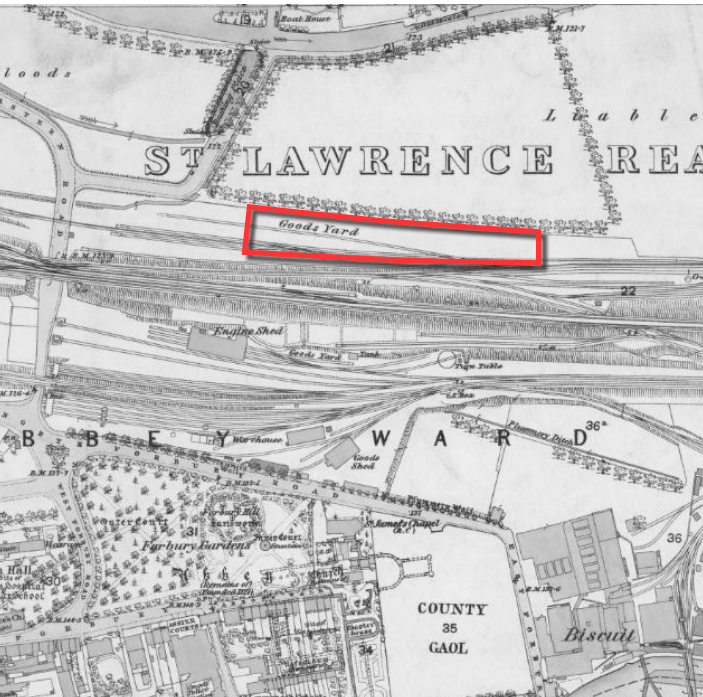
Kings Meadow was originally a possession of Reading Abbey until the dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII. The crown then sold it to Reading Borough Council in 1869. Since then the area has been designated for recreation and used for many public events including markets, racing, shows, fairs and sports.

Our site frames this historic area and complementary development is considered crucial. Interestingly the Thames Lido, which is a popular attraction today, dates back to its original construction in 1902. Prior to this a sluice existed off the Thames which was noted as being a place for bathing, back to as far as 1880. The relationship to Thames Lido is a strong historical connection due to it's position in relation to our site.

1879

The land bounded by Kings Meadow and Forbury Road has been occupied by railway infrastructure since the arrival of the railways in 1840.

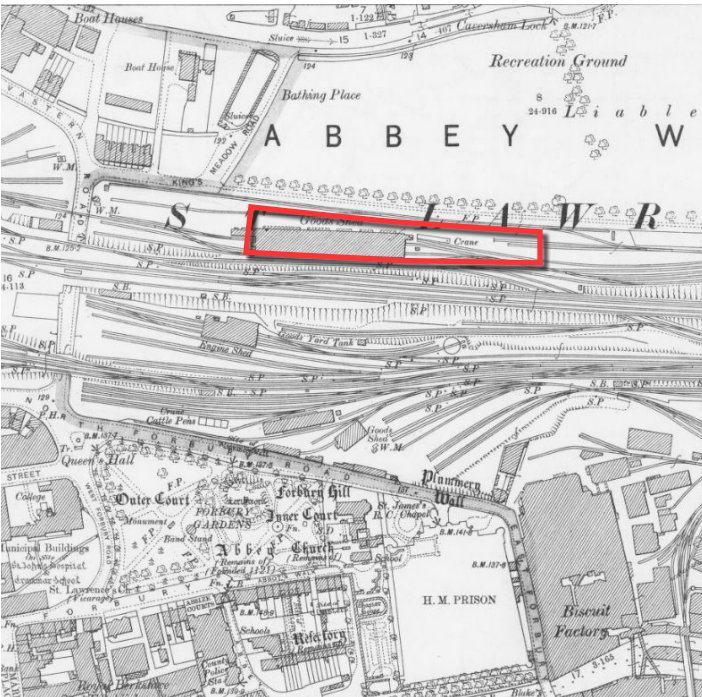
Initially the site was occupied by open air sidings which served a goods yards.



1900

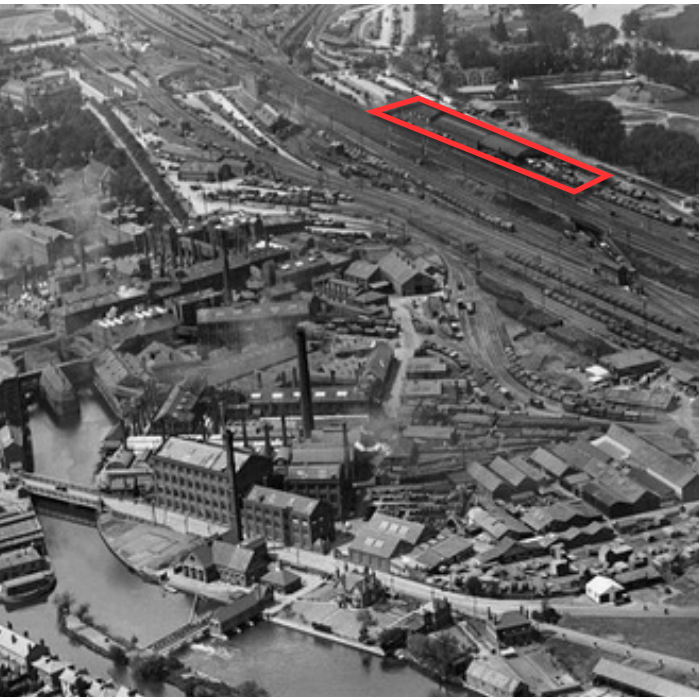
By the turn of the century, the dominance of the railways as the key mode of transport had grown. Further lines were added and sidings increased across the area.

A large goods shed now occupies the site which is pictured adjacent in the aerial photographic survey from the 1920s.



1920

By 1920 the Thames Lido had been built in Kings Meadow as a key architectural feature of the area. Industrial iron works are still seen south of the Railway.



1990

The site remained unaltered until the 1980s. At this time, the railways being in decline, road freight overtakes rail and the goods yard and shed are demolished with the land then being re-purposed.

Also at this time, Napier Road is introduced providing access to the newly built office buildings on the site and the nearby residential and retail development.



2.11 Existing Site Sections

These Long Sections show the existing townscape profile of Central Reading. Datums set by newly developed context are visible, creating a precedent for the massing of the Napier Court site.

Existing site information is taken from 3D Survey Data provided by Greenhatch Group from a survey dated June 2023.



Existing West Facing Townscape Section



Existing South Facing Townscape Section

DESIGN PROCESS