



Townscape and Visual Appraisal

Napier Court, Napier
Road,
Reading

June 2024 | Project Ref 09178C





Project Number: 09178C

File Origin: /Users/clairebrowne/Documents/9178 Napier Court/OneDrive_1_03-06-2024/2024.6.03 9178 Napier Ct TVA V7docx.docx

No text or imagery within this report has been generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	3
3. The Proposed Development	5
4. Townscape Planning Context	7
5. Townscape Appraisal	11
6. Visual Effects	20
7. Summary and Conclusions	47

Appendices

- App. 1 Detailed Methodology**
- App. 2 Planning Policy**
- App. 3 Figures**

Figures (Appendix 3)

- Fig. 1 Site Location and 1 km Study Area**
- Fig. 2 Designations**
- Fig. 3 Townscape Character Areas**
- Fig. 4 ZTV and Viewpoint Locations**
- Fig. 5 Viewpoint 1 Existing View**
- Fig. 6A Viewpoint 2 Existing View**
- Fig. 6B Viewpoint 2 Proposed View**
- Fig. 7A Viewpoint 3 Existing View**
- Fig. 7B Viewpoint 3 Proposed View**
- Fig. 8A Viewpoint 4 Existing View**
- Fig. 8B Viewpoint 4 Proposed View**
- Fig. 9A Viewpoint 5 Existing View**
- Fig. 9B Viewpoint 5 Proposed View**
- Fig. 10A Viewpoint 6 Existing View**

- Fig. 10B Viewpoint 6 Proposed View**
- Fig. 11 Viewpoint 7 Existing View**
- Fig. 12 Viewpoint 8 Existing View**
- Fig. 14 Viewpoint 9 Existing View**
- Fig. 15 Viewpoint 10 Existing View**
- Fig. 16 Viewpoint 11 Existing View**
- Fig. 15 Viewpoint 12 Existing View**
- Fig. 16 Viewpoint 13 Existing View**

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Townscape and Visual Appraisal (TVA) has been prepared by HCUK Group on behalf of Peveril Securities Limited in support for the proposed redevelopment of Napier Court, Napier Road, Reading, RG1 8BW. The site (henceforth referred to as 'the Site') is centred at approximately SU72027385.
- 1.2** The Site is located to the west of Reading town centre, south of Kings Meadow and is bounded by the railway line to the south. 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 very well connected to the train station, bus services and town centre facilities.
- 1.3** There are currently three low rise commercial buildings on the Site with associated car parking and access to the rear.
- 1.4** The Proposed Development is for a full planning application for demolition of the existing three office buildings, and construction of new 11 storey buildings, with amenity space at roof level (part indoor and set back), to provide 576 residential dwellings consisting of 1, 2 and 3-bedroom apartments. The development will include ancillary facilities for residents, such as a residents' lounge, gym and communal workspace. The buildings will be set in landscaping to the front and between the buildings together with 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 very well connected to the train station, bus services and town centre facilities.
- 1.5** This TVA has been prepared as a standalone document to support the planning application.

Purpose of the TVA

1.6 The TVA considers the potential effects of the proposed development on:

- Townscape elements and features such as built features, boundaries, vegetation, and landform;
- Townscape character; and
- Visual amenity.

1.7 The primary objectives of the TVA are as follows:

- To identify, describe and evaluate the current Townscape character of the Site and its surrounding area.
- To identify, describe and evaluate any notable individual Townscape and Townscape elements and/or features within the Site.
- To determine the sensitivity of the Townscape to the type of development proposed.
- To identify potential visual receptors (i.e., people who would be able to view the proposed development) and to evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed.
- To identify and describe any effects of the proposed development in so far as they affect the Townscape and/or views and to evaluate the magnitude of change owing to those effects.
- To make recommendations regarding the mitigation of important adverse effects where necessary.

Key Considerations

1.8 The TVA has been undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Townscape Institute. The visual and character appraisal was undertaken in May and October 2023 when vegetation was in full leaf. Consideration has also been given to the effect on visibility during winter when vegetation is not in full cover.

2. Methodology

2.1 This TVA has been undertaken with reference to the following best practice guidance:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) – Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).
- Townscape Character Assessment - LI Technical Information Note 05/2017, Revised April 2018.
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Landscape Institute Technical Design Note TGN 06/19.

2.2 As recommended within the published guidance, townscape (elements and character) and visual effects are assessed separately. A detailed methodology is provided at Appendix 1.

2.3 For the purposes of this assessment, unless otherwise stated, changes to townscape and visual amenity as a result of the proposed development are permanent and non-reversible.

2.4 The nature of any effect can be adverse i.e., negative, beneficial i.e., positive or neutral i.e., neither wholly adverse nor wholly beneficial. GLIVA 3 sets out the criteria which should be used in reaching a professional judgment on the nature of effects. These include, but are not necessarily restricted to:

- The degree the proposal fits with existing character; and
- The contribution to the townscape that the development might make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to existing character (GLVIA 3 page 88 paragraph 5.37).

2.5 The TVA has been undertaken for the proposal assuming the project is below the threshold for EIA development. The appraisal is therefore scoped accordingly in proportion to likely effects of importance and focusses on the salient issues and considerations, in addition to alignment of the proposals with townscape planning policy objectives.

- 2.6** A number of Accurate Visual Representation have been prepared for each assessment viewpoint and are provided (Appendix 3), with a methodology for preparation of the visuals in Appendix 1.

Extent of the Study Area

- 2.7** Given the built-up context of the Site, the study area for the TVA was taken to be a 1 km radius from the Site. This included areas that would share visibility with the proposed development and included sensitivities such as The Thames Valley major landscape feature and Forbury Gardens Park and Garden of Historic Interest, a key consideration for the TVA.
- 2.8** The extent of the study area and selection of assessment viewpoints was informed by a combination of desk study, production of a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) map and consultation with the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

3. The Proposed Development

- 3.1** The proposed development would demolish the existing three buildings and would introduce two linear blocks (Blocks A and B to the west and Blocks C and D to the east) to front onto Napier Road, with access and car parking to the south of the buildings, to screen it from Kings Meadow. These linear blocks would be articulated into a series of linked building elements that would be perceived of taller mansion blocks of a similar height and character and lower linked buildings.
- 3.2** The mansion block elements would be 11 storeys in height to the main parapet level, with a setback upper level with external roof terrace to Block A. The proposed height and massing is relative to the lower block of the Thames Quarter development to the west and is relative to Forbury Place south of the railway. The linked building elements would vary in height between 7-11 storeys, stepped back from the building line intended to break up the massing along Napier Road.
- 3.3** The buildings would be predominantly constructed of high quality multi-toned brick, articulated with contrasting patterns, and metalwork to the balconies.
- 3.4** The proposed palette of materials is predominantly a multi-toned brick, in red, grey and buff, to reflect the varied palette of brick colours seen in Reading's built environment.



Plate 1: Proposed Masterplan

3.5 The proposed development would reinforce the tree-lined character of Napier Road and enhance the green infrastructure to the public realm with hedge planting and enhanced flowering lawns to the verges. A permeable boundary to Napier Road will enable views into the landscaped courtyard. The resident's gym to the northwest of Block A would create positive and active frontage to Napier Road. It is the intention to create a new pedestrian crossing to improve the connection to Kings Meadow.

3.6 All trees protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to the northwest of Block A would be retained with the proposals in place.



Plate 2: Northern Elevation Block A

4. Townscape Planning Context

- 4.1** The following Chapter outlines the relevant national and local policies that are relevant to the townscape and visual context of the Site and the proposed development. A comprehensive scope of these policies is provided in Appendix 2 and designations and policies within the 1 km study area are shown by Figure 2.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.2** The NPPF was updated in December 2023 and full details of policies that are relevant to the townscape appraisal are provided in Appendix 2. The NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development (outlined in paragraph 10).
- 4.3** Section 12 of the NPPF 'Achieving well-designed places' outlines the importance of good design and sets out the implications for development proposals in paragraph 135.
- 4.4** Paragraph 136 refers to the important contribution trees make to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also mitigate and adapt to climate change. It states that new streets should be tree-lined and that opportunities should be taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.
- 4.5** Paragraph 137 of the NPPF states that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals and it states the need for community consultation on any evolving designs.
- 4.6** Paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, 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 such as design guides and codes.
- 4.7** Section 14 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change' sets out planning for climate change. Paragraph 175 states that major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems and multi-functional benefits should be provided where possible.

- 4.8** Section 15 of the NPPF refers to 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' and planning decisions should contribute to enhancement by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside and minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity.

Local Policy

- 4.9** The Site is located within the boundary of Reading Borough Council. The Local Plan sets out planning policies for development in Reading until 2036. The Site falls within the area covered by Central Reading policy.

Adopted Local Plan (2011 – 2036)

- 4.10** The following policies are considered relevant to the Townscape and Visual Appraisal. These are fully detailed in Appendix 2.
- Policy CC7 Design and the Public Realm;
 - Policy CR2 Design in Central Reading;
 - Policy CR3 Public Realm in Central Reading;
 - Policy CR11 Major Opportunities Boundary Policies;
 - Policy EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment;
 - Policy EN7 Local Green Space and Public Open Spaces (LGS) and Public Open Space (POS);
 - Policy EN11 Water Spaces;
 - Policy EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network;
 - Policy EN13 Major Landscape Features; and
 - Policy EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands.
- 4.11** The following Public Open Spaces lie in the ZTV of the proposed development:
- En7Ca Christchurch Meadows;
 - En7Cb Forbury Gardens; and
 - En7Cd Kings Meadow.

- 4.12** Policy EN7 protects the character of these spaces against insensitive adjacent development.
- 4.13** Similarly, Policy EN13 Major Landscape Features protects the area north of the Site, The Thames Valley, including Christchurch Meadow from development that would detract from the character or appearance of the Major Landscape Feature.

Designations

- 4.14** The designations relevant to the townscape appraisal are shown by Figure 2. The HCUK Heritage Impact Assessment provides details of relevant heritage assets including listed buildings.
- 4.15** Tree preservation order (TPO) 13/10 protects two tree groups of a total of five trees to the northern corner of the Site on Napier Road. The Site is not covered by any landscape policy designations.
- 4.16** The Forbury Garden is a Grade II listed Park and Garden located 0.17 km south of the Site and is also a Scheduled Monument. As shown Figure 4, the eastern part of the Site including the fountain and the Forbury Tunnel access from the Garden to the Abbey ruins, and path giving access from Abbot's Walk to St James' church to the north, in addition to an area north west of The Maiwand Lion are theoretically intervisible with the proposed development. Forbury Garden includes several listed buildings and features including the Forbury Tunnel (GII*), St. James' Church to the east (GII), domed alcove near the pond (GII) and Maiwand Memorial (GII).
- 4.17** The present area of the Forbury Garden has been in use since at least AD 870 when a Viking encampment was set up on the site. The Pleasure Gardens were laid out in the enclosed Abbey ruins in the 1830s and on Forbury Hill, opened in 1856. The 2ha site is largely enclosed by a low brick and flint wall, in places still punctuated by tall piers to give a castellated effect.
- 4.18** The Scheduled Monument extend beyond the garden to the east, covering the ruins of Reading Abbey (described as a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork). Several listed buildings lie immediately south of the garden, including the Grade I Abbey Gate. Refer to the HCUK Heritage Statement for full details of heritage assets.

4.19 The following Conservation Areas are within the ZTV of the proposed development:

- Eldon Square (0.6 km south east)
- Kendrick Road (0.82 km south); and
- Market Place / London Street (0.25 km south west).

4.20 However, on site observations conclude that there were no obvious public views where the Site would be intervisible and these have been scoped out of the TVA.

Cumulative Developments

4.21 Forbury Retail Park is the subject of an extant application that has not yet been determined. The application reference is 230822 and the proposed development is for Outline application with all matters reserved with the exception of access, for site redevelopment involving the demolition of all existing structures & a residential-led mixed use proposal for up to 820 residential units (Class C3) & up to 5,500 sqm (GEA) of commercial uses (Class E), together with various associated works including replacement pedestrian and vehicle access routes, open spaces, hard & soft landscaping & sewer works, basement excavation, up to 200 basement level car parking spaces, up to 53 separate car parking spaces for Class E uses, up to 860 cycle parking spaces & servicing facilities. This application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

4.22 The Forbury Retail Park development is for 12 blocks ranging in height between 10-12 storeys, up to 75m AOD.



Plate 3: Elevation of the Proposed Development at Forbury Retail Park

5. Townscape Appraisal

Site Description

- 5.1** The Site is 1.26 ha. in area and has a rectilinear form, bounded by Napier Road to the northern boundary and the railway corridor to the south. The Site comprises three office blocks with car parking to the rear and access from Napier Road to the east and west extents of the Site.

Baseline Townscape Features and Elements of the Site

- 5.2** The following section describes the Townscape features and elements of the Site. The appraisal identifies their condition and the overall value of features and elements of in terms of contribution to the Site and Townscape character.
- 5.3** The levels range gently slope west to east, from around 38.05m AOD to 37.8m AOD. The landform of the Site is reasonable flat and indistinct, typical of the wider floodplain setting. The value of landform is low with a medium susceptibility to the type of change proposed and a low sensitivity overall.
- 5.4** The current land-use of the Site is commercial use and this reflects the land-use to the west towards the centre of Reading. Land-use is of medium value and has a medium susceptibility to change and a medium sensitivity overall.
- 5.5** A tree survey has been undertaken by FPCR and identifies 17 trees and 5 groups in total across the Site. Of these, 12 trees and 3 groups are classed as B (moderate) quality and 5 trees and 4 groups as C category (low) quality. Species include predominantly Norway maple, alder and rowan and to a lesser extent beech, birch, silver maple, oak and a laurel hedge. Five trees to the north east corner of the Site are protected by TPO (13/10) and are Norway maple. The overall value of the trees on the Site is medium and they are judged to have a medium susceptibility to the proposed development and therefore are of medium sensitivity overall.
- 5.6** Other vegetation is limited to small areas of ornamental shrubs to the perimeter of the rear car park, specimen shrubs within the amenity grass verge on Napier Road

and laurel hedging to the boundary walls. The value of other vegetation is medium and has a low susceptibility to change, having a low sensitivity overall.

- 5.7** The existing built form comprises three office buildings that are two storeys in height, constructed of buff brick, painted blue metalwork panelling and windows, and with brown tiled pitched roofs. The buildings date from the 1980s-1990s and have a ubiquitous character and limited architectural value. The buildings form a consistent building line to Napier Road, with buff brick screen walls slightly set back and bin stores and substations behind. A gabion wall screens the eastern end of the car park. The rear access and car parking is constructed of concrete block pavements and tarmac. The value of the built form is low and has a low susceptibility to the proposed development, with a low sensitivity overall.

Townscape Context

- 5.8** The Site is located c. 0.3 km north west of Reading Station and the City Centre.
- 5.9** Reading has developed on the southern and northern banks of the Thames, in a river valley at the confluence of the River Thames and the River Kennet. The valley sides rise steeply to the north and gently undulates between 35-50m AOD to the south. The valley landform facilitates short and mid-range views down into the centre of Reading.
- 5.10** The river corridor creates an open aspect through the city centre and some of the most open and expansive views of the tallest buildings in the centre are experienced from the Thames Footpath to the east and west of central Reading.
- 5.11** The Site is located in a mixed use area of commercial and residential development along Napier Road, south of the expanse of the green space of Kings Meadow that extends to the Thames corridor to the north. The green space is bordered east and west by predominantly residential development. The parkland of Kings Meadow, comprising three large fields of amenity grass defined by tree lines to the boundaries, extends to the River Thames corridor River Thames c. 180m north of the Site. The Thames Path, a long distance footpath follows the river corridor.
- 5.12** The Site is rectilinear in shape and is constrained by the railway embankment along its southern edge. The Thames Quarter development is west of the Site.

5.13 The Thames Lido or Kings Meadow Swimming Pool is a single storey Grade II listed Edwardian building further modified in the 20th century, and is situated to the north west of Kings Meadow. Kings Meadow Road joins Napier Road with the river corridor to the north and a mix of three storey terraced houses and five storey office block is located to the west of the road.

5.14 An access road bounds the eastern extent of the Site, with the two storey maintenance depot beyond. The car parking area for Kings Meadow is located north of the Site, extending along Napier Road. The townscape character of the Site and immediate context is discussed later in this chapter.

Historic context

5.15 Reading grew as a railway town and post 1840, the town expanded due to the growth manufacturing and commerce.

Baseline Townscape Character Areas

5.16 The following section provides an analysis of Townscape character areas (TCAs) in the study area, identified as a 1 km radius from the Site. The Townscape surrounding the Site can be categorised into several areas, that have been informed by review of the Reading Borough Council's publication the Reading Tall Building Strategy (2008) and Update Note (2018) illustrated on Figure 3 (Appendix 3).

5.17 The character and appearance of each Townscape character area are defined by changes in scale, density or grain of built form across the study area, in addition to the dominant age of built development in each area.

5.18 The Townscape Character Areas (TCAs) that are located within 500m of the Site and would have a higher level of theoretical visibility, as indicated by the ZTV, have been scoped into the assessment and comprise:

- TCA 11: Napier Road (includes the Site);
- TCA 23: Kings Meadow;
- TCA 10: Forbury Retail Park;
- TCA 22: Vastern Road; and

- TCA 2: Reading Station East.

5.19 Other TCAs within 500m of the Site that would experience lower theoretical levels of visibility of the proposed development, that would also be limited in geographical extent, have all been scoped out of the assessment. The rationale for scoping out these areas is that there would be no potential for any notable indirect effects on townscape character as a result of the proposed development. These areas comprise:

- TCA 1 : Station Hill. The ZTV indicates potential views from the western edge of the train platform with multiple train lines and the Multi-storey car park, Thames Quarter building to the west of the Site and office buildings to the south in adjoining character areas dominating views.
- TCA 8: Forbury Gardens. The ZTV indicates very limited theoretical visibility restricted to the upper parts of the proposed buildings from localised parts of the character area. Any glimpses of the proposals should be set behind tall office buildings along the Forbury Road dual carriageway.
- TCA 9: Reading Prison. The ZTV indicates the potential for very limited theoretical visibility restricted to the upper parts of the proposed buildings from localised parts of the character area. Any glimpses of the proposals set behind tall office buildings along the Forbury Road dual carriageway.
- TCA 21: Forbury South. The ZTV indicates theoretical visibility that would be restricted to the upper parts of the proposed buildings from very localised parts of the character area. Any glimpses of the proposals would be set behind numerous intervening buildings.

5.20 The character and visual characteristics of each area that is scoped into the assessment are outlined below as derived from the Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (2008).

TCA 11: Napier Road

5.21 The western end of the character area includes the Site.

5.22 Key characteristics include:

- Residential, office and retail (Tesco) land uses;

- Historical post 1840 growth as part of railway town;
- Buildings largely late 20th/early 21st century;
- Buildings tall (10 storey apartment blocks of Luscinia View), but block sizes medium and separated by parking and landscaped areas resulting in medium scale townscape. 2 storey office units on the Site;
- “Weak condition” lacking in distinctive townscape elements. Sense of being a “forgotten area” constrained by railway embankment and Napier Road; and
- Key views into the TCA from elevated Caversham Park, Ballmore Park and Horse Close as part of the view of central Reading.

5.23 The Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (2008) concludes that existing 10 storey apartment blocks are prominent features and buildings of a similar height would not appear uncharacteristic.

5.24 The recently constructed Thames Quarter building with residential units lies adjacent to the western boundary of the TCA and includes a 23 storey tower.

5.25 Individual features/elements are commonplace and have no rarity. The area is undesignated, in a reasonable condition/state of repair but of low aesthetic quality. Overall, the value is considered low. The susceptibility to change to the type of proposed development and associated increase in scale and massing is judged to be medium. The sensitivity of TCA 11 is therefore considered to be low overall.

TCA 23: Kings Meadow

5.26 A large character area north of the Site and adjoining Napier Road.

5.27 Key characteristics include:

- Recreational ground and river meadow land uses;
- Few buildings e.g., Lido building;
- Large expanse of meadows creates a large townscape scale;
- The Christchurch Bridge is a new prominent landmark on the Thames;
- Well maintained recreational resource;

- Open views within the character area of bankside tree planting;
- Key views into the TCA from elevated Caversham Park, Ballmore Park and Horse Close as part of the view of central Reading.

5.28 Kings Meadow is designated Local Green Space with local biodiversity value that contributes positively to the character of the town, although not covered by any other designation related to landscape quality. Overall, the value is considered medium. The susceptibility to indirect change resulting from the type of proposed development including the increase in scale and massing is judged to be medium. The sensitivity of TCA 23 is therefore considered to be medium overall.

TCA 10: Forbury Retail Park

5.29 A medium sized character area to the south of the Site and adjoining the railway.

5.30 Key characteristics include:

- Large scale commercial/offices, retail warehouses and car parks;
- Recent residential development at Kenavon Drive at eastern end of LCA and three 11-storey residential blocks on former Homebase/Toys R Us site;
- Historical post 1840 growth as part of railway town;
- Buildings predominantly late 20th century with metal and plastic cladding;
- Large scale blocks separated by large parking areas creates large scale townscape;
- Key view within the character area from Kenavon Drive to Reading Prison; and
- Key views into the TCA from elevated Caversham Park, Ballmore Park and Horse Close as part of the view of central Reading.

5.31 Individual features/elements are commonplace and have no rarity. The area is undesignated, in a reasonable condition/state of repair but of low aesthetic quality. Overall, the value is considered low. The susceptibility to indirect change resulting from the type of proposed development including the increase in scale and massing is judged to be low. The sensitivity of TCA 10 is therefore considered to be low overall.

5.32 As noted in Chapter 4, Forbury Retail Park is the subject of an extant application that has not yet been determined. The proposed height of the development is similar to the proposed development and will be assessed as cumulative development in the townscape appraisal.

TCA 22: Vastern Road

5.33 A medium sized character area adjoining the western boundary of the Site and extending north of the railway.

5.34 Key characteristics include:

- Retail warehouses and car parking including multi-storey car park;
- Historical post 1840 growth as part of railway town;
- Buildings predominantly late 20th century with coloured metal cladding;
- Medium scale blocks separated by parking areas creates medium scale townscape;
- The recently constructed Thames Quarter building with residential units lies at the eastern end of the TCA and comprises a 23 storey high tower;
- New entrance to the station and adjacent square have improved the townscape condition of a small part of the site;
- Key views into the character areas from Oxford Road approaching Reading from the west; and
- Key views into the TCA from elevated Caversham Park, Ballmore Park and Horse Close as part of the view of central Reading.

5.35 Individual features/elements are commonplace and have no rarity. The area is undesignated, in a reasonable condition/state of repair but of low aesthetic quality. Overall, the value is considered low. The susceptibility to indirect change resulting from the type of proposed development including the increase in scale and massing is judged to be Low. The sensitivity of TCA 10 is therefore considered to be low overall.

TCA 2: Reading Station East

5.36 A small character area to the southwest of the Site and adjoining the railway.

5.37 Key characteristics include:

- Large scale offices;
- Historical post 1840 growth as part of railway town and lies next to Forbury Gardens;
- Buildings predominantly 1970's to late 20th century of "unexceptional design and quality";
- Apex Plaza and Energis / Metal box are local landmarks due to height and prominence;
- Key views into the TCA from elevated Caversham Park, Ballmore Park and Horse Close as part of the view of central Reading.

5.38 Individual features/elements are commonplace and have no rarity. The area is undesignated, in a reasonable condition/state of repair but of low aesthetic quality. Overall, the value is considered low. The susceptibility to indirect change resulting from the type of proposed development including the increase in scale and massing is judged to be low. The sensitivity of TCA 2 is therefore considered to be low overall.

Author's Character Assessment

5.39 The author's assessment forms a baseline of the Site and surrounding townscape character up to a distance of approximately 0.2 km from the Site boundary, where the most notable effects would be experienced, and is a further refinement of the published assessments. The following criteria have been used:

- Landform and enclosure.
- Townscape scale.
- Urban grain, townscape pattern and human influence.
- Townscape condition and distinctiveness.
- Skylines.
- Intervisibility.

Landform and Enclosure

- 5.40** The Site lies on the flat low-lying land of the Thames floodplain, the river corridor lying c. 180m north of the Site. The River Kennet is a tributary of the Thames and is located c. 0.3 km south of the Site. North of the river corridor, land rises towards Caversham and Dunstead Green is an elevated region within the study area at c. 77m AOD. Land also rises notably south of the town centre, to c. 64m AOD at the southern end of Mount Pleasant.
- 5.41** Medium and tall buildings within the town centre surrounding the Site provide a moderate level of enclosure to the west and south and mature tree canopies and intermittent shrubs provide a reasonable level of enclosure along Napier Road east of the Site. The expanse of Kings Meadow has a more open character to the north, beyond Napier Road, with open fields and intermittent lines of mature trees. Vegetated and built-up islands in the river corridor north of the Site provide enclosure.

Townscape Scale

- 5.42** The scale of built form increases from the two storey buildings at Napier Court to the west and south of the railway. The Thames Quarter is 11-23 storeys, ranging between 78.2-112.2m AOD in height and Reading Bridge House is c. 11 storeys in height. Lusiana View is a group of tall late 20th century residential blocks c. 0.2km to the east of Napier Road, that rise to nine storeys in height.
- 5.43** South of the railway embankment, offices at No.2 Forbury Place, including the SSE buildings are generally 8-10 storeys in height (at 75.4m AOD) and the recent residential development, "The Biscuit Factory" to the south east is up to 10 storeys in height. At 119.3m AOD, the Blade is one of the tallest buildings in Reading and is located on Abbey Square c. 0.38 km south of the Site. These buildings are interspersed with occasional low rise development with large footprints, such as the Forbury Retail Park on the southern side of the railway line c. 100m from the Site.

Urban grain, townscape pattern and human influence

- 5.44** The Site conforms to the descriptions for TCA 11 in having a medium scaled urban grain. The Site and adjacent development form ribbon development along Napier Road and Kings Meadow Road, bounded by the east-west railway corridor.

Townscape condition and distinctiveness

- 5.45** The Site conforms to the descriptions for TCA 11 in having a weak condition, lacking in distinctive townscape elements, although it makes some contribution to the character of Kings Meadow to the north.

Skylines

- 5.46** Built form characterises the skylines to the south and west of the Site, with the Blade and Thames Quarter being prominent. Skylines to the east and south are formed by mature tree canopies, with the top of Luciana View blocks glimpsed above the trees.

Intervisibility

- 5.47** The Site is intervisible with Kings Meadow to the north, with some open views to the middle distance, limited by tree cover. Lines of mature poplars limits views along the Thames River corridor to the north west. Built form generally provides enclosure within the town and moderate to tall built form generally limits intervisibility with areas west and south of the Site, with exception of channelled views along streets, the river corridors and railway. The Site has limited intervisibility with Forbury Gardens RPG to the south, glimpsed between the SSE buildings, although the existing buildings are not visible.

Summary of Townscape Character of the Site up to 0.2 km

- 5.48** The overall townscape character of the Site, and area up to 0.2 km from the Site boundary, is judged to be of low value overall, as the built character is generally weak and lacking distinctiveness. The susceptibility to change to the type of development is judged to be medium, given the intervisibility with Kings Meadow. The sensitivity of the Site and local townscape character is therefore considered to be low overall.

Townscape Impact Appraisal

- 5.49** The following section first considers the effect of the proposed development on the Townscape elements and features and the character of the Site and then on each of the identified Townscape Character Areas.

Effect on the Townscape Elements and Features of the Site

- 5.50** The proposed development would result in only minor changes to landform for excavations associated with building foundations and access. The magnitude of change would be low and with a low sensitivity, would result in a minor adverse effect.
- 5.51** The land-use of the Site would change to being predominantly residential, with a resident's only gym proposed to the ground floor of Block A. The residential use would relate well to surrounding uses to the east and northwest of the Site including the Kings Meadow recreation area. The magnitude of change would be low and with a medium sensitivity, is judged to be a minor beneficial effect.
- 5.52** The tree resource on the Site is of medium sensitivity. The proposed development would require the removal of 5 no. individual trees of B category, one tree group of B category, three individual trees of C category, and five groups of trees and one hedge of C category. The landscape proposals (Stantec) show that c.45no. trees would be planted as mitigation. At Year 1 and this is judged to be a medium magnitude of change which is a moderate effect and neutral overall, changing to moderate beneficial upon establishment and growth, relative to the baseline by Year 15.
- 5.53** The proposed development would introduce extensive ornamental planting, hedge planting and enhancement of lawn areas with a flowering lawn mix. The magnitude of change is low and with a low sensitivity is judged to result in a minor beneficial effect.
- 5.54** The proposed development would demolish the existing two storey blocks and replace these with high quality buildings of up to 11 storeys in height, with a set-back upper floor and external terrace to Block A. The design of the buildings have been articulated as a series of mansion blocks and lower link buildings. Along with the stepping of the building line, breaks in the façade, and contrasting brick colours, these design measures help to visually break up the development massing along Napier Road. This approach is a well-considered contemporary interpretation of the varied design and palette of materials that are an established part of Reading's built environment. The height is relative to the adjacent section of the Thames Quarter and is equivalent to the Forbury Place offices south of the railway.

The quality of the built character of the Site will be much enhanced. The magnitude of change is high and with a low sensitivity, the proposed development is judged to result in a moderate and beneficial effect on the built character of the Site.

Effect on Townscape Character Areas

5.55 Reference is made to the Accurate Visual Representations provided in Appendix 3 to demonstrate potential effects on the surrounding Townscape.

TCA 11 Napier Road

5.56 TCA 11 is shown by Viewpoint 1 (Figure 5). The proposed development would increase the scale of built form on the Site from two to 11 storeys in height to the parapet, in addition to the stepped back upper storey to the roof with external terrace to Block A. The Proposed Development would replace existing buildings that are of low quality and have an indistinctive character. The proposed development would retain a similar pattern of built form, with a linear footprint to the street frontage and access with car parking to the rear. Whilst the overall massing would increase, the new buildings would be articulated to retain a medium scale with slightly projecting taller mansion blocks and the set-back linking blocks and fenestration of similar proportions to the existing built form.

5.57 The height of the new buildings would be relative to the adjacent lower block of the Thames Quarter development within TCA22 to the west and Forbury Offices within TCA 2 south of the railway and would slightly increase the enclosure by built form along Napier Road, reducing intervisibility with townscape south of the railway line. The proposed landscape would retain and augment the green frontage to Napier Road and enhance the public realm.

5.58 The magnitude of change is high. With a low sensitivity, the proposed development is judged to result in a moderate beneficial effect upon TCA 11 Napier Road.

TCA 23 Kings Meadow

5.59 The parkland of Kings Meadow is already characterised by tall and medium scaled built form to its northern edge. This TCA is intervisible with the tall built form of the Thames Quarter, the mid-sized blocks of Forbury Place and Luciana Gardens as

well as the Site. The expanse of meadows has a large townscape scale that has the capacity to accommodate other similar sized blocks along this edge in adjoining TCA's, as shown by Viewpoint 2 and 3, where the proposed development would be introduced to the foreground of Forbury Place. Whilst the proposed development would intensify built form to the perimeter of TCA 23, the indirect change would result in a coherent built-edge to the parkland with an interesting rhythm created by the stepped heights of the link buildings, articulated with contrasting materials along its length. The proposed development would create active frontage overlooking Kings Meadow compared to the existing commercial offices, with glazed entrances and amenity spaces, as well as the gated courtyard and balconies. The green infrastructure to the frontage would enhance the transition to parkland, with intervisibility into the planted courtyard from localised areas. The magnitude of change is medium and with a medium sensitivity, the proposed development is judged to result in a moderate neutral effect on Kings Meadow.

TCA 10 Forbury Retail Park

5.60 The proposed development would introduce taller built form to the skyline north of this TCA, although sharing characteristics with other built form surrounding this TCA. TCA 10 is a large scale townscape that has capacity to accommodate the indirect effects of the proposed development and the quality of the architecture would enhance the visual character of this area. The proposed development would have a skylining effect, although of a more diminished scale to Forbury Place being set further back and would provide better definition and focus at the Forbury Road Roundabout, where the townscape is currently ill-defined and weak at the junction. The magnitude of change is medium at the western end of the TCA and with a low sensitivity, would result in a minor neutral effect on the TCA overall.

TCA 22 Vastern Road

5.61 Intervisibility would generally be limited to the eastern end of Vastern Road, Kings Meadow Roundabout and Kings Meadow Road as shown by the ZTV (Figure 1, Appendix 3), where the Site would be viewed in the context of the 23 storey high Thames Quarter and other significant office blocks. The retained mature tree group to the south west corner of the Site (see Viewpoint 1), along with the proposed green infrastructure enhancements to Napier Road, would retain the verdant character of the road and help to assimilate the development, although the

proposed development would increase the level of enclosure to the road and result in some localised skylining effects. Whilst the magnitude of change is higher at the eastern end of the TCA, the overall magnitude is judged to be low. With a low sensitivity, the proposed development would result in a minor neutral effect.

TCA 2 Reading Station East

- 5.62** The proposed development would have a limited intervisibility from public areas and would be generally glimpsed between built form of a similar or larger scale, having a limited effect on the character of this TCA. The magnitude of change is low and with a low sensitivity, is judged to be a minor and neutral effect on TCA 2.

Effect on the Townscape Character of the Site and Townscape within 0.2 km

- 5.63** The proposed development would result in a notable increase in scale of built form on the Site and would intensify built development along Napier Road resulting in some localised skylining effects. However, the effects on character are moderated by the presence of existing medium to tall built form on the skyline to the south, east and west. It is judged that the increased height and massing of the proposed built form can be accommodated at the edge of the large scale open space of Kings Meadow and the proposed development would create a coherent edge to the parkland perimeter, articulated to create a rhythm and to give relief to the massing along its length. The multi-toned brick and subtly contrasting brick detailing would give visual relief to each block at closer proximity relating to the human scale. The active frontage of the development and building articulation is considered to improve the public realm of Napier Road, enhancing the transition from parkland to the town centre. The replacement of the existing poor quality buildings, with high quality architecture that utilises local building materials and the strengthening of the green infrastructure of Napier Road in the long-term are judged to be beneficial effects of the proposed development.

- 5.64** On balance, with a low sensitivity, the proposed development is judged to result in a high magnitude of change on the Site and townscape within 0.2 km. This is judged to result in a moderate and overall, a slightly beneficial effect on the townscape character overall.

Summary of Townscape Effects

5.65 In summary, the proposed development is judged to result in no important levels of effect on townscape character.

5.66 The proposed development would initially result in a moderate effect on the tree resource of the Site; however, this loss will be mitigated with significant replacement tree planting, resulting in a net gain of trees across the Site to retain the verdant character of Napier Road. The proposed development would result in a notable enhancement to the built character of the Site and green infrastructure to Napier Road, resulting in a moderate and slightly beneficial effect on the local townscape character overall.

5.67 The following table 2 summarises the effects on the townscape features and elements of the Site and townscape character areas.

Table 2: Summary of Townscape Effects

Townscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Townscape Effect
Landform	Low	Low	Minor adverse
Land-use	Medium	Low	Minor beneficial
Trees	Medium	Medium	Moderate neutral (Year 1) Moderate beneficial (Year 15)
Other Vegetation	Low	Low	Minor beneficial
TCA 11 Napier Road	Low	Low	Moderate beneficial

Townscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Townscape Effect
TCA 23 Kings Meadow	Medium	Medium	Moderate neutral
TCA 10 Forbury Retail Park	Low	Medium	Minor neutral
TCA 22 Vastern Road	Low	Low	Minor neutral
TCA 2 Reading Station East	Low	Low	Minor neutral
Townscape Character of the Site up to 0.2 km	Low	High	Moderate (Slightly beneficial)

Cumulative Effects on Townscape Character Areas

Forbury Retail Park Development

5.68 An outline planning application has been submitted for site but has been submitted but not yet approved. As the proposals are at outline stage, only a high level appraisal of likely cumulative effects on townscape character has been undertaken as follows:

- effects on TCA 11 Napier Road are likely to be neutral to beneficial, as whilst there would be an intensification of built form in the local area, the Proposed development would share characteristics of scale and the townscape backdrop to the south would be rationalised.
- With the cumulative development in place, the magnitude of change on TCA 23 Kings Meadow resulting from the Proposed Development would be

reduced as there would be a continuity of built-form on the skyline east of Forbury Place. The effects are likely to be neutral and no more harmful.

- The addition of the Proposed development is likely to result in little additional change to TCA 10 Forbury Retail Park other than an intensification of built development in the localised area.
- The character of TCA 22 Vastern Road is unlikely to experience cumulative effects owing to distance and presence of intervening tall development.
- Effects on TCA 2 Reading Station East would be limited by the presence of Forbury Place and cumulative effects are likely to be negligible.

6. Visual Effects

- 6.1** A visual assessment has been undertaken from the representative viewpoints to determine how the proposed development might influence public views. A Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) map illustrates the likely visibility of the proposed development and has informed assessment viewpoint locations (see Figure 4, Appendix 3). The assessment viewpoints have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.2** The viewpoints are regarded as being representative of the range of potential views and receptors e.g., users of the public highway and open spaces, etc. from various distances and directions around the Site. The representative viewpoints are not intended to be exhaustive. The locations of the representative viewpoints are illustrated by Figure 1 and the existing baseline views are shown by Figures 5-17. The visual impact of the proposed development is shown by the Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs) in Appendix 3 and are referenced below.
- 6.3** The visual appraisal describes the baseline character of the existing view and an assessment is made of sensitivity to change with reference to the methodology (see Appendix 1) for each visual receptor (person observing the view). An assessment of the predicted view at Year 1 with the development proposals is made, describing the magnitude of change and nature of change. Finally, the scale of effect is assessed taking into account the magnitude of change and the sensitivity of the viewpoint.
- 6.4** The following Table 6.1 assesses the sensitivity of each representative viewpoint in relation to the visual receptor experiencing the view.

Table 3: Sensitivity of Assessment Viewpoints

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
Viewpoint 1 – Kings Meadow Roundabout	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Medium	Medium	Low Medium
Viewpoint 2 – Kings Meadow	Recreational Users	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 3 – Kings Meadow Thameside Promenade	Recreational Users	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 4 – George Street / Reading Bridge	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Medium	Medium	Low Medium
Viewpoint 5 – Christchurch Bridge	Pedestrians	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 6 – Forbury Gardens	Recreational Users / Visitors	High	High	High
Viewpoint 7 – Forbury Road	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Medium	Low	Low Low

Viewpoint				
	Type of Visual receptor	Susceptibility	Value	Overall Sensitivity
Viewpoint 8 – Kennetside Bridge	Pedestrians	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 9 – Christchurch Meadow	Recreational Users	Medium	Medium	Medium
Viewpoint 10 – The Horse Close	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Medium	Medium	Low Medium
Viewpoint 11 – Mount Pleasant	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Medium	Medium	Low Medium
Viewpoint 12 – Dunsden Way	Recreational Users of the PRow	High	Medium	High
Viewpoint 13 – Great Knolly's Street	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Medium	Medium	Low Medium

Viewpoint Assessment

6.5 The following section assesses the effects of the proposed development on the above viewpoints, with reference to the AVRs extracted below and in Appendix 3, assessed against the baseline views (Figures 5 – 17).

6.6 An appraisal has been undertaken of the likely visual effects with the proposed cumulative scheme at Forbury Retail Park (see Chapter 4), although as an outline application the appraisal is high level.

Viewpoint 1 – Kings Meadow Roundabout

Description of Baseline View

6.7 A linear view from the western end of Napier Road, approximately 0.1 km west of the Site (see Figure 5). The Site lies on the right side of the road in the middle distance, beyond the Thames Quarter development, viewed at a close proximity to the foreground right of the view. The side elevation of the two storey building at the western end of the Site is glimpsed but largely screened by tree canopies. The mature trees and green verges creates a verdant character beyond the foreground and provides a reasonable level of enclosure. The view is judged to have a medium value.

6.8 The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and road users that have a low susceptibility to change. With a medium value, pedestrians have a medium sensitivity and road users a low sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

6.9 The two storey block behind the trees would be replaced with the introduction of the western block of the proposed development, as a continuation of the building line to the right side of the road. The new block would infill the sky to the centre and left side of the view beyond the Thames Quarter and the access road. The tree cover to the north west corner would be slightly thinned following the removal of one tree and the commercial unit to the ground floor may be glimpsed. The balconies to the corner of the block and articulation of the buildings would create visual interest.

- 6.10** The magnitude of change is judged to be medium. With a medium sensitivity, pedestrians are judged to experience a **moderate neutral** effect and road users a **minor neutral** effect.

Viewpoint 2 – Kings Meadow

Description of Baseline View

- 6.11** An open view across the expanse of the large scale field of Kings Meadow, in a south westerly direction, approximately 150m from the Site (see Figure 6A). The two storey blocks of Napier Court are viewed against a built up backdrop composed of the mid-sized blocks of Forbury Place, with the tall landmark building of the Blade beyond and tall block of Thames Quarter to the right. The 23 storey Thames Quarter is the tallest building in the view. Napier Court appears somewhat diminished in the foreground. The view is characterised by a juxtaposition of building styles, although of limited architectural merit and Napier Court appears dated amongst the more contemporary style buildings. The buildings are softened by the trees to the edge of the parkland. The side elevation of the lido building is glimpsed to the right. The view is of medium value.

- 6.12** The view is experienced by recreational users that have a medium susceptibility to change. With a medium value, recreational users have a medium sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.13** The proposed view is shown by the AVR on Figure 6B. The proposed development will be notable extending across a wide extent of the view in the middle distance. The scale of the new blocks would be comparable to the lower block of the Thames Quarter to the right and will screen Forbury Place and The Blade in the background. The proposed development would provide a consistent roofline to the mansion blocks and will rationalise the built form in the view, introducing modern buildings of a high architectural quality.
- 6.14** The mansion blocks with lower link buildings will create a coherent architectural language and rhythm to the edge of the parkland, articulated to break up the massing along its length with subtle contrasts in the materials used for each building block.

- 6.15** The magnitude of change is high. With a medium sensitivity, recreational users are judged to experience a **major** visual effect that is **neutral** overall.

Viewpoint 3 – Kings Meadow Thameside Promenade

Description of Baseline View

- 6.16** A view across an open expanse of a playing field with level terrain, bounded by trees and shrubs in the middle distance and the upper storeys of buildings beyond the Site (see Figure 7a). The upper elevation and distinctive curved roofline of Luscinia View is visible above the treeline to the left and these are the most prominent buildings in the view. The top of Thames Quarter is glimpsed above the tree line to the right. Forbury Place offices are visible to the centre above the tree line between the poplar trees, although the Site is screened. Left of these views of The Blade and the County Court buildings are glimpsed, filtered by trees. The view is of medium value.

- 6.17** The view is experienced by recreational users that have a medium susceptibility to change. With a medium value, recreational users have a medium sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.18** The predicted view is shown by the AVR (Figure 7b). The proposed development would be introduced in front of Forbury Place and would screen these buildings. The new buildings would slightly increase the scale of built development, although the view would not be readily perceived as being foreshortened given the way the trees to the edge of the field assimilate the buildings into the view. The proposed buildings, whilst appearing marginally higher on the skyline, relative to the Forbury Place buildings behind, would be better articulated as a result of the design and use of contrasting materials to break up the massing.
- 6.19** The magnitude of change is low. With a medium sensitivity and a low magnitude of change, the proposed development is judged to result in a **minor neutral** effect on recreational users.

Viewpoint 4 – George Street / Reading Bridge

Description of Baseline View

6.20 An oblique view south east from the bridge over the Thames river crossing c. 0.22 km from the Site. The river forms the foreground of the view, extending towards the southern bank to the right, flanked by the towpath and three storey 20th terraced housing, where each storey steps back from the river (see Figure 8a). A large 20th century office block is viewed to the far right adjacent the bridge crossing. Thames Quarter and offices at Forbury Place form the backdrop to the houses. The centre and left of the view has a verdant character, with mature trees and a vegetated island with boat moorings. The view of the river environment is attractive although the architectural quality of the buildings is modest. The value of the view is medium.

6.21 The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and road users that have a low susceptibility to change. With a medium value, pedestrians have a medium sensitivity and road users have a low sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

6.22 The proposed view is shown by the AVR in Figure 8B. The new buildings will be introduced to the backdrop of the houses screening Forbury Place behind. The proposed development would slightly increase the extent of built development in the backdrop of the view, infilling sky. The height would not be prominent and the western block would be of similar height to the lower Thames Quarter block. The new buildings to the centre and eastern end of the Site would be largely filtered by trees and these help assimilate the development into the view. The buildings' articulation breaks up the massing and adds interest whilst the balconies would provide a positive interface with the river corridor, compared to the baseline comprising an inactive blank side elevation and façade of an office development.

6.23 The magnitude of change is medium and with a medium sensitivity, pedestrians are judged to experience a **moderate neutral** effect and road users a **minor neutral** effect.

Viewpoint 5 – Christchurch Bridge

Description of Baseline View

- 6.24** A direct view eastwards elevated over the river on the Christchurch Bridge crossing c. 0.42km from the Site (see Figure 9A). View east from the bridge over the Thames river crossing c. 0.22 km from the Site. The river expands across the foreground to the middle distance, where the southern bank to the right is built up and the parkland of Christchurch Meadows is to the left. The 23 storey Thames Quarter block is prominent on the skyline and the office block of Reading Bridge House forms a notable mass to the right of Reading Bridge in the middle distance. Buildings have limited architectural merit and date from late 20th century to early 21st century and have a variety of roof and materials, of buff, brown and grey tones. Frequent mature trees and parkland create a green verdant character to the centre and left of the view. The view is of medium value.
- 6.25** The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change. With a medium value, pedestrians have a medium sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.26** The proposed development would be introduced to the centre of the view in the backdrop to the poplar trees and Reading Bridge (see massing AVR Figure 9B). The height of the new buildings would be just above the middle of Reading Bridge House, glimpsed between the trees. Whilst the proposed development would slightly intensify the presence of built development to the right bank, the articulation of the buildings with contrasting materials would break up the horizontal massing and assimilate the development in this context.
- 6.27** The magnitude of change is low. With a medium sensitivity, pedestrians are judged to experience a **minor neutral** effect.

Viewpoint 6 – Forbury Gardens

Description of Baseline View

- 6.28** A view from within the grounds of Forbury Gardens Registered Park and Garden near the fountain, towards the south east boundary of the garden, c. 0.22 km from the Site (see Figure 10A). The gable end of St James' Church, a listed building occupies the right of the view, a modest scale building with pitched roof. The view

is limited in range by the mature trees to the perimeter of the garden and backdrop of offices at Forbury Place that form a moderate mass of built form in the backdrop. The view is composed of an interesting mix of historic gardens features and built form, of stone and flint construction and modern 20th century offices in the backdrop. The Site is not visible beyond Forbury Gardens. Although the buildings forming the backcloth to the garden are of limited architectural merit, the view is judged to be of high value.

- 6.29** The view is experienced by recreational users and visitors that has a high susceptibility to change and are judged to have a high sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.30** The proposed view is shown by the AVR on Figure 10B. A small proportion of the new buildings would be visible, glimpsed between the SSE buildings at Forbury Place and heavily filtered by tree canopy to the right of the view. The built form is of a diminished scale compared to the foreground buildings. The silhouette and sky around St. James' Church would remain unchanged.
- 6.31** The magnitude of change is low. With a high sensitivity, recreational users and visitors are judged to experience a **moderate neutral** effect with the proposed development in place.

Viewpoint 7 – Forbury Road

Description of Baseline View

- 6.32** A view across the roundabout towards the Forbury Retail Park in the foreground, characterised by low development occupying a large footprint, as shown by Figure 11, c. 0.2 km south of the Site. The character of the view is built up, where the gable of the SSE building at Forbury Place is of a notable mass and the lower block of Thames Quarter is set further back from the viewer to the right of this building in the context of Reading Bridge House. The tops of tree canopies rise just above the roofline of the retail park. The view is of low value.
- 6.33** The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and road users that have a low susceptibility to change. With a low value, pedestrians and road users have a low sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.34** The proposed development would extend along the backdrop of the retail park, extending approximately to the right of the view and thus occupying much of the view. Existing trees would remain visible behind the retail park. The proposed development would impact the skyline, although of a lower height than SSE in this view and would introduce a stronger focus to the junction. It is likely that Thames Quarter would be largely screened and Reading Bridge House completely screened in the background.
- 6.35** The proposed development would be articulated along its length with slightly projecting mansion blocks and lower stepped back link buildings, along with balconies, brick detailing and contrasting materials to break up the horizontal massing of the development. The proposed materials would complement the townscape character of the wider view and would enhance the architectural quality of the built environment. The magnitude of change is judged to be high.
- 6.36** With a high magnitude of change and a low sensitivity of pedestrians and road users, the proposed development is judged to have a **moderate neutral** effect.

Viewpoint 8 – Kennetside Bridge

Description of Baseline View

- 6.37** A built-up view from the bridge crossing over the river Kennet from the pedestrian ramp, as shown by Figure 12. The foreground to middle ground of the view is dominated by a late 20th century housing development of predominantly two storey houses, against mid-scaled apartment blocks in the middle distance. The upper storeys of the taller Thames Quarter block is visible in the distance. The Site is not visible. The view is of medium value.
- 6.38** The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and with a medium value of the view, are judged to have a medium sensitivity overall.

Predicted view with Development

- 6.39** A small part of the upper building elevations and roofline may be glimpsed in the distance to the centre right of the view. It is likely that the new buildings would be glimpsed between the tree canopies forming a minor component of the view. The magnitude of change is predicted to be negligible. With a negligible magnitude of change the visual effect experience by pedestrians of a medium sensitivity is **minor neutral**.

Viewpoint 9 – Christchurch Meadow

Description of Baseline View

- 6.40** View from the public footpath from Christchurch Meadow c. 0.62 km north west of the Site as shown by Figure 13. The foreground to the middle ground is dominated by the green space of Christchurch Meadows, whilst the Thames Quarter, Reading Bridge House and top of The Blade form a tight cluster of medium to tall buildings in the backdrop. A tall line of poplar trees mark the edge of the green space and screen views towards the Site, which is not currently visible. The value of the view is medium.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.41** The proposed development would be of a height below the tree line, heavily filtered by the poplar trees in the foreground. Views of the western extent of the development is likely to be more limited owing to the greater density of trees and layering effect of vegetation in the foreground. During the winter, visibility is likely to increase, particularly of the eastern extent of the development, although built form would remain filtered by the trees.
- 6.42** The magnitude of change is judged to be low. With a medium sensitivity, the proposed development is judged to result in a **minor neutral effect** on recreational users of Christchurch Meadow.

Viewpoint 10 – The Horse Close

Description of Baseline View

- 6.43** A distance elevated view towards the town centre from the residential area of Caversham, c. 2 km north of the Site. The town centre is glimpsed between

bungalows and trees in the foreground. The roof form of The Blade is a distinctive landmark on the skyline. The moderate mass of the Forbury Place offices are discernible in the foreground and the taller Thames Quarter block to the right. Another cluster of tall buildings west of the town centre are visible to the right. The view is of medium value.

- 6.44** The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and road users that have a low susceptibility to change. With a medium value, pedestrians have a medium sensitivity and road users have a low sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.45** The proposed development will be introduced to the foreground of Forbury Place, screening these buildings in the view. The height and massing of the new buildings in this view will be very similar to the baseline and would not be a readily discernible change in view at this distance.

- 6.46** The magnitude of change is negligible. With a negligible magnitude of change, pedestrians are judged to experience a **minor effect** and road users a **negligible effect** that is **neutral**.

Viewpoint 11 – Mount Pleasant

Description of Baseline View

- 6.47** View from Mount Pleasant c. 1.3km south of the Site. The road is central to the view, sloping downhill to the middle distance, flanked by two storey Victorian Houses. The taller cluster buildings in the town centre are visible in the backdrop to the road. The Blade is prominent on the skyline, with the taller Thames Quarter block slightly lower set further away. The view is built-up, softened by the occasional street trees. The Site is not visible. The view is of medium value.

- 6.48** The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and road users that have a low susceptibility to change. With a medium value, pedestrians have a medium sensitivity and road users have a low sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.49** Given that the lower Thames Quarter block is currently screened from view and the proposed development is of a relative scale, it is likely that the proposed development would be completely screened by foreground elements. Possibly in winter the roofline of the proposed development would be glimpsed although unlikely to be a discernible change.
- 6.50** The magnitude of change is negligible. With a negligible magnitude of change, pedestrians are judged to experience a **minor effect** and road users a **negligible effect** that is **neutral**.

Viewpoint 12 – Dunsden Way Public Footpath

Description of Baseline View

- 6.51** A distant elevated view from the edge of Dunsden Green, a village north east of Reading c. 3.55km from the Site. An open expansive view across an agricultural field in the foreground, towards a vegetated belt to the field boundary. The rural setting in the foreground contrasts with the built-up town centre in the distance, where The Blade has a distinctive roofline and the Forbury Place offices are discernible in the foreground. The taller block of the Thames Quarter breaks the skyline. A pylon and crane also break the skyline. The view is of medium value.
- 6.52** The view is experienced by recreational users of the public right of way (PRoW) and are of high susceptibility to change and a high sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.53** The central and eastern part of the development is likely to be visible, screening the view of Forbury Place. The western part of the development is screened by foreground trees although the view may be filtered in the winter. The proposed development would be of a similar scale and location as Forbury Place and at this distance the change in view would not be readily discernible. Moreover, in different weather conditions at this distance visibility would be further reduced.
- 6.54** The magnitude of change is negligible. With a high sensitivity, the visual effect on recreational users is judged to be **minor and neutral**.

Viewpoint 13 – Great Knolley’s Street

Description of Baseline View

- 6.55** A townscape view c. 1.16 km south east of the Site, from a residential area near to the Civitas Academy. The view is channelled towards the direction of the Site, where the road is flanked by two storey Victorian houses and the taller block of the Thames Quarter is prominent on the skyline, along with another block under construction to the right of the view. A cluster of medium scaled commercial buildings are located to the foreground of Thames Quarter. The Site is not visible. The view is of medium value.
- 6.56** The view is experienced by pedestrians that have a medium susceptibility to change and road users that have a low susceptibility to change. With a medium value, pedestrians have a medium sensitivity and road users have a low sensitivity overall.

Predicted View with Development

- 6.57** Should the proposed development be visible at all beyond the Thames Quarter it is likely to be limited to very small glimpses of the parapet and roofline. The lower block associated with Thames Quarter is not visible and the proposed development would be of a similar scale.
- 6.58** The magnitude of change is negligible. With a negligible magnitude of change this is judged to result in no greater than a **minor neutral effect** on pedestrians and a **negligible neutral** effect on road users.

Summary of Visual Effects

- 6.59** A summary of visual effects of the proposed development is given in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Summary of Visual Effects

	Type of Visual receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Visual Effect
Viewpoint 1 – Kings Meadow Roundabout	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	Low Medium	Medium	Moderate neutral Minor neutral
Viewpoint 2 – Kings Meadow	Recreational Users	Medium	High	Major neutral
Viewpoint 3 – Kings Meadow Thameside Promenade	Recreational Users	Medium	Low	Minor neutral
Viewpoint 4 – George Street / Reading Bridge	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	Low Medium	Medium	Minor neutral Moderate neutral
Viewpoint 5 – Christchurch Bridge	Pedestrians	Medium	Low	Minor neutral
Viewpoint 6 – Forbury Gardens	Recreational Users / Visitors	High	Low	Moderate neutral
Viewpoint 7 – Forbury Road	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	(a)Low (b)Low	High	Moderate neutral

	Type of Visual receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Visual Effect
Viewpoint 8 – Kennetside Bridge	Pedestrians	Medium	Negligible	Minor neutral
Viewpoint 9 – Christchurch Meadow	Recreational Users	Medium	Low	Minor neutral
Viewpoint 10 – The Horse Close	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	Low Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral Minor neutral
Viewpoint 11 – Mount Pleasant	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	Low Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral Minor neutral
Viewpoint 12 – Dunsden Way	Recreational Users of the PRow	High	Negligible	Minor neutral
Viewpoint 13 – Great Knolly's Street	(a) Users of the public highway (b) Pedestrians	Low Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral Minor neutral

6.60 The visual appraisal has identified one view, Viewpoint 2 from Kings Meadow, as experiencing an important (Major) level of visual effect with the development in place, although on balance the nature of change would represent a neutral effect. The new development would be introduced to the foreground and adjacent existing built form of a similar height and massing. Whilst there would be some impact on

the skyline towards the east end of the development, the view will be rationalised and buildings of limited merit will be screened and replaced with buildings that are carefully articulated to break up horizontal massing whilst also creating interest, and relate well to the human scale of the public realm. This viewpoint is at a relatively close proximity to the Site where the buildings would be prominent, although the green infrastructure improvements to Napier Road would also be apparent and would soften and green the setting of the development.

- 6.61** Three other viewpoints would experience moderate changes in view that are judged to be neutral.
- 6.62** Views west of Reading Bridge are generally limited by built form and riverside vegetation.
- 6.63** The visual appraisal has considered distant viewpoints from the north and south of the town centre. There are no notable views from the south, given intervening taller buildings and the density of the urban grain limiting viewpoints. Occasional glimpsed views are possible from Caversham and outside the village of Dunstead Green, although the Site is viewed at some distance and would be a similar height and location as Forbury Place in the view, where any change in view would not be readily perceived.
- 6.64** In summary, the proposed development would not impact on any strategic city centre views identified in the SPGs (refer to paragraph 5.16). Whilst there would be impacts on close ranging views from Kings Meadow, the proposed development is judged to fit with the scale of the landscape setting and is carefully articulated to enhance the built character in the views.

Cumulative Visual Effects

- 6.65** An appraisal of likely cumulative visual effects with Forbury Business Park has been undertaken, although as the proposals are at outline this appraisal is high level. It is not thought that the addition of the Proposed Development would give rise to any important levels of visual effect.
- 6.66** The effects on Viewpoints 1-3 (Napier Road and Kings Meadow) are likely to be a low magnitude of change and neutral in nature as the Proposed Development would be introduced in the foreground of a similar scale development.

- 6.67** Any effects on Viewpoints 6, 7, 8 and 12 are likely to be no greater than minor and neutral in nature.
- 6.68** It is predicted that there would be no cumulative visual effects on Viewpoints 4, 5, 9, 10, 11 and 13.

Summary of Effects on Landscape Designations

Major Landscape Feature – The Thames Valley.

- 6.69** As noted above and in the townscape appraisal, the proposed development would lead to some perceived intensification of built development to the edge of the Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature Designation, protected by Policy EN13 (see Appendix 2). The proposed development is considered not to conflict with the objectives of this policy as it does not detract from this feature, and whilst the perimeter of the parkland would be better defined, the proposals are judged to provide an enhanced interface with this important green space. This conclusion has been reached by considering the architectural design compared to existing buildings of lower merit that would be removed or screened. The built edge to the park would be rationalised with a coherent design and rhythm compared to buildings of varying scale and character that form a more disparate townscape composition currently. The green infrastructure enhancements to Napier Road would retain its verdant character and would soften localised views from Kings Meadow. Along the promenade, a wide view is possible (Viewpoint 3) where the new building is judged to assimilate successfully within the context and is generally screened along the Thames Path and other parts of the corridor. Visibility from Christchurch Meadows west of Reading Bridge is limited and, in this context, the proposed development is in the backdrop of an area already characterised by mid to tall scale buildings.

Forbury Gardens RPG

- 6.70** The visual appraisal has considered the visual effect on visitors to Forbury Gardens. As the proposed development is very much glimpsed in the backdrop of prominent offices at Forbury Place and beyond the dual carriageway of Forbury Road, the proposed development is judged to result in an acceptable level of effect that does not adversely impact the landscape character of the gardens.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)

- 6.71** The townscape appraisal provides a summary of impact on the TPO trees to the north west corner of the Site and all of these will be retained and protected with the proposed development in place.

7. Summary and Conclusions

- 7.1** A Townscape and Visual Appraisal has been undertaken for the proposed development at Napier Court in Reading. The Site is located west of the town centre within a mixed-use area on Napier Road and is bounded by the railway on the southern boundary. The Site currently contains three two storey commercial buildings of limited architectural merit, with access and car parking to the rear. The Site is immediately adjacent the significant Thames Quarter development and the offices at Forbury Place are south of the Site and the railway corridor. Kings Meadow and the Thames corridor lie immediately north of the Site, defined as a Major Landscape Feature in Local Policy and is a key consideration for the appraisal.
- 7.2** The proposed linear building footprints will retain a similar relationship to Napier Road, with access and parking screened from Kings Meadow. The proposed development will comprise a series of mansion blocks of similar height and character, of 11 storeys in height to the main parapet, with a setback upper storey and external roof terrace to Block A. The buildings are predominantly of high quality multi-toned brick, articulated with contrasting patterns, with metalwork to the balconies.
- 7.3** The proposed development would initially result in a moderate neutral effect on the tree resource of the Site; all of the TPO trees would be retained, and other tree loss would be mitigated with significant replacement tree planting to result in a net gain of trees and beneficial effect over time. The proposed development would result in a notable enhancement to the built character of the Site and green infrastructure to Napier Road.
- 7.4** The proposed development would result in some moderate effects on townscape character comprising both neutral and beneficial changes. The proposed development is of a comparable scale to the lower 11 storey block of the Thames Quarter development on Napier Road. When the proposed development is viewed from the north it will typically be seen in the context of taller existing development in the backdrop, and consequently the proposals are considered to assimilate well in the surrounding context. There would be some intensification of built development to the edge of Kings Meadow with the proposed development in place, although the design is of high quality, often screening existing buildings of low

architectural merit. Furthermore, the proposed buildings are carefully articulated and detailed to break up the horizontal extent of the massing.

- 7.5** The townscape appraisal has provide a high level appraisal of potential cumulative effects with the outline planning proposal at the Forbury Retail Park. The proposed scheme will include blocks of a similar scale as the proposed development and whilst there will be some localised intensification of development and increased enclosure, this is likely to not give rise to any important levels of cumulative effect.
- 7.6** The visual appraisal has assessed the effects on 13 viewpoints, informed by a ZTV analysis and supported with the production of a number of AVRs. One viewpoint, a close ranging view from Kings Meadow, has been found to experience an important level of effect, although on balance considering the quality of the design is judged to be a neutral nature of change overall. Four other mid-range viewpoints would experience moderate effects that are neutral. Distant viewpoints are limited and would experience no greater than a negligible magnitude of change.
- 7.7** The visual appraisal assesses the cumulative effect of the proposed development with the outline proposals at the Forbury Retail Park and no important levels of effect have been identified.
- 7.8** In conclusion, this TVA assesses that the proposed development would be acceptable with regards to impacts on townscape and visual amenity and is consistent with planning policy objectives.

Appendix 1

Detailed Methodology

Appendix 1: Detailed Methodology

Perveril Securities
October 2023

Project Ref: 09178

No text or imagery within this report has been generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

1. Approach

Introduction

- 1.1** The Townscape and Visual Appraisal (TVA) has been undertaken with reference to best practice, as outlined in the following published guidance:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) – 'GLVIA 3'.
 - GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 – Landscape Institute (2015).
 - Townscape Character Assessment Technical Information Note 05/17 Revised April 2018.
 - Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Landscape Institute (2019).

- 1.2** The proposed development was assessed for the purposes of the townscape and visual analysis. The effects on settings of heritage assets or ecological/environmental assets are not considered within this TVA.

Nature, Duration and Reversibility of Effects

- 1.3** The nature of any effect will be adverse i.e. negative, beneficial i.e. positive, or neutral i.e. neither completely adverse nor beneficial. Unless expressly noted, effects are deemed to be adverse in nature.

- 1.4** All effects are permanent and non-reversible¹ unless otherwise stated.

Desktop Appraisal

- 1.5** If Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) have been provided, these have been calculated for the proposed development to help inform a preliminary Study Area,

¹ Paragraphs 5.51, 5.52 and 6.41 at pages 91 and 115 of GLVIA 3

assist in viewpoint selection and to help establish the geographical extent of likely effects as described in Section 2 of the main TVA report.

1.6 Reference points representing proposed development are tested across a model of the surrounding terrain and surface objects including buildings and vegetation to determine where the proposal would be theoretically visible. The resulting ZTV outputs are typically presented with and without vegetation. The availability of detailed LIDAR data and ever-increasing computer processing power make ZTVs a far more accurate and reliable tool than they have been in the past, but they remain a theoretical exercise which are dependent on the placement of reference points and the accuracy of the surface model.

1.7 While LIDAR derived ZTV analysis can depict the predicted extent of potential visibility to a high degree of accuracy, and careful use of multiple sets of reference points could even show, for example, how many stories of a tall building might be visible at any point, a ZTV analysis on its own cannot provide a proper assessment of visual impact. Their main use is as a guide and aid to further investigation through additional analysis, site visits, receptor appraisals, and where appropriate, computer-generated visualisations of the proposed development.

1.8 A baseline appraisal of the Site and preliminary Study Area was carried out to determine the current elements and character of the Townscape within and surrounding the Site. This involved an initial desktop study of but not necessarily limited to:

- Ordnance survey maps at 1:50,000, 1:25,000 scales.
- Aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area.
- Online public rights of way information held by the planning authority.
- Datasets for rural designations from the MAGIC website (Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside).
- Relevant planning policy including adopted supplementary planning guidance.
- Relevant national, regional, and local scale Townscape character assessments, historic Townscape character assessments and/or sensitivity assessments.

- Relevant technical reports prepared by others that may inform the baseline sensitivity of Townscape elements including ecology, arboriculture, and cultural heritage reports.

2. Townscape Appraisal of Effects

Sensitivity of Townscape Receptors

- 2.1** The sensitivity attributed to a Townscape element/feature or character is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to that element/feature or character and its susceptibility to change that would arise because of the proposed development.²
- 2.2** The value of designated townscapes including statutory designations i.e., World Heritage Site (WHS) and non-statutory designations e.g., local townscape designations, are typically considered to be of high value. However, further analysis may be required where the Townscape value within the Study Area may be different from that suggested by the formal designation³.
- 2.3** The indicative criteria used to determine the indicative value of Townscape receptors are set out in Table 1 below are assessed as low, medium, or high. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular receptor and the criteria within each category are not in a hierarchy.

Table 1: Indicative Value of Townscape Receptors

Low	- Individual features/elements have no rarity and/or, make no and/or only a limited contribution to the key characteristics of the Townscape and have a limited aesthetic, perceptual and/or experiential contribution to the baseline. - An area that is typically undesignated and in a poor condition/state of repair, of low scenic quality, is not a rare or important Townscape character area/type, contains none or very few buildings of architectural interest, has none or very limited recreational value, and is a Townscape with no associations.
-----	--

² Paragraphs 5.38 to 5.47 at pages 88-90 of GLVIA 3

³ Paragraph 5.45 to 5.47 at pages 89-90 of GLVIA 3

Medium	- Individual features/elements are commonplace or have limited rarity and/or have some contribution to the key characteristics of the Townscape and have a limited aesthetic, perceptual and/or experiential contribution to the baseline. - An area that is typically undesignated, in a reasonable condition/state of repair, of moderate aesthetic quality, some architectural interest, is not a rare or important Townscape character area/type, has some recreational value and has none or limited associations.
High	- Individual features/elements are of recognised value e.g., Buildings, open spaces or other features that contribute positively to the character of a Conservation Area and may be designated hedgerow, TPO tree that have an important contribution to one or more key characteristics of the Townscape with a notable aesthetic, perceptual and/or experiential contribution to the baseline. - Areas typically with national / international townscape designations, i.e., World Heritage Site (WHS), locally designated Townscapes (Conservation Areas) or occasionally non-designated Townscapes in particularly good condition which contribute positively to the townscape. - Areas of high aesthetic quality, a rare and/or important Townscape type/area, with high recreational value with some specific associations. - Buildings, open spaces, or other features, which contribute positively to the character of a Conservation Area and may be designated. - Buildings, open spaces, or other features of townscape merit outside of Conservation Areas and may be designated. - Buildings or groups of buildings, and open spaces which have won awards for architecture or design quality, such as Civic Trust or RIBA awards. - Buildings, open spaces, or other features identified on a local list. - Greenspaces or other open spaces, which are designated in the Local Plan or have won awards, such as Green Flag or Landscape Institute awards.

	• Areas designated and protected for geological or biological conservation, such as SSSIs and, SACs. • Key or protected views.
--	---

2.4 Susceptibility to change is defined as the ability of the Townscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of Townscape planning policies and strategies⁴.

2.5 The indicative criteria used to determine the indicative susceptibility of Townscape receptors to change are set out in Table 2 below are assessed as low, medium, or high. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular receptor and the criteria within each category are not in a hierarchy.

Table 2: Susceptibility to Change of Townscape Receptors

Low	• Individual features/elements are in poor condition and/or are easy to replace. • A Townscape area that can easily accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline condition and/or achievement of key Townscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	• Individual features/elements are in moderate condition and/or are moderately easy to replace. • A Townscape area that could accommodate the proposed development with some consequences for maintenance of the baseline condition and/or achievement of key Townscape planning policies and strategies.

⁴ Paragraph 5.40 at pages 88/89 of GLVIA 3

High	• Individual features/elements in good condition and/or are difficult to replace. • A Townscape area that would accommodate the proposed development with notable consequences for the baseline condition and/or would be clearly unable to comply with key Townscape planning policies and strategies.
------	--

2.6 The sensitivity of the Townscape receptors assessed, is determined by combining the value of the Townscape receptor (from Table 1) with the Susceptibility to change (from Table 2) and is guided by Table 3 overleaf.

Table 3: Sensitivity of Townscape Receptors

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change upon Townscape Receptors

2.7 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of direct physical impacts on individual existing Townscape elements/features and character areas as set out in the indicative criteria outlined in Table 4 below. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular receptor and the criteria within each category are not in a hierarchy.

Table 4: Indicative Criteria for determining the magnitude of change upon Townscape receptors

Negligible	• No loss or very small alteration to an existing Townscape element/feature, typically over a very localised geographical area. • No notable introduction of new Townscape elements/features into the Townscape or change to the scale, landform, land cover and/or pattern of the Townscape. • No changes to the key characteristics of the Townscape character area.
Low	• Small loss or alteration to part of an existing Townscape element/feature, typically over a localised area. • Introduction of new elements into the Townscape and/or small changes to the scale, landform, land cover and/or pattern of the Townscape. • Small changes to the key characteristics of the Townscape character area over a localised geographical extent.
Medium	• Notable loss or alteration to part of an existing Townscape element and/or feature. • Introduction of some notable elements into the Townscape or some notable change to the scale, landform, land cover and/or pattern of the Townscape. • Substantial or moderate changes to the key characteristics of the Townscape character area across a localised geographical extent or small to moderate changes to key characteristics across a large geographical extent.
High	• Total or major loss of an existing Townscape element/feature. • Introduction of major new elements into the Townscape and/or some major change to the scale, landform, land cover and/or pattern of the Townscape. • Substantial changes to the key characteristics of the Townscape character area over a large geographical extent.

- 2.8** The overall level of effect determined by combining receptor sensitivity and magnitude of change is set out at Section 4 of this methodology.

3. Visual Effects Appraisal

- 3.1** The appraisal of visual effects was undertaken based on viewpoint analysis. The viewpoints which are in different directions from the site and are at varying distances and locations were selected to represent a range of views and visual receptor types⁵. The number and location of viewpoints selected reflects the emphasis on proportionality in relation to the scale and nature of the development proposal and its likely notable effects.⁶
- 3.2** The viewpoints have been agreed with the Local Planning Authority and were all taken from publicly accessible land in accordance with best practice guidance⁷.
- 3.3** The viewpoints were used as the basis for determining the effects of visual receptors within the wider study area, where appropriate.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 3.4** Sensitivity is determined by a combination of the value that is attached to a view and the susceptibility of the receptor to changes in that view that would arise because of the proposed development⁸. Both value and susceptibility are assessed as high, medium, or low.
- 3.5** In making a professional judgement as to the value attached to a view⁹, the criteria in Table 5 below have helped guide the process. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular receptor/view and the criteria within each category are not in a hierarchy.

⁵ Paragraphs 6.16 to 6.22 at pages 107 to 110 of GLVIA 3

⁶ Paragraph 6.21 at pages 109 to 110 of GLVIA 3

⁷ Technical Guidance Note 06/19 by the Townscape Institute (2019)

⁸ Paragraphs 6.31 to 6.37 at pages 113 to 114 of GLVIA 3.

⁹ Paragraph 6.37 at page 114 of GLVIA 3

Table 5: Indicative Criteria for judging levels of visual value

Low	- Views from within or towards undesignated Townscapes and/or features of either importance to the site only or of no importance. - View has little aesthetic merit e.g., has numerous visual detractors, is badly degraded etc. - View makes a limited contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the Townscape. - Views with no known social, cultural, or historic associations. - Views from locations that are not necessarily destination points or that are infrequently visited.
Medium	- Views from within or towards undesignated Townscapes and/or features of local importance. - View with some limited aesthetic appeal. - View makes a reasonable contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the Townscape. - Views with some known local social, cultural, or historic associations. - Views from locations that are locally popular destination points or that are frequently visited by locals but not necessarily by visitors from further afield.
High	- Views from within or towards designated Townscapes and/or features of importance at district level and above. - View with great aesthetic appeal. - View makes an important contribution to the understanding of the function or wider pattern of the Townscape. - Views with some known national or international social, cultural, or historic associations especially to art and literature.

	Views from locations that are popular regional, national, or international destination points or that are frequently visited by large numbers of visitors from further afield.
--	--

3.6 The indicative criteria in Table 6 below are used to assist in the determination of the visual susceptibility of different receptors. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular receptor/view and the criteria within each category are not in a hierarchy.

Table 6: Indicative Criteria for judging Levels of Visual Susceptibility

Low	- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the Townscape. - Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes that are not recognised scenic routes and where the type of development/change is commonplace. - People at their place of work whose attention not focused on their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.
Medium	- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which may involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the Townscape. - Travellers on road, rail, or other transport routes on recognised scenic routes. - Users of public rights of way and pedestrian footways/cycleways where the focus is not on the Townscape of the Site or on particular views that include the Site. - Residents at home, using rooms normally un-occupied in daylight hours e.g., bedrooms.¹⁰

¹⁰ In line with paragraph 6.17 of GLVIA 3 this LVA covers key views from the public domain that may be similar to views from nearby residential properties, but it does not constitute a formal Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). It is noted that an RVAA may be requested by a planning authority where a detailed assessment of private views may be required to inform any potentially overbearing effects of a development proposal upon living conditions.

High	- Visitors to heritage assets or other recognised attractions where views of surrounding Townscape are important contributor to the experience. - Users of public rights of way including promoted routes e.g., national/regional cycle routes and long-distance footpath routes, where the focus includes the Townscape of the Site or particular views that include the Site. - Residents at home, especially using rooms and garden areas normally occupied in daylight hours.³
-------------	---

3.7 The sensitivity of the visual receptors assessed, is determined by combining the value of the views experienced by the receptor (from Table 5) with the Susceptibility to change (from Table 6) and is guided by Table 7 below.

Table 7: Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

	VALUE			
SUSCEPTIBILITY		HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
	HIGH	High	High	Medium
	MEDIUM	High	Medium	Low
	LOW	Medium	Low	Low

Magnitude of Change on Visual Amenity

3.8 Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude change on visual amenity as set out using the indicative criteria in Table 8 below and is

assessed as negligible, low, medium, or high. Not all the criteria have to apply to a particular receptor/view and the criteria within each category are not in a hierarchy.

Table 8: Indicative Criteria for Magnitude of Change to Visual Receptors

Negligible	No readily discernible change to the baseline view/s from the loss or addition of features because of the proposed development.
Low	- The loss or addition of features from the proposed development results in a modest proportion of the baseline view/s changing. - Changes to the view/s including consideration of form, scale, mass, line, height, colour, and texture resulting in a proposed development that has a low degree of contrast and integrates well into the baseline view/s. - View/s will typically be localised, partial and/or glimpsed and may be oblique in nature.
Medium	- The loss or addition of features from the proposed development results in a moderate proportion of the baseline view/s changing. - Changes to the view/s including consideration of form, scale, mass, line, height, colour, and texture resulting in a proposed development that has a moderate degree of contrast with respect to established elements in the baseline view/s. - View/s will typically be localised but experienced from more than a single location and are likely to be full in extent and direct.
High	- The loss or addition of features from the proposed development results in a large proportion of the view changing. - Changes to the view/s including consideration of form, scale, mass, line, height, colour, and texture resulting in a proposed development that has a notable degree of contrast with respect to established elements in the baseline view/s. - View/s will typically be localised but experienced from more than a single location and are likely to be full in extent and direct.

4. Overall Level of Townscape and Visual Effects

4.1 The overall level of effect can only be defined in relation to each proposed development and its specific location¹¹ and is determined by considering the sensitivity of the Townscape or visual receptor, combined with the magnitude of change. The overall effects are described as major, moderate, minor, or negligible as set out in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Overall Level of Effect Thresholds for Townscape and Visual Receptors

		MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE			
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
SENSITIVITY	High	Major	Major	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	Negligible

¹¹ Paragraph 5.53 at page 91 of GLVIA 3

Appendix 2

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF was updated in December 2023 and has a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10). Specifically, paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that:

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For plan-making this means that:

- a) all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;
- b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:
 - i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

For decision-taking this means:

- c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or

(ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF defines the three dimensions to sustainable development. These dimensions are economic, social and environmental.

Section 12 of the NPPF 'Achieving well-designed and beautiful places' states in paragraph 135:

"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."

Paragraph 136 refers to the important contribution trees make to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also mitigate and adapt to climate change. This policy goes on to state:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure

long-term maintenance of newly planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.”

Paragraph 137 of the NPPF refers to design quality and that it should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals and the need for community consultation on evolving designs.

Paragraph 139 states that development that is not well designed should be refused, 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 such as design guides and codes. It states that significant weight should be given to:

- a) Development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account and local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or
- b) Outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.

4.24 Section 14 “Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change” sets out planning for climate change. Paragraph 175 states that major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. Part d states “where possible, provide multi-functional benefits.”

4.25 Section 15 of the NPPF refers to ‘Conserving and enhancing the natural environment’. Relevant parts of Paragraph 180 states:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued Landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (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, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) re-vegetating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

Local Policy

The Local Plan sets out planning policies for development in Reading until 2036.

The Site falls within the area covered by Central Reading policy.

Adopted Local Plan (2011 – 2036)

Relative to this TVA document, the following policies are considered relevant to the planning application.

Policy	Scope
Policy CC7 Design and the Public realm	<i>All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form, including: -</i> • Layout: urban structure and urban grain; • Landscape; • Density and mix;

Policy	Scope
	• Scale: height and massing; and • Architectural detail and materials <i>will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives: -</i> • Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place • Continuity and enclosure • Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping • Ease of movement and permeability • Legibility - clear image and easy to understand • Adaptability – capable of adaptation over time • Diversity – meets a wide range of needs. • Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: - • Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm; • Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; • Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily; • Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

Policy	Scope
	<i>Applications for major developments, or other relevant developments, should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deals with all the above matters.</i>
CC8 Safeguarding amenity	Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: • Privacy and overlooking; • Access to sunlight and daylight; • Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; • Harm to outlook; • Noise and disturbance; • Artificial lighting; • Vibration; • Dust and fumes; • Smell; • Crime and safety; or • Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.
CR2 Design in Central Reading	<i>Applications for development within Central Reading should demonstrate the following attributes:</i> <i>a. Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and</i>

Policy	Scope
	<i>contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;</i> <i>b. Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscaped areas, and public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;</i> <i>c. Development should consider and, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment;</i> <i>d. The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;</i> <i>e. Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety; and</i> <i>f. Development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites, and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites.</i>
CR3 Public Realm in Central Reading	<i>Proposals for new development will need to make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm of the central area and will be assessed against the following criteria:</i> <i>i. All proposals on sites of more than 1 hectare within the central Reading boundary will need to provide new public open space or civic squares integrated with surrounding development. Smaller developments will contribute towards improvements to the public realm;</i>

Policy	Scope
	<i>ii. Imaginative uses of open space and the public realm, which contribute to the offer of the centre, will be encouraged, and new open spaces should be of a size and shape to be flexible enough to accommodate such uses. The provision of water features, trees (including street trees) and other planting, as well as hard landscaping, to create high quality spaces, will be expected, where appropriate;</i> <i>iii. Development proposals adjacent to or in close proximity to a watercourse will retain and not impede existing continuous public access to and along the watercourses, and will provide legible continuous public access to and along the watercourses where this does not currently exist;</i> <i>iv. The design of developments adjacent to a watercourse, including the refurbishment of existing buildings, will be required to enhance the appearance of the watercourses and to provide active elevations facing the watercourses. Development that turns its back on the watercourses and results in blank or mundane elevations facing the watercourses will not be permitted;</i> <i>v. The public realm should conserve and enhance the historic environment of the centre and the significance of heritage assets therein and their setting, including through layout, materials, hard and soft landscaping. There may be opportunities for areas of public realm to provide improved access to and visibility for heritage assets.</i> <i>Pedestrianisation, traffic management and/or environmental enhancements will continue to be implemented on appropriate streets.</i>
CR11 Major Opportunities Boundary Policies	<i>Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area will:</i> <i>i) Contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself and capitalise on its role as one of the most</i>

Policy	Scope
	<i>accessible locations in the south east. Development for education will be an acceptable part of the mix;</i> <i>ii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly on the key movement corridors. North-south links through the area centred on the new station, including across the IDR, are of particular importance;</i> <i>iii) Provide developments that front onto and provide visual interest to existing and future pedestrian routes and open spaces;</i> <i>iv) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;</i> <i>v) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, with green infrastructure, including a direct landscaped link between the station and the River Thames;</i> <i>vi) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings, conservation areas and historic gardens and their settings;</i> <i>viii) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and</i> <i>ix) Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.</i> <i>Development of the station and interchange was completed in 2015. Development in surrounding areas will be in line with the following provisions for each sub-area:</i>

Policy	Scope
	CR11i, NAPIER COURT: <i>This area will be developed for residential. The design must avoid detrimental effects on the adjacent Thames Valley Major Landscape Feature, and building heights should reduce from west to east across the site. Land on the Napier Road frontage will be safeguarded for Mass Rapid Transit. Development of the Network Rail depot will be dependent on an alternative location at the railway triangle to the west of the centre becoming available. Development should take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.</i>
EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment	(see Heritage Statement for full policy). Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include: • Listed Buildings; • Conservation Areas; • Scheduled Monuments; • Historic parks and gardens; and • Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List. All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.

Policy	Scope
	 Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance, features or setting of the park or garden, key views out from the park, or prejudice its future restoration.
EN6 New Development in a Historic Context	In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration: a. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space); b. Sensitivity to historic context; c. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g., patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing); d. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.
EN7 Local Green Space and Public Open Spaces (LGS) and Public Open Space (POS)	The following Local Green Spaces (LGS) and Public Open Space (POS), as shown on the Proposals Map, will be protected from development. Proposals that would result in the loss of any of these areas of open space, erode their quality through insensitive adjacent development or jeopardise their use or enjoyment by the public, will not be permitted. En7Ca Christchurch Meadows En7Cb Forbury Gardens En7Cd Kings Meadow.

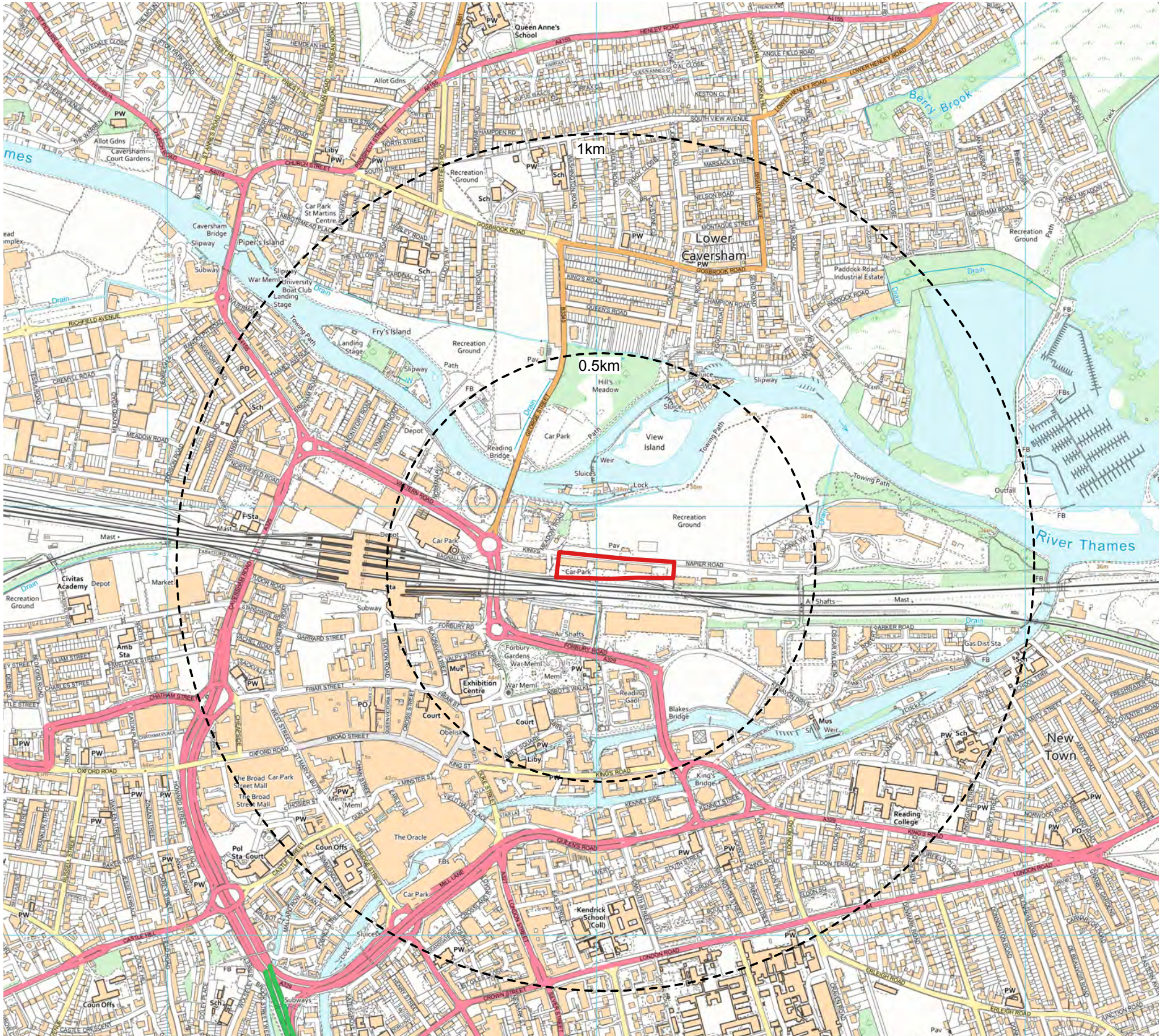
Policy	Scope
EN11 Water Spaces	<i>Reading's water spaces will be protected and enhanced, so that they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, flood mitigation, local character, heritage and visual amenity, the provision of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities and, where appropriate, navigation. There will be no adverse impact on the functions and setting of any watercourse and its associated corridor.</i> <i>Where development in the vicinity of watercourses is acceptable, it will:-</i> • Provide appropriate, attractive uses and buildings that enhance the relationship of buildings, spaces and routes to the watercourse, including through creating or enhancing views of the watercourse, and create a high quality public realm; • Make positive contributions to the distinct character, appearance, historic significance, landscape and amenity of the watercourses; • Provide a strengthened role for watercourses as important landscape features, wildlife corridors, historic features and recreation opportunities; • Wherever practical and consistent with its biodiversity role, provide good, level access to and along the waterside for all those who want to use it; • Be set at least ten metres back from the watercourse wherever practicable and appropriate to protect its biodiversity significance; • Improve the quality of watercourse environment through protecting and enhancing habitats and ensuring that habitat creation is balanced with access and urban uses; and • Pursue opportunities for de-culverting of watercourses.

Policy	Scope
EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network	<i>a) The identified Green Network, the key elements of which are shown on the Proposals Map, shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Permission will not be granted for development that negatively affects the sites with identified interest or fragments the overall network. The Green Network comprises:</i> • Sites with identified biodiversity interest - Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, and the River Thames and all its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal); and • Areas with potential for biodiversity value and which stitch the Green Network together – designated Local Green Space and open green spaces, and existing and potential Green Links. <i>New development shall demonstrate how the location and type of green space, landscaping and water features provided within a scheme have been arranged such that they maintain or link into the existing Green Network and contribute to its consolidation. Such features should be designed to maximise the opportunities for enhancing this network. All new development should maximise opportunities to create new assets and links into areas where opportunities are as yet unidentified on the Proposals Map.</i> <i>b) On all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible. Development should:</i> • Protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site, incorporating and integrating them into development proposals wherever practicable; and

Policy	Scope
	Provide new tree planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable. <i>In exceptional circumstances where the need for development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site, and it is demonstrated that the impacts cannot be: 1) avoided; 2) mitigated or; 3) compensated for on-site; then new development will provide off-site compensation to ensure that there is "no net loss" of biodiversity. Provision of off-site compensation shall be calculated in accordance with nationally or locally recognised guidance and metrics. It should not replace existing alternative habitats, and should be provided prior to development.</i>
EN13 Major Landscape Features	<i>Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would detract from the character or appearance of a Major Landscape Feature. The following areas, as shown on the Proposals Map, are defined as Major Landscape Features:</i> The Thames Valley
EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands	<i>Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced.</i> <i>New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained.</i>

Appendix 3

Figures



Site Boundary



W: www.hcukgroup.co.uk

Client:
Peveril Securities Limited

Project:
Napier Court, Napier Rd, Reading

Description:
Site Location Plan and 1 km Study Area

Status:
Planning

Scale:
1:10,000 @A3

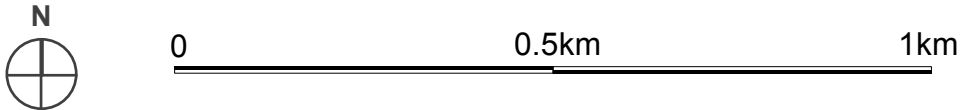
Drawn I Checked
CB SH

Date:
5/10/2023

Job Number:
09178

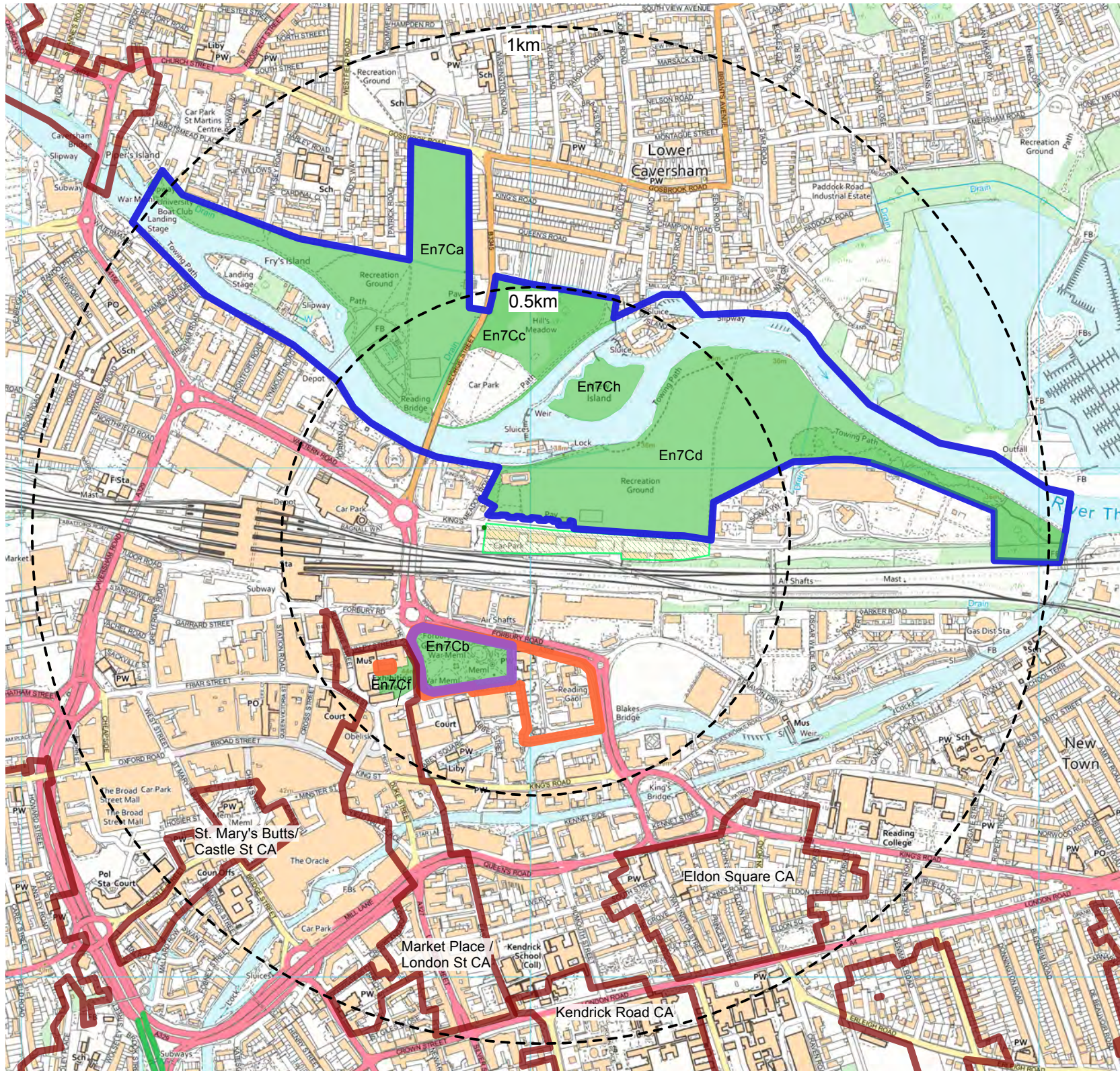
Drawing Number:
Figure 1

Revision:
-



Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2023)

ARCHAEOLOGY | HERITAGE | LANDSCAPE | PLANNING



Key



Site boundary



Park and Garden
The Forbury Garden (GII)
Local Plan Policy EN1

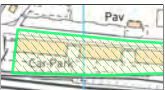


Scheduled Monument
Local Plan Policy EN1

Listed Buildings
NB: Not shown on plan, refer to
HCUK Heritage Impact Assessment



Conservation Area
Local Plan Policy EN1



CR11 Major Opportunities Boundary Policy
Station / River Major Opportunity Boundary



EN7 Local Green Space and
Public Open Spaces (LGS)
and Public Open Space (POS)



EN13 Major Landscape Features



Tree Preservation Order (TPO 13/10 2 x groups)



W: www.hcukgroup.co.uk

Client:
Peveril Securities Limited

Project:
Napier Court, Napier Rd, Reading

Description:
Landscape Policy Context and Designations

Status:
Planning

Scale:
1:10,000 @A3

Drawn I Checked
CB SH

Date:
5/10/2023

Job Number:
09178

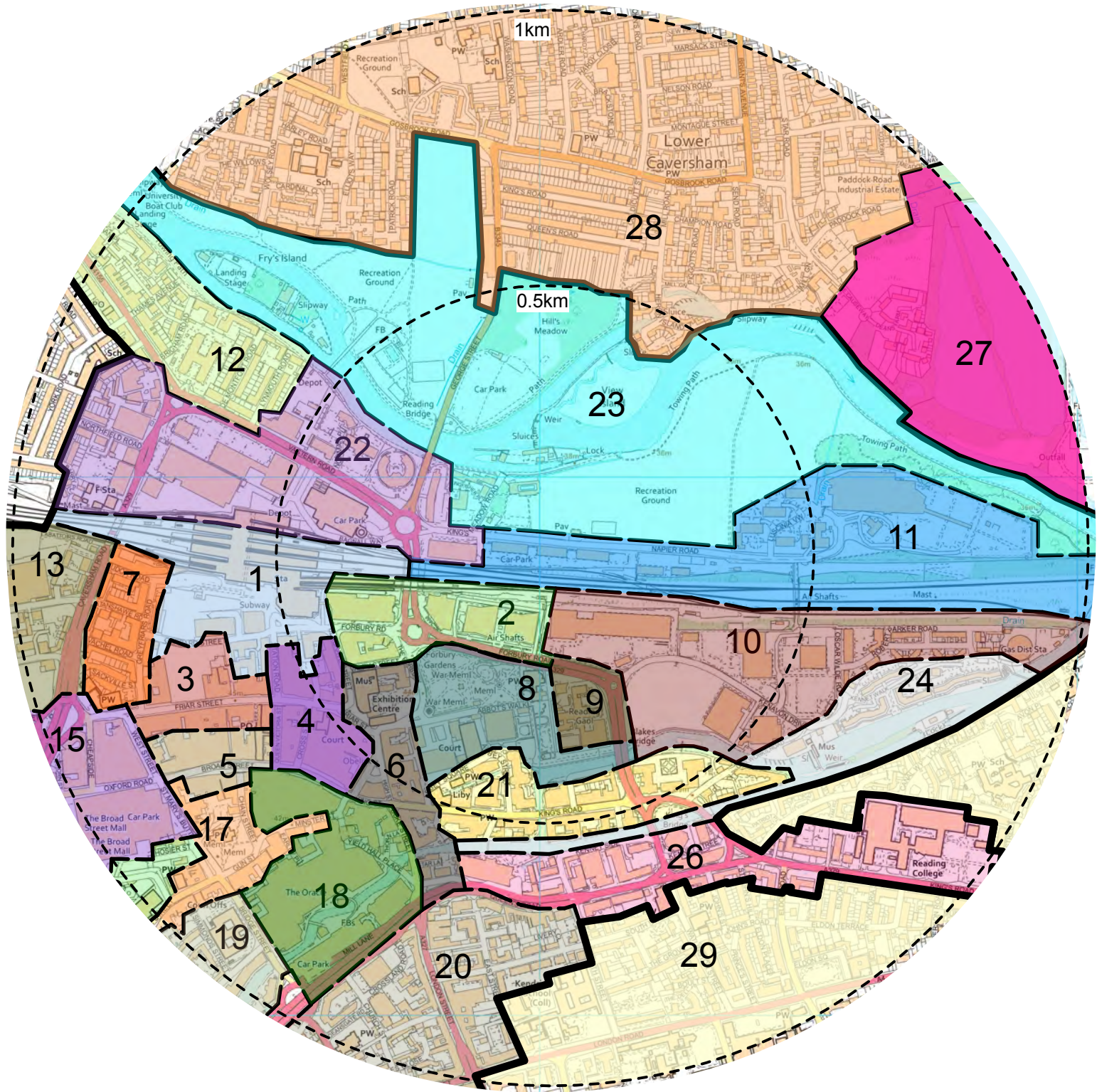
Drawing Number:
Figure 2

Revision:
-

Townscape Character Areas (TCAs)



Site boundary



Townscape Character Areas*

1. Station Hill
2. Reading Station East
3. Friar Street
4. Station Road
5. Broad Street
6. St. Lawrence and Market Place
7. Reading Station West
8. Forbury Gardens
9. Reading Prison
10. Forbury Retail Park
11. Napier Road
12. Caversham Road
13. Cattle Market and Chatham Place
14. Oxford Road and Surroundings
15. Cheapside
16. The Civic Centre
17. St. Mary's and Castle Street
18. The Oracle
19. Mallard Row to Fobney Street
20. London Street
21. Forbury South
22. Vastern Road
23. King's Meadow
24. Kennt Walk
25. IDR
26. King's Road.
27. Thames Floodplan North East
28. Lower Caversham
29. Reading Suburbs South

*Reading Borough Council, Reading Tall Building Strategy. January 2008 (adopted 2018)

27. Thames Floodplan North East
28. Lower Caversham
29. Reading Suburbs South



W: www.hcukgroup.co.uk

Client:
Peveril Securities Limited

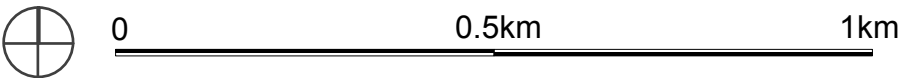
Project:
Napier Court, Napier Rd, Reading

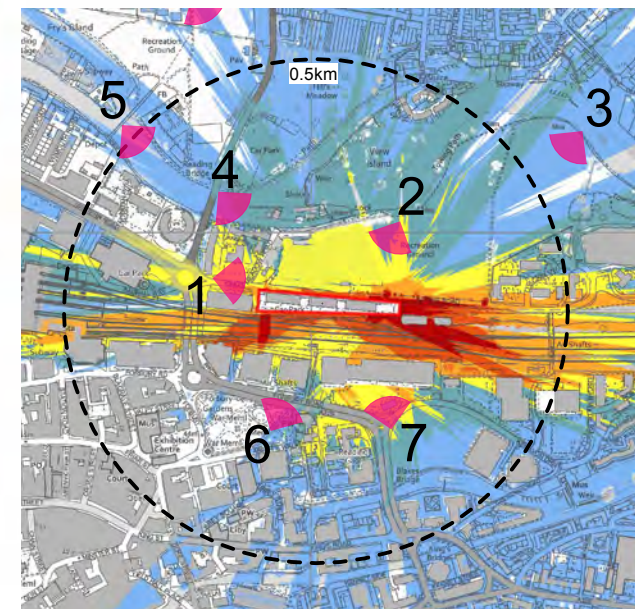
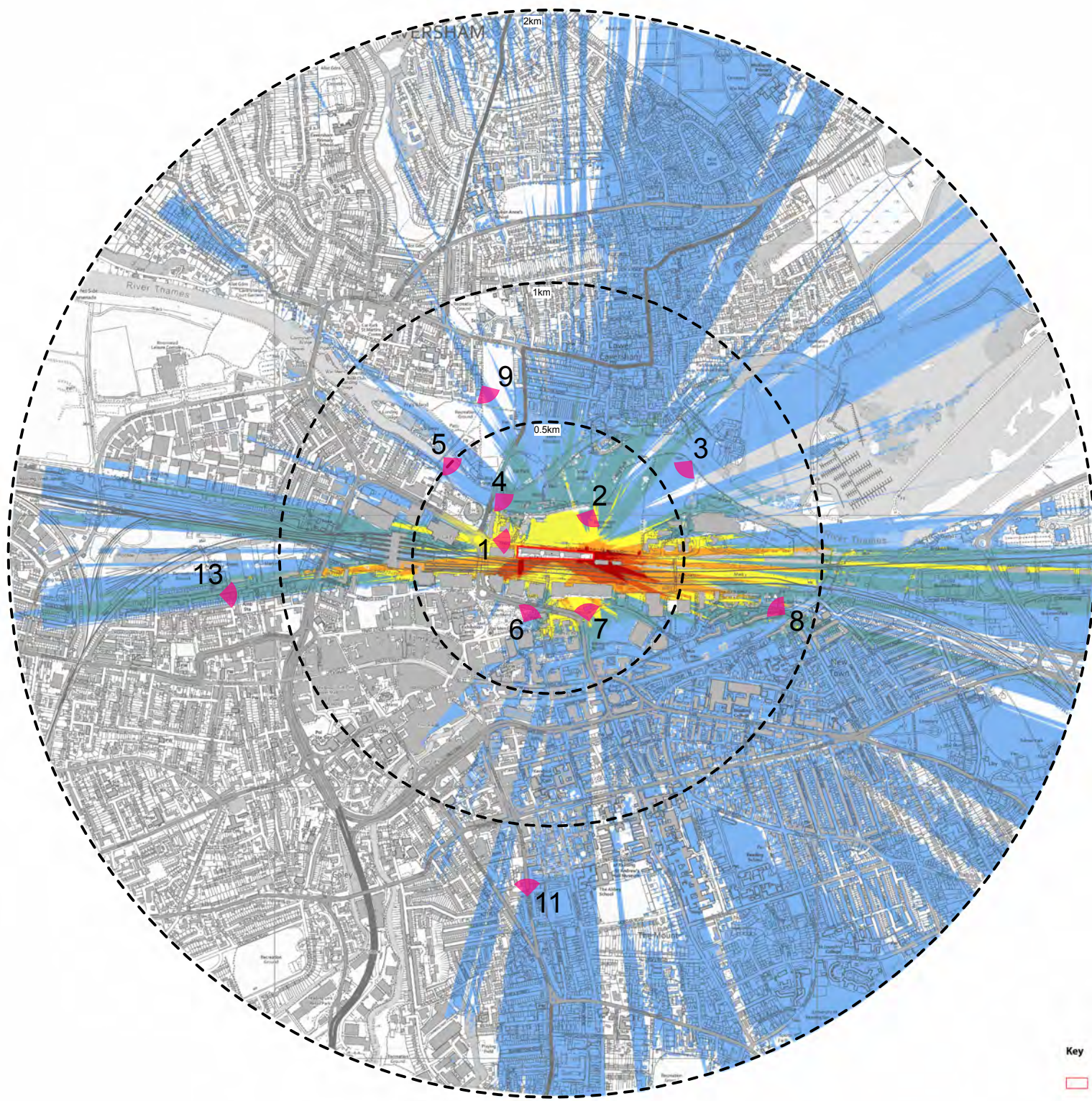
Description:
Townscape Character Areas (TCAs)

Status:
Planning

Scale: 1:10,000 @A3 Drawn I Checked SH CB Date: 5/10/2023

Job Number: 09178 Drawing Number: Figure 3 Revision: -



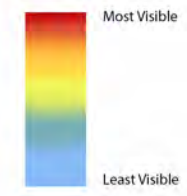


ZTV 0.5km study area
Scale 1:15,000

Key

Site boundary
Proposed Buildings (max height 39m)

Zone of Theoretical Visibility



- Viewpoints**
- Viewpoint 1 Kings Meadow Roundabout
 - Viewpoint 2 Kings Meadow Park
 - Viewpoint 3 Kings Meadow Park Thameside Promenade
 - Viewpoint 4 George Street / Reading Bridge
 - Viewpoint 5 Christchurch Bridge
 - Viewpoint 6 Forbury Gardens Public Park
 - Viewpoint 7 Forbury Road
 - Viewpoint 8 Kannetside Bridge to Kannet Walk
 - Viewpoint 9 Christchurch Meadow
 - Viewpoint 10 The Horse Close, Caversham
 - Viewpoint 11 A327
 - Viewpoint 12 Public Footpath 205/11/10 Eye and Dunsden
 - Viewpoint 13 Great Knolly's Street near Civitas Academy



Distant Viewpoints beyond 2km (NTS)



W: www.hcukgroup.co.uk

Client:
Peveril Securities Limited

Project:
Napier Court, Napier Rd, Reading

Description:
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Status:
Planning

Scale: 1:20,000 @A3
Drawn I Checked SH CB
Date: 09/10/2023

Job Number: 09178
Drawing Number: Figure 4
Revision: A



Approximate extent of the Site

HCUK Group
W: www.hcukgroup.co.uk

Viewpoint Information:
Paper Size: 420 x 297mm
Image Size: 390 x 260mm
Camera: Nikon D3500

Lens: AF-S NIKKOR 35mm
(52mm FFS equivalent)

Date: 4.10.23
Time: 13:16
Location: Kings Meadow
Roundabout
Grid ref: 471816, 713912
Elevation: 39m

Client: Peveril Securities Ltd
Project: Napier Court,
Reading
Drawing Title: Viewpoint 1
Existing View

Job no.	Drawing No.	Revision:
9178	Figure 5	A
Dwg Chkd:	Date:	
CB/ NF	Jan 24	



Approximate extent of the Site

HCUK Group
W: www.hcukgroup.co.uk

ARCHAEOLOGY | HERITAGE | LANDSCAPE | PLANNING | VISUALISATIONS

Viewpoint Information:
Paper Size: 841 x 297mm
Image Size: 820 x 250mm
Camera: Nikon D3500
Lens: AF-S NIKKOR 35mm (52mm
FFS equivalent)

Date: 26.5.23
Time: 10.34
Location: King's Meadow
Grid ref: 472155, 174021
Elevation: 40m

Client: Peveril Securities Ltd

Project: Napier Court, Reading

Drawing Title: Viewpoint 2 - Existing View

Job no.	Drawing No.	Revision
9178	Figure 6A	A
Dwg Chkd:	Date:	
NF / CB	18.1.24	

