



FORMER JOHN LEWIS DEPOT, LETCOMBE STREET, READING
(ALSO KNOWN AS JLP MILL LANE)

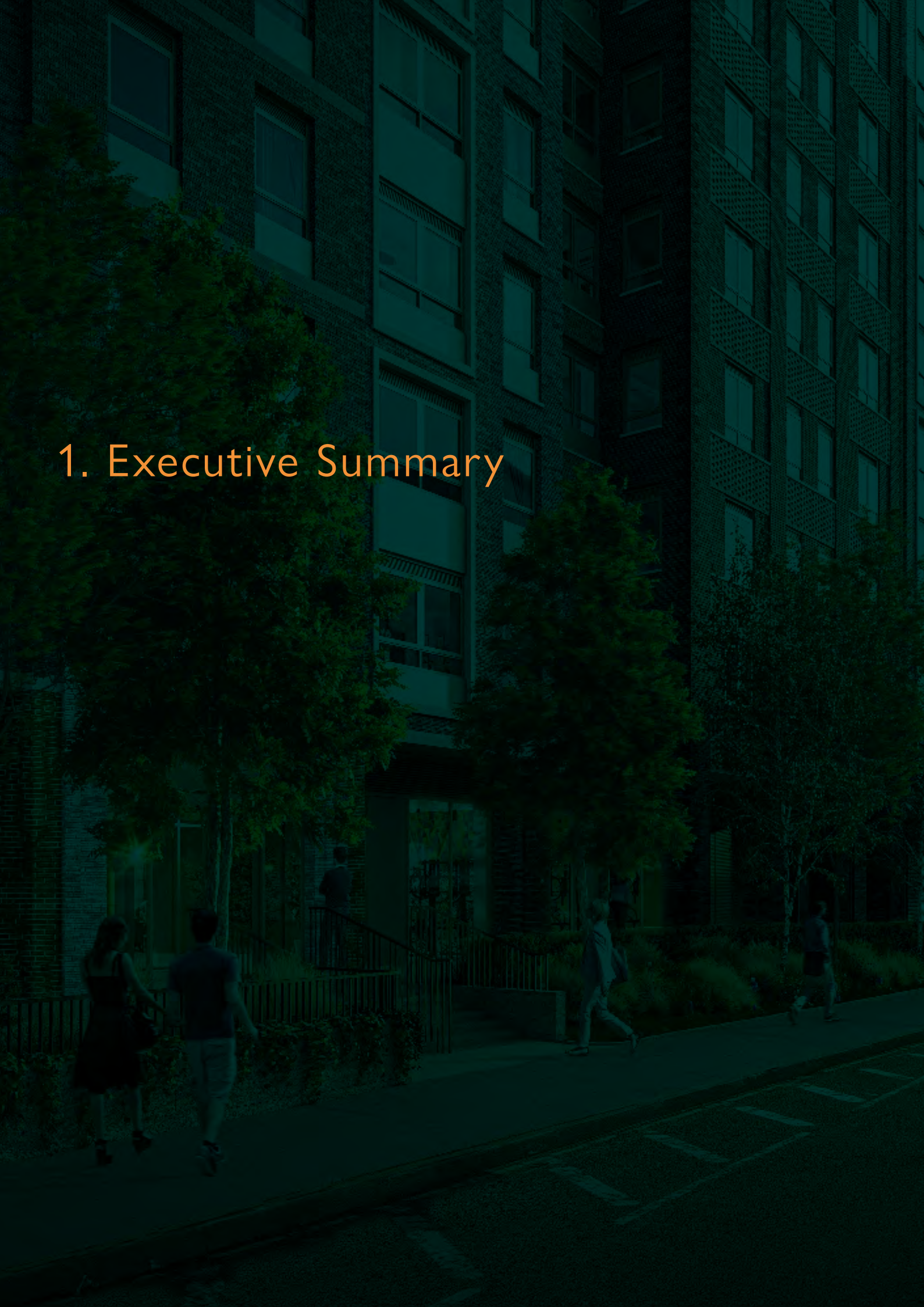
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

AUGUST 2024

Cratus
group

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An architectural rendering of a modern, multi-story brick building. The building features a prominent green wall on the left side, which is covered in climbing plants. The facade is composed of red brick with large, rectangular windows. In the foreground, a paved sidewalk runs along the building, with several pedestrians walking. A street with a crosswalk is visible in the lower right corner. The overall scene is set in a bright, sunny environment.

1. Executive Summary

1. Executive Summary



Throughout 2024, John Lewis Partnership BTR Ltd (referred to as either “JLP” or “the Applicant” hereafter) has undertaken a programme of community and political engagement relating to the proposed transformation of the former John Lewis Depot, Letcombe Street, Reading (also known as JLP Mill Lane), to provide a new community of high-quality build-to-rent homes developed and operated by JLP.

Public consultation took place in two stages between January and April 2024. Two public exhibition events were held in the South Street Arts Centre close to the site, which welcomed over 50 members of the public to discuss the proposals in detail, with members of the JLP and design teams. A consultation webinar also took place in January 2024.

This is in addition to local media engagement, leaflets being issued to over 4,000 local homes, along with a dedicated consultation website which was viewed by over 1,400 people.

The public engagement revealed a strong level of local positivity towards the proposed development of new homes at the site. For instance, 82% of respondents to the first public consultation said they agreed or strongly agreed with the need for high-quality rental homes to be developed in Reading. Strong majorities also agreed with the aspirations for sustainable, energy efficient brownfield development which reflects the history and heritage of the local area. The overall sentiment of respondents to the proposals was positive.

This public consultation programme was accompanied by a thorough programme of engagement with political, civic and community stakeholders from across Reading, to discuss both the emerging planning application and the significant potential for social value which accompanies the project. Starting in January 2024, 16 meetings with these stakeholders took place in the

lead-up to submission of the planning application in August 2024 (see table on pp.15-16).

JLP has set out to actively involve and seek feedback from the local community, key groups and organisations in formulating its development proposals. Building long term partnerships and relationships is at the heart of JLP’s ambitions. It is important to JLP for this development to meet local needs; not only by meeting the needs of the new residents but by contributing to the success of the existing community.

This Statement of Community Involvement summarises the consultation strategy and offers detail on each stage of its implementation in the lead-up to submission of the planning application, to Reading Borough Council. A series of appendices also accompanies the Statement, reproducing copies of the main consultation materials for consideration.

JLP remains committed to ensuring the voices of local stakeholders are heard in the process and will seek to build on the relationships already established to deliver tangible public benefits as the project is determined, constructed and operated.

JLP’s aims for community benefits and ongoing local engagement are addressed in the Social Value Strategy document which has also been submitted as part of the planning application.

2. Introduction



2. Introduction

This document provides a detailed record of engagement activities undertaken in relation to the planning application for the development of the former John Lewis Depot, Letcombe Street, Reading (also known as JLP Mill Lane), by John Lewis Partnership BTR Ltd (referred to as either “JLP” or “the Applicant” hereafter).

JLP has undertaken extensive and detailed engagement prior to the application submission in order to understand local views and priorities and create an opportunity to inform the proposed development.

The pre-application engagement has been undertaken by Cratus Group (Cratus) on behalf of JLP.



The site, located on the edge of central Reading between Mill Lane, Crossland Road and Letcombe Street— next to the A329 and opposite the Oracle Car Park.

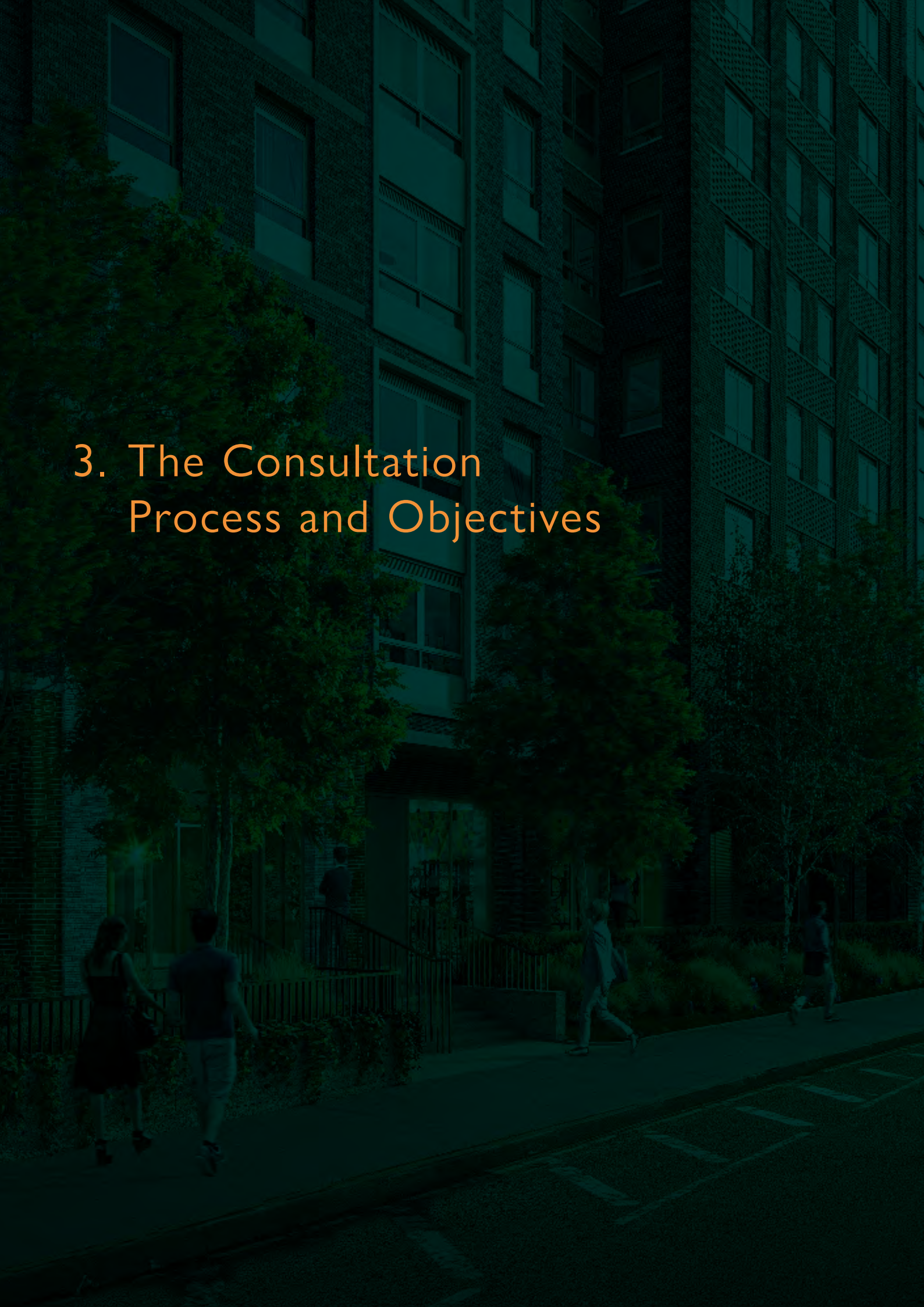
Site overview

The application site comprises land between Mill Lane, Crossland Road and Letcombe Street – next to the A329 and opposite the Oracle Car Park. The site currently contains a former customer collection facility, which was operated by John Lewis, until being consolidated with the John Lewis store on Broad Street, in 2021.

The site links urban and higher density townscape in central Reading to the north and the intimate character of the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area to the south.

The building is a typical mid-1990s warehouse car park. The building has little architectural merit and makes no positive contribution to the setting of the area.

The site is located within the Katesgrove ward of Reading Borough Council.

An architectural rendering of a modern, multi-story brick building. The building features a prominent green wall on the left side, which is covered in climbing plants. The facade is composed of dark red bricks with large, rectangular windows. In the foreground, a paved sidewalk runs along the building, with several pedestrians walking. A street with white lane markings is visible in the lower right corner. The overall scene is set in a bright, sunny environment.

3. The Consultation Process and Objectives

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JLP appointed Cratus to undertake a comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement with the local community, elected representatives and interested stakeholders, in relation to the proposals for the site.

JLP made clear from an early stage the importance of engaging with key stakeholders in order to inform them of the emerging plans for the site and to gain valuable feedback to inform and refine the proposals. It was seen as essential to the success of the development that the proposals meet not only the needs of the new residents but contribute to the success of the existing community.

To this end, consultation has included two in-person public consultation events, a public webinar, and 16 meetings with elected politicians, local employers, relevant public sector bodies and interested community groups. Establishing and building upon JLP's already strong partnerships and relationships amongst the vibrant voluntary & charitable sector within Reading has been an important element of the pre-application consultation process. As JLP will be the long-term owner and operator of the scheme, these relationships will form an equally important part of the project through determination, construction and operation.

Background and Approach

Policy Framework

The process of consultation undertaken has been in accordance with both national and local guidance on best practice of pre-application consultation. The details of the guidance followed is listed below:

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023)
- Localism Act (2011)
- Reading Council Statement of Community Involvement (2014)

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The document states that applications which can demonstrate early, effective, and proactive engagement with communities and other interested parties should be looked upon more favourably than those that cannot. It specifically sets out the following:

"Pre-application engagement and front-loading

39. Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality preapplication discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.

Local planning authorities have a key role to play in encouraging other parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. They cannot require that a developer engages with them before submitting a planning application, but they should encourage take-up of any pre-application services they offer. They should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.

40. The more issues that can be resolved at pre-application stage, including the need to deliver improvements in infrastructure and affordable housing, the greater the benefits. For their role in the planning system to be effective and positive, statutory planning consultees will need to take the same early, pro-active approach, and provide advice in a timely manner throughout the development process. This assists local planning authorities in issuing timely decisions, helping to ensure that applicants do not experience unnecessary delays and costs.

41. The participation of other consenting bodies in pre-application discussions should enable early consideration of all the fundamental issues relating to whether a particular development will be acceptable in principle, even where other consents relating to how a development is built or operated are needed at a later stage. Wherever possible, parallel processing of other consents should be encouraged to help speed up the process and resolve any issues as early as possible.

42. The right information is crucial to good decision-making, particularly where formal assessments are required (such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats Regulations assessment and flood risk assessment). To avoid delay, applicants should discuss

what information is needed with the local planning authority and expert bodies as early as possible.

43. Local planning authorities should publish a list of their information requirements for applications for planning permission. These requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions, and should be reviewed at least every two 14 years. Local planning authorities should only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in question.

44. Local planning authorities should consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting of, or changes to, major hazard sites, installations or pipelines, or for development around them.

45. Applicants and local planning authorities should consider the potential for voluntary planning performance agreements, where this might achieve a faster and more effective application process. Planning performance agreements are likely to be needed for applications that are particularly large or complex to determine."

The Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act (2011) is intended to empower local communities to participate in the planning processes in their areas and the consultation process has accorded with the key principles established therein for consulting with the public. Principally, these are:

- The publication of the proposed application widely, to an extent that can be reasonably said to bring the proposed application to the attention of the majority of persons who live at, or otherwise occupy, premises in the vicinity of the land
- To make clear how interested persons may contact the applicant team should they wish to comment or collaborate in relation to the proposed development
- To give such information about the timetable to ensure that persons wishing to comment on the proposed development may do so in good time
- Have regard to the responses to consultation that have been made following the consultation process

Reading Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (2014)

Cratus, under the instruction of JLP, has conducted its community consultation work in line with guidance issued in Reading Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement (2014).

The Statement of Community Involvement offers the following guidance:

"The Council agrees with this emphasis on engaging the community from the outset. It can result in an improved scheme which takes the needs of the existing community into account, and a better relationship between the developer and the community that carries through the application process and beyond. This is particularly the case for proposals that are sensitive or of a significant scale."

Reading Borough Council's SCI defines significant development as that which provides "a net increase of more than 50 units" in terms of housing and identifies that those promoting "Significant Developments" should undertake the following community involvement:

- Developers should prepare circular information on the developer/applicant's intentions to make a planning application and develop a particular site.
- Developers should widely distribute such information as may be agreed by the local planning authority by posting to household addresses and other addresses determined in conjunction with and agreed by the local planning authority.
- Developers should arrange and provide at least one interactive involvement event
- Developers should provide a website of relevant information or provide digital images and information

JLP has sought to undertake an open process of pre-application consultation on the proposed scheme, with involvement from local residents and locally elected representatives. This activity is set out in greater detail in this report.

4. The Engagement Programme



4. The Engagement Programme

Consultation strategy

JLP has set out to actively involve and seek feedback from the local community, key groups and organisations in formulating its development proposals. It is important to JLP that the Mill Lane development not only meets the needs of the new community but contributes to the success of the existing community and building long term partnerships and relationships is at the heart of the ambitions for the site.

As a result, JLP has undertaken a thorough programme of political and community engagement ahead of the submission of a planning application for the proposed redevelopment of the former John Lewis Depot.

To implement this vision, it was decided that a two-stage consultation programme should be undertaken, to both incorporate stakeholder feedback into the scheme from an early stage, and to provide updates as the project progressed.

A consultation programme was designed which included the following key milestones:

- 23 January 2024: In-person exhibition event, South Street Arts Centre, Reading, RG1 4QU
- 30 January 2024: Public webinar
- 7 March 2024: In-person update event, South Street Arts Centre, Reading, RG1 4QU

These events were accompanied by a comprehensive series of meetings with key political and community stakeholders. The first of these meetings occurred in early January 2024, with the most recent meetings taking place in August 2024. JLP's intention is to continue to build on these relationships, established at these meetings, throughout the life of the application and the operation of the development.

Leaflets

Ahead of each stage of the public consultation, leaflets announcing the intention to consult were issued to homes within a defined distribution zone. As shown below, the distribution zone contains 4,469 addresses. This map is reproduced in **Appendix 1**.



In addition to providing details about the public consultation period, the leaflets offered an overview of the proposals and contained information regarding how residents could contact the project team regarding the proposals, by post or through online means.

Leaflets were issued to addresses within the distribution zone in advance of both the first-stage event (23 January 2024) and the update information session (7 March 2024).

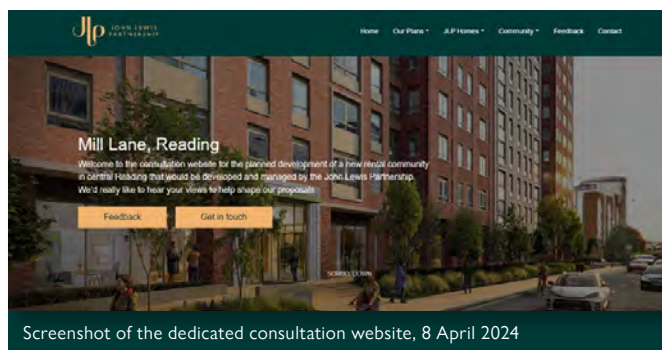
Consultation website

A dedicated consultation website was designed and launched to accompany the proposals. The website was initially launched on 8 January 2024 at <https://jlpmillanereading.co.uk/> and was updated with additional information and documents as the consultation period progressed.

As of 21 August 2024, the website had been viewed by 1,407 users.

Between the official launch of the first-stage consultation on 23 January and 21 August 2024, ten feedback forms were submitted via the website, in addition to the physical feedback forms which were completed at the public exhibition events.

Alongside information regarding the consultation process itself, the website contained detailed information regarding the site and the emerging proposals. Details were published giving users access to the boards which were displayed at the public exhibitions, in addition to online versions of the consultation feedback forms.



Newspaper advertising

Ahead of each public consultation stage, print advertising ran in the *Reading Chronicle* in the editions of the following dates:

- Thursday, 11 January 2024 (full-page)
- Thursday, 29 February 2024 (half-page)

A tear sheet from the *Reading Chronicle* depicting the first advertisement as it looked on the printed page is copied below. Both adverts are reproduced in Appendices 3 & 5.



Local media engagement

Prior to each phase of the public consultation strategy, JLP reached out directly to local media outlets, offering to briefing journalists on the proposals in order to generate editorial coverage for the proposed development both before and during the consultation period.

A journalist from the *Reading Chronicle* was welcomed to the in-person exhibition events to be briefed on the latest version of the proposals. This resulted in coverage of the consultation appearing in the *Chronicle* (web screenshot below):



Public exhibition events

Two in-person exhibition events were held to consult with local people on the emerging proposals, and these formed the centrepiece of the overall engagement programme. As referenced above, these events were advertised by leaflets, in the *Reading Chronicle* and on the dedicated consultation website.

Both of the events took place at the South Street Arts Centre, 21 South Street, Reading RG1 4QU. A short walk from the site. This was considered to be the optimal venue to host the events in terms of size, location and accessibility.

The timing and attendance of each event was:

- First event: Tuesday, 23 January 2024, 2-8pm – 27 attendees
- Second event: Tuesday, 7 March 2024, 2-8pm – 19 attendees

The events featured members of the JLP and project teams who were available to answer questions about the proposals. Team members attended the event from the following:

- John Lewis Partnership (Applicant)
- CJCT (Architects)
- Savills (Town planners)
- M3 Consulting (Development management)
- Cratus Communications (Community & stakeholder engagement consultants)

The first event consisted of pull-up banners setting out the main details of the proposals and, printed Foamex boards featuring a range of historical imagery, indicative views, and images of the site today. The exhibition banners and Foamex boards are reproduced in Appendices 6, 7 & 8.



Pull-up banners being displayed as part of the first exhibition event

Public webinar

In between the two in-person exhibition events, a public webinar was hosted via the Zoom online platform at 6:30pm on Tuesday, 30 January 2024.

This event was similarly advertised via leaflet, newspaper advert and online.

In order to ensure that stakeholders who were only able to attend one event were not at a disadvantage, JLP team sought to ensure that the same level of detail was provided at the webinar as at the in-person events.

Team members from the following were represented among the webinar hosts:

- John Lewis Partnership (Applicant)
- CJCT (Architects)
- Savills (Town planners)
- Cratus Group (Community & stakeholder engagement consultants)

Following the webinar, the full video of the event was uploaded to the dedicated consultation website.

Feedback forms

Both stages of the public consultation invited participants to offer their feedback on the emerging scheme.

Feedback forms were drafted and designed to accompany the consultation activities – one for each stage of the programme. The forms were printed and used for feedback submission at the public exhibitions, and forms with identical questions were uploaded to the dedicated consultation website.

The forms asked respondents the following information about themselves:

- Email address
- Postcode
- Reason for participating in the consultation (tick- box question)

The main body of the forms consisted of questions asking respondents to what extent they approved or disapproved of various aspects of the proposed development, with options ranging from 'strongly approve' to 'strongly disapprove', including a 'neutral'

option. The nature of these questions allowed for quantitative analysis to assess the overall sentiment of respondents towards the proposed development.

There were also a series of free-text response boxes, which allowed respondents to include additional information in their answers.

Pre-application engagement meetings

A key part of the consultation programme consisted of dedicated, direct engagement meetings between the JLP team and key stakeholders within Reading.

In addition to the need to consult widely and accept stakeholder feedback on the emerging proposals, JLP sought to establish positive relationships with major employers and voluntary organisations within

Reading, in order to ascertain the needs and priorities of different groups, and to lay the foundations for the rollout of the project's social value strategy in the months ahead.

As of 21 August 2024, the meetings undertaken as part of the project include the following:

Date	Stakeholder	Issues discussed
Friday 5 January 2024	Cllrs. Jason Brock (Leader of Reading Borough Council) and Micky Leng (Lead Member for Planning)	• Principle of development • JLP's vision for Build-to-Rent • Approach to consultation
Friday 19 January 2024	Cllr. Liam Challenger (ward councillor, Katesgrove ward)	• Principle of development • JLP's vision for Build-to-Rent • Approach to consultation
Friday 16 February 2024	Abbey School	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • JLP's aspirations for social value • School staff experience of affordable housing need • Potential areas of collaboration with the School
Friday 16 February 2024	Reading Civic Society, Katesgrove Community Association, Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Cllr. Louise Keane (ward councillor, Katesgrove ward)	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • Design, heritage & townscape elements of the proposals • Discussion of height and massing • Outline of social value strategy and potential areas and groups for collaboration
Friday 16 February 2024	St Giles-in-Reading Church	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • JLP's aspirations for social value • Assessment of social issues in Reading and potential areas of charitable outreach
Friday 16 February 2024	Reading Cycling Campaign	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • Discussion of sustainable transport elements of the proposals • Outline of social value strategy and potential areas for collaboration
Tuesday 5 March 2024	Food4Families / Reading International Solidarity Centre	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • Discussion of sustainability elements of the proposals • Outline of social value strategy and potential areas for collaboration

Tuesday 5 March 2024	University of Reading	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • JLP's aspirations for social value • University staff experience of affordable housing need • Potential areas of collaboration with the University, in areas including sustainability, transport, real estate and general social value
Tuesday 5 March 2024	Cllr. Doug Cresswell (ward councillor, Katesgrove ward)	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • Discussion of key elements of the forthcoming planning application • Discussion of consultation, engagement and social value strategy
Monday 11 March 2024	University of Reading: Presentation to real estate students	• Outline of proposals and principle of development including the overall development process • Discussion of ways into a career in real estate
Friday 17 April 2024	Matt Rodda MP (MP for Reading East)	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • Discussion of aspirations for consultation, engagement and social value
Monday 13 May 2024	Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC), Food4Families	• Update discussion on potential areas of collaboration • Potential for partnership with both RISC and the broader voluntary sector within Reading
Wednesday 15 May 2024	Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • Discussion about aspirations for consultation, engagement and social value • Discussion about potential partnership on affordable housing, allocation for key workers and for the creation of deeper links between JLP and the Foundation Trust
Tuesday 6 August 2024	Cllr. Liz Terry (Leader of Reading Borough Council) and Micky Leng (Lead Member for Planning & Deputy Leader of Reading Borough Council)	• Update discussion on the principle of development, JLP's vision for the build-to-rent sector, consultation activities taken place so far and the proposed timeline for submission and determination of a planning application • Further discussions around affordable housing, sustainability, social value
Tuesday 6 August 2024	Reading Civic Society, Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Katesgrove Community Association	• Update discussion on the principle of development, JLP's vision for the build-to-rent sector, consultation activities taken place so far and the proposed timeline for submission and determination of a planning application • Further discussions around affordable housing, sustainability, social value
Wednesday 7 August 2024	Ethical Reading	• Outline of proposals and principle of development • General discussion of potential for partnership as part of Social Value Strategy

Pre-application meetings: Follow-up and actions arising

Feedback from these pre-application engagement meetings, in addition to that received as part of the public elements of the programme, have been invaluable in helping JLP refine the proposals. The early establishment of connections and relationships with a range of Reading-based community stakeholders has allowed the draft Social Value Strategy, which has been submitted alongside this report as part of the planning application, to take shape.

In addition to the above-listed meetings, JLP has reached out to a number of additional groups and organisations in the local area as part of the consultation strategy, and conversations held as part of this outreach have likewise been helpful in shaping the emerging planning application.

In particular, positive engagement has been held with representatives from the Reading Friends' Meeting House, which is located on Church Street to the rear of the site. Representatives from the Meeting House attended the public exhibition in January 2024, and further engagement has occurred as part of work towards the Social Value Strategy (see below).

Given the Meeting House's status as an important local stakeholder and the historic nature of the site, JLP looks forward to continued engagement as the development progresses.

Key points

Emerging social value strategy

A Social Value Strategy has been produced and submitted as part of the planning application for the site. As detailed elsewhere in this planning application, John Lewis Partnership has had a presence in Reading stretching back decades. JLP recognises the strong opportunity that exists to build on the existing, positive social value work carried out by the Waitrose and John Lewis stores in Reading.

In keeping with the broader strategy around consultation and engagement, JLP considered it essential that strong, durable relationships be established with charitable and voluntary sector organisations in Reading, to ascertain their needs ahead of the full Social Value Strategy being implemented following receipt of planning consent.

Following initial internal discussions and the first external meetings, JLP focussed its proposed social value outreach into a series of themes, grouping relevant local groups according to theme and identifying potential short-, medium- and long-term activations that could be implemented in partnership with these stakeholders as part of the overall strategy.

For instance, future partnership with the **Reading Elderly Befriending Scheme** was considered as a way to address the needs of Reading's existing elderly population, while several meetings held with the **Reading International Solidarity Centre** and **Food4Families** produced proposals regarding sustainability, climate action and education which will be rolled out across several strands through the next stages of the project.

Refined design

The pre-application stakeholder meetings led to a number of changes being incorporated into the design of the building, in addition to feedback received directly from members of the public at the public consultation events.

Following feedback between the first and second rounds of public consultation, the design was amended as follows:

- Incorporating local Reading brickwork styles and details into the facades, including more articulation.
- Introducing more dual-aspect apartments and balconies
- Increasing activation at ground level
- Updating the massing to enable the building to more appropriately sit within the immediate local context
- Introducing a new commercial/community space at ground level

Conversations with stakeholder groups including the Reading Civic Society and Katesgrove Community Association assisted the JLP team in designing a scheme which responds more appropriately to the local character and heritage. Detailed design work to further refine the proposals has continued since the second round of consultation, and stakeholder feedback has again been of great benefit to the project in this regard.

5. Community Feedback

An architectural rendering of a modern, multi-story brick building. The building features a prominent green wall on the left side, which is covered in climbing plants. The facade is made of dark red bricks with large, rectangular windows. In the foreground, a paved sidewalk runs along the building, with several people walking. A man in a blue shirt and dark pants is walking towards the left, while a woman in a black dress and a man in a white shirt and dark pants are walking away from the camera. The scene is set during the day, with natural light illuminating the building and the people. The overall atmosphere is one of a modern, urban environment.

5. Community Feedback



First round consultation

The feedback form for the first round of public consultation included a range of question formats, including sliding scale approval questions, questions offering a series of different options for aspects of the scheme, and free-text questions allowing respondents to write in their own answers. In total, 17 people completed a feedback form as part of the initial consultation – ten at the in-person event, and seven online.

The first set of questions asked for their name, postcode and email address, in addition to a tick-box question regarding their relationship to the site.

Overall, the feedback to the first round of consultation was positive, with support expressed both for the principle of development and for specific elements of the proposals. The more qualitative, free-text questions were additionally a source of useful feedback around precise elements of the design and public realm. Many of these points and suggestions led to changes to the design prior to the second round of consultation in March 2024.

General feedback

The feedback received from attendees at the public exhibitions – both verbal and written – was diverse and dealt with a number of relevant topics. The most prominent of these included:

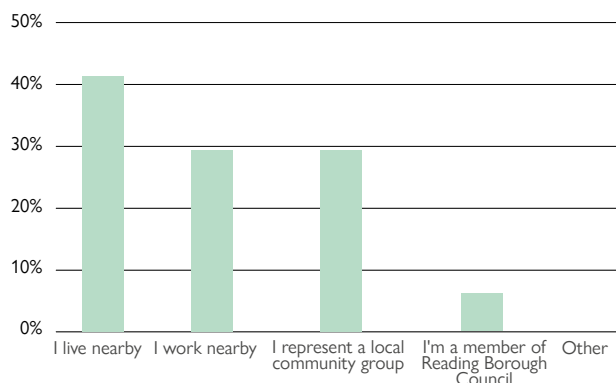
- The principle of development
- Height and massing of the proposed building
- Design of the façade and relationship to local architectural context
- Issues related to operation and management of a build-to-rent community
- Parking and transport
- Social value opportunities
- Design and use of the public spaces and community & resident gardens

As outlined elsewhere in this document, this feedback was invaluable in allowing the applicant team to refine the proposals prior to the second-round consultation and submission of the planning application.

A question-by-question breakdown from the first consultation is below:

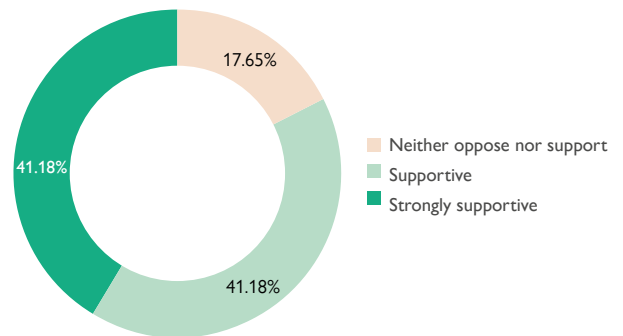
Q1 - What is your relationship to the site?

- A strong majority of respondents said they were either nearby residents or worked close to the site.
- Close to a third additionally said that they were responding on behalf of a local community group



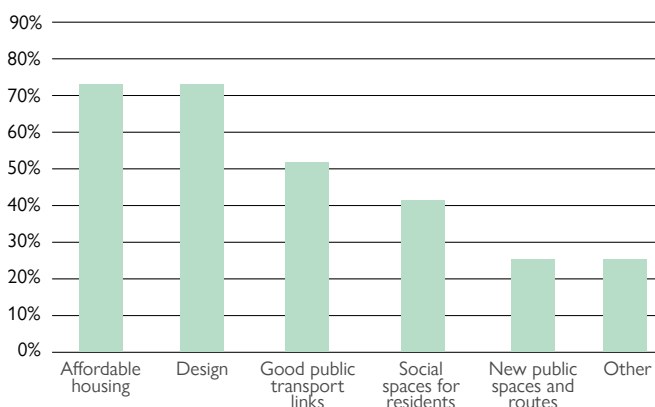
Q2 - Do you agree there is a need for high quality rental homes in Reading?

- 82% of respondents said that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the need for high-quality rental homes in the town
- A smaller proportion asserted their neutrality on the question, while no respondents said that they disagreed.
- **Sample comment:** "Provided there is element of affordable units, there is high quality soundproofing and a recognition that the air quality in the area is not good"



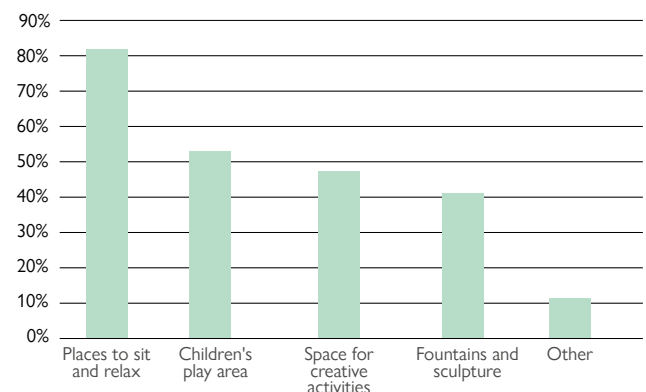
Q3 - When thinking about the new rental homes, which features do you think are most important?

- There was a reasonable level of consensus regarding the features which respondents wished to see integrated into the new development.
- Affordable housing and high-quality design were selected by most respondents (over 80%) to this multiple-choice question, though the other options – around transport, social space and public amenity space – all received support from respondents
- **Sample comments:** “Important to respect the existing environs of the development - listed buildings on London Street, Black History mural site adjacent, Conservation Area, Quaker Burial Ground, street layout, materials and massing.”
- “Sustainable environmentally friendly homes, with low running costs. Integrated into the local community, not behind fences.”



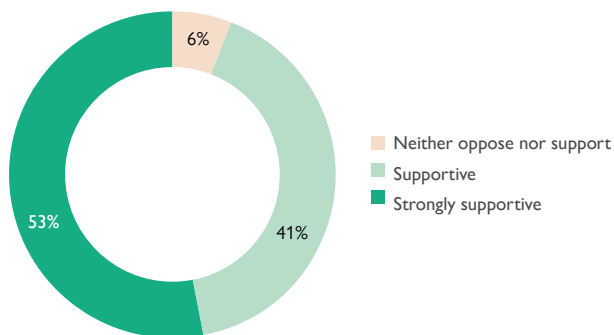
Q4 - Thoughtfully designed public spaces are key to our proposals. What would you like to see provided at Mill Lane?

- Feedback was also welcomed regarding the public spaces which are to be provided as part of the development. Over 80% of respondents to this question supported ‘places to sit and relax’ as potential features of the public space
- Over half of the respondents selected children’s play areas, while there was also significant support for the remaining options
- **Sample comment:** “Gardens where people can grow their own food (and perhaps provide surplus to the community). Space for nature as well as people.”



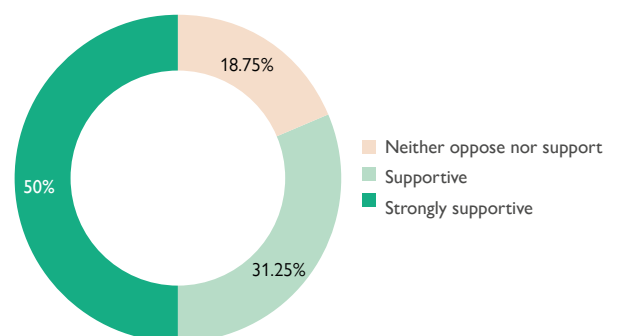
Q5 - Do you believe new homes are best located on sustainable, brownfield sites?

- Respondents likewise expressed strong support for the principle of locating new housing development on sustainably located brownfield sites.
- Over half of all respondents said they 'strongly support' such a belief with an additional 41% expressing 'support'.
- There were no respondents who expressed opposition to the principle
- **Sample comment:** "Yes, the principle of housing on this site is totally accepted"



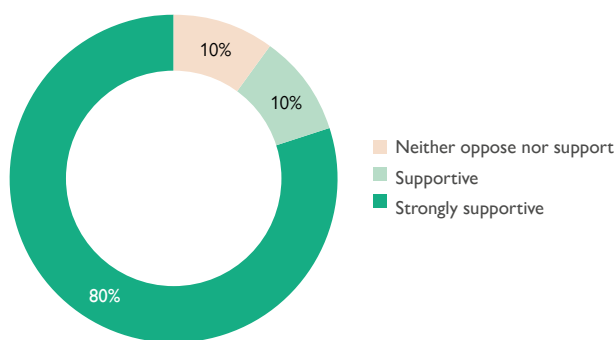
Q6 - We have sought to design the scheme to reflect the history of the site and to consider the surrounding context. Do you agree with our approach?

- There was also strong support expressed for design choices in the development seeking to reflect the history of the site and surrounding context.
- While close to 20% felt neutral about these choices, half of respondents said they were strongly in favour.
- Stakeholder comments included suggestions regarding how the applicant could reflect John Lewis' history in Reading at the site; and how the previous uses of the site could be integrated into the development.
- **Sample comment:** "Block names, e.g. 'Heelas', 'Gaberdine'; Use photos, memorabilia, artefacts in public areas"



Q7 - Do you agree with our vision for long term, sustainable and energy efficient homes?

- JLP's aspiration for the provision of sustainable, energy efficient homes was strongly supported by the vast majority – 80% of respondents, one of the highest levels of support for any aspect of the scheme.
- In a pattern repeated in other questions as part of the consultation, small numbers of respondents said they were either supportive or neutral, while nobody who answered the question opposed the vision.
- **Sample comment:** “Yes - it's very important that any new developments (housing or otherwise) are sustainable and energy efficient”



Q8 - Please let us know your thoughts on how our new homes can support local charities and groups in the town?

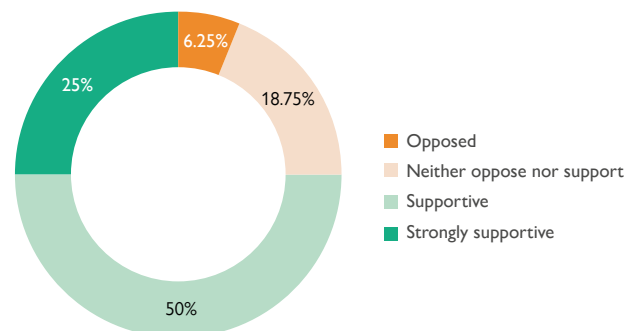
- The applicant has sought to establish strong relationships with the local charity and voluntary sector, with the intention of incorporating support for some of these groups into the project during the planning, construction and operation phases of the development
- These aspirations are detailed further elsewhere in this report, and in the draft Social Value Strategy which was also submitted as part of the current planning application.
- **Sample comments:** “Provide free or low-cost meeting spaces for community groups. Coffee mornings or social evenings where local groups come in to meet with residents. Maybe a community larder or swap shop, or upcycling studio

or something of a social nature to bring in people to mix with the residents. Maybe a partnership of some sort with RISC (Reading International Solidarity Centre, on London Street) to encourage residents to use the refill shop?”

- “Overall I was pleasantly surprised by this project. Community is paramount and I think this is something you have considered. I hope to see the site developed with much needed homes in the near future.”

Q9 - Overall, how do you feel about our plans to redevelop the site at Mill Lane, to provide a new and exciting rental community?

- The final, summary question asked respondents to consider the proposals in the round and express their level of support accordingly.
- In keeping with the earlier questions, a strong majority (75%) of respondents expressed either support or strong support for the plans, while less than 20% expressed neutrality and only 6.25% of respondents said they felt opposed.
- **Sample comment:** “A good site for housing near town centre; Reading will be looked at for success or otherwise of the scheme; Purchase would be better; Needs to link back to St Giles Close, Deansgate Road/Letcombe Street”
- “The design and look will inevitably need some fine-tuning. A Residents Association is required to keep the landlord honest and top of the job”



Second round consultation

The second-stage public consultation received a slightly lower number of responses than the initial phase of engagement. This can happen for a number of reasons, including lower levels of interest in a second event, or a sense among local residents that they are broadly happy with the principle of development.

Seven feedback forms were submitted as part of the second round of consultation. Broad support was expressed by respondents for the refined version of the proposed development which was presented at the exhibition.

The second feedback form featured a series of sliding-scale questions, asking people to rate their support/agreement with specific elements of the proposals on a scale from 1-5 – with 5 being ‘strongly supportive/strongly agree’, and 1 being ‘strongly opposed/strongly disagree’.

General feedback

Despite the lower response rate to the second consultation, the update exhibition was again highly useful in gauging the response of community stakeholders to the refined proposals, and the feedback received played an important role in the detailed design work which took place prior to submitting the application.

As seen in the charts below, respondents’ sentiment towards the updated proposals was largely positive, with only a small number of negative responses recorded to any of the questions on the feedback form.

Key topics referenced in the feedback included:

- Comments on the updated design
- Heritage & conservation issues
- Affordable housing allocation and management
- Social value and partnerships with local groups
- Ideas for the use of community & resident gardens
- Suggestions for the use of S106 and CIL contributions

Other comments

Aside from the responses to the sliding scale question, attendees at the second public event were invited to leave other comments on the proposals. Several of these comments focussed on the planned affordable housing at the site, for instance:

“I am a key worker and I look forward to hearing how we can be helped to have long-term housing options that are clean, psychologically pleasing, safe and affordable.”

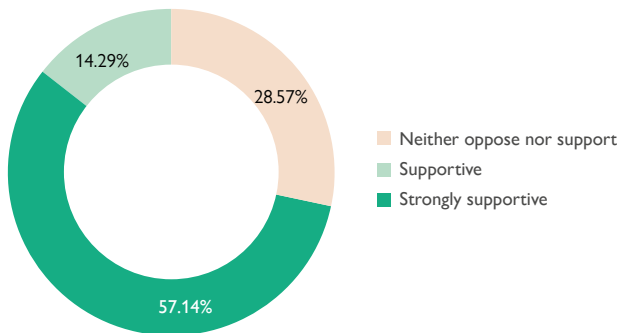
“I am strongly in favour of the new development - it appears to offer an opportunity for people to live a sustainable, comfortable and happy life. I appreciate the explanation of the scheme”.

“The proposal seems an effective and sensitive approach to redeveloping a surplus industrial/brownfield site and provides a more valuable conversion to residential”

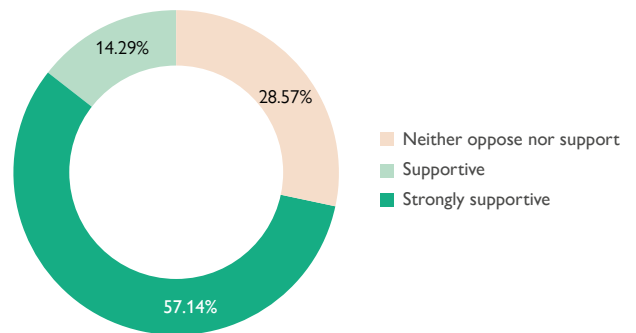
A range of views were expressed in relation to the proposed allocation of affordable housing within the project to local key workers. Some respondents felt that a focus on lower-income renters more broadly would be a better approach. JLP continues to discuss the affordable housing approach and eligibility criteria with Reading Borough Council.

Q1 - Since our first exhibition in January, we have made some changes to the design of the building, including more dual aspect apartments and changes to the massing. Would you say you are supportive of these changes?

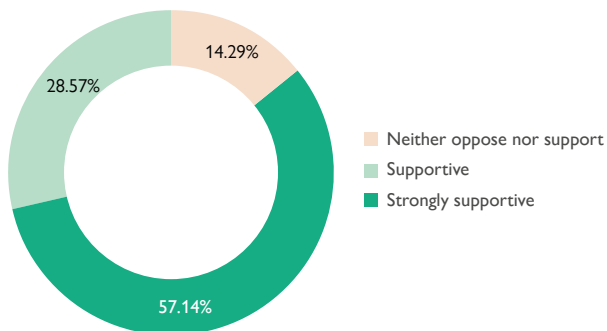
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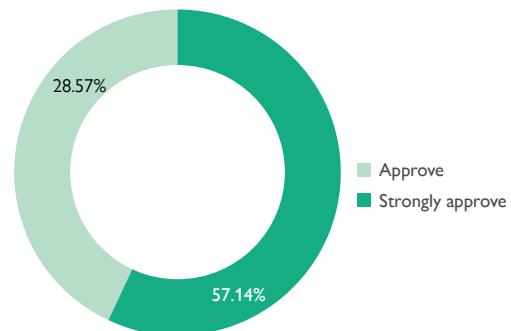
Q2 - We have also made changes to the public realm and landscaping - including by increasing the size of the neighbourhood and wellness gardens. Would you say you are supportive of these changes?



Q3 - Our updated plans take cues from the history of the site, John Lewis' history in Reading, and the nearby conservation area for its material palette. Are you supportive of the building's appearance?



Q4 - We have set out our plans for a Cultural and Social Value Strategy to maximise our positive contribution to the local area. Do you approve of our strategy?



6. Response to Feedback



6. Response to Feedback



Following receipt of feedback during the initial phase of the public consultation, as well as formal pre-application discussions and ongoing detailed design work, the applicant and the project team took time over several weeks to refine the proposals ahead of the second-round consultation, and again in the time leading up to the submission of the planning application.

These updated plans were presented to key stakeholder groups in direct engagement meetings and formed the basis of the second consultation event in the South Street Arts Centre.

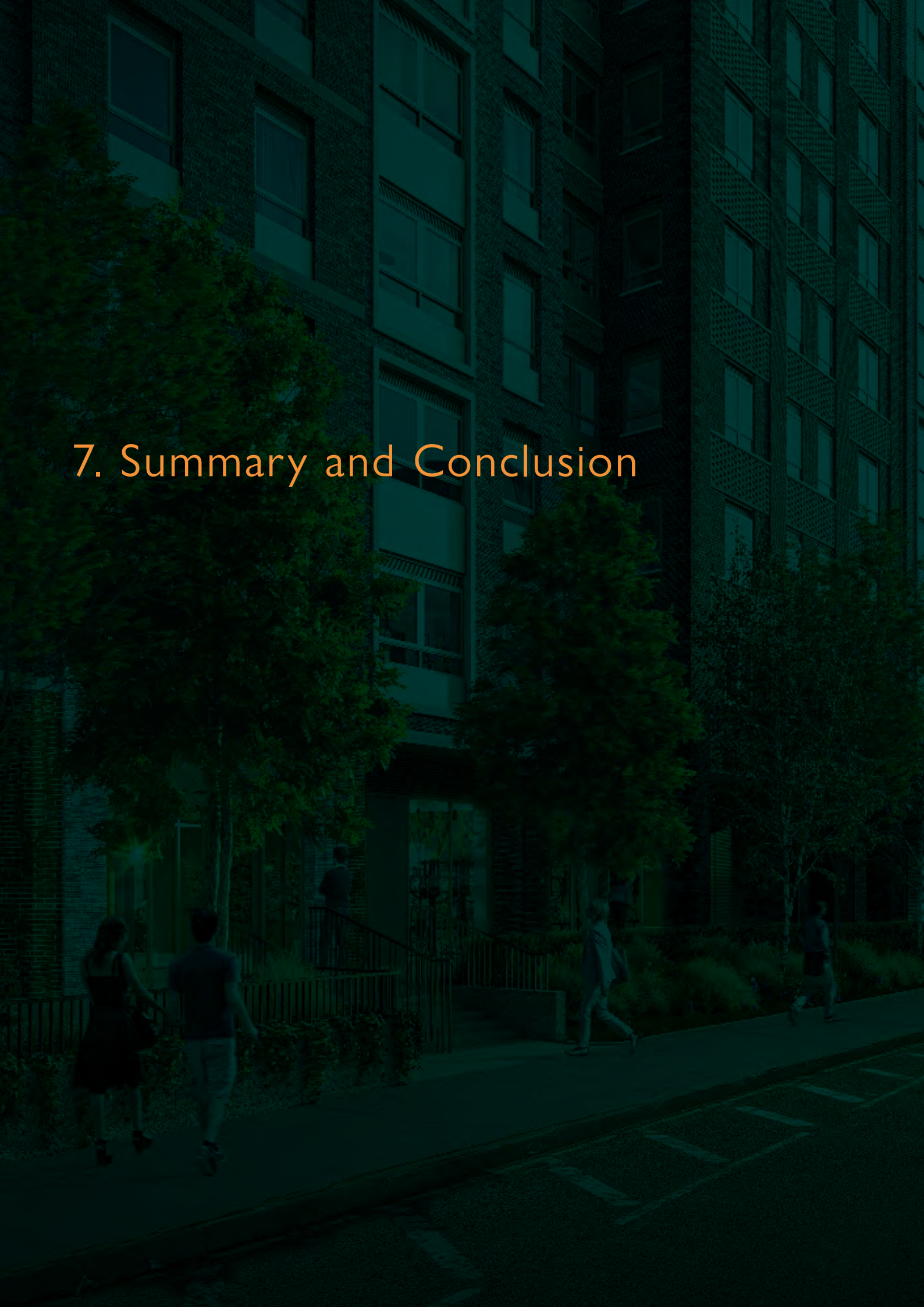
Among the major changes, the following were considered particularly important as part of the response to community and stakeholder feedback:

- The size of the public and neighbourhood gardens has been increased
- More activation has been provided to the frontage along Mill Lane, through introduction of a community/commercial space at ground floor
- One of the stair-cores has been relocated to maximise activation to the south-west corner of the building
- More of the apartments have been designed to be dual aspect, through introduction of an access deck on the south elevation of the building
- The materiality used in the building façade has been further refined, taking cues from the history of Reading and the context of the nearby London Street Conservation Area
- The massing of the building has been amended to better respond to the local context

Further minor changes have been made to the scheme in the weeks following the second-round consultation event, as a result of detailed design and technical assessment work.

JLP has remained clear in its commitment to engagement, and sees the incorporation of feedback into the submitted proposals as part of an ongoing dialogue which will continue throughout construction and operation.

JLP has continued to engage with interested residents, stakeholder groups and elected representatives in the time since the conclusion of the second-round consultation. Having held a number of positive, engaging discussions regarding the potential delivery of social value for the local area, it is envisaged that these conversations will continue to develop through the determination period, construction and operational phases of the project.

An architectural rendering of a modern, multi-story brick building. The building features a prominent green wall on the left side, which is covered in climbing plants. The facade is composed of red brick with large, rectangular windows. In the foreground, a paved sidewalk runs along the building, with several pedestrians walking. A street with a crosswalk is visible in the lower right corner. The overall scene is set in a bright, sunny environment.

7. Summary and Conclusion

7. Summary and Conclusion



This Statement of Community Involvement summarises the consultation and engagement activities which have taken place relating to the proposed development of a new rental community at the former John Lewis Depot, Letcombe Street, Reading (also known as JLP Mill Lane).

Having set out the activities undertaken as part of the public consultation and having considered the feedback offered by local stakeholders on the proposed development, Cratus is satisfied that the public consultation undertaken exceeds the principles of local and national policy.

Following two public events, a webinar, consultation leaflets distributed to thousands of local homes, and a website which saw a high level of traffic over the course of the consultation period, it is clear that the local community was offered the chance to comment on and shape the emerging proposals in advance of the submission of a planning application. This is in addition to meetings with a wide array of stakeholder groups, elected politicians and local employers.

Following feedback received from members of the public and local stakeholders, both online and at the exhibition events, the project team has considered and reviewed the feedback, and has used this feedback to refine the proposals ahead of the submission of the planning application to Reading Borough Council.

The applicant team remains committed to going above and beyond the standard approach to consultation, and establishing strong, long lasting relationships with the local community which will add value to Reading's existing residents and assist the new residents of the development in integrating with the local area.

Appendices



Appendices

Appendix 1: Map of distribution zone (4,469 addresses) for circulation of consultation leaflets

As discussed in Section 3, leaflets advertising the consultation were distributed to addresses in the below, defined distribution zone. These leaflet deliveries took place in advance of each round of the public consultation:

- First leaflet: w.c. 15 January 2024
- Second leaflet: w.c. 26 February 2024



Appendix 2: Leaflet advertising first consultation events

As discussed in Section 3, the leaflet advertising the initial stage of the public consultation was delivered to addresses in the local area during the week commencing Monday 15 January 2024.





We will be hosting two consultation events to provide more detail about the emerging plans and to hear your thoughts. There's the option to join the discussion in-person or virtually via webinar:

**The details of the first event
are as follows:**

Tuesday 23 January 2024
14:00 - 20:00

South Street Arts Centre,
21 South Street,
Reading, RG1 4QU

**The second event will
be a webinar:**

Tuesday 30 January 2024
18:30 - 20:00

To sign up, please visit our
dedicated project website:
JLPmillanereading.co.uk

Feel free to contact us directly at
info@JLPmillanereading.co.uk

or by post at
**Freepost CRATUS
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We look forward to
hearing your views.

Scan here to sign up for
the webinar



Appendix 3: Newspaper advert advertising first consultation

As discussed in Section 3, a full-page newspaper advert regarding the initial stage of the public consultation was published in the *Reading Chronicle* in the print edition of Thursday 19 January 2024.



JLP JOHN LEWIS
PARTNERSHIP

CONSULTATION INVITATION

Mill Lane, Reading

The John Lewis Partnership is preparing plans to deliver much-needed new rental homes in Reading and we'd really like to hear your views to help shape our proposals.

Given the rapid growth of the town and the enormous demand for new homes, we have an opportunity to regenerate the vacant John Lewis warehouse site, located next to the A329 and opposite the Oracle car park, to create a thriving new rental community.

Transforming such a well connected, brownfield site would create around 200 energy-efficient homes, all of which would be managed by the John Lewis Partnership for years to come, offering residents greater security and a high level of customer service.

We are proposing a variety of community benefits, including affordable housing, improved public realm, new public spaces and community partnerships. We are keen to have your input on what else we can do to ensure our plans make a positive difference to the local area.

We will be hosting two consultation events to provide more detail about the emerging plans and to hear your thoughts. There's the option to join the discussion in-person or virtually via webinar.

JLPmillanereading.co.uk

The details of the events are as follows:

IN-PERSON
Tuesday 23 January 2024
14:00 - 20:00
South Street Arts Centre,
21 South Street, Reading, RG1 4QU

WEBINAR
Tuesday 30 January 2024
18:30 - 20:00

To sign up, please visit our dedicated project website: JLPmillanereading.co.uk

Feel free to contact us directly at
info@JLPmillanereading.co.uk

or by post at
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We look forward to
hearing your views.



Scan here for more information

Appendix 4: Leaflet advertising second consultation

As discussed in Section 3, the leaflet advertising the second stage of the public consultation was delivered to addresses in the local area during the week commencing Monday 26 February 2024.

EXHIBITION INVITATION
Proposed New Homes -
Mill Lane, Reading





The John Lewis Partnership is preparing to submit a planning application to deliver a new community of much-needed rental homes in central Reading, and we want to let you know about our updated proposals.

Earlier this year we shared our initial plans to transform the vacant John Lewis warehouse site on Mill Lane, located next to the A329 and opposite the Oracle car park, into a thriving new rental community.

Following feedback from our initial consultation with the local residents, community groups, and Reading Borough Council, we have evolved our designs, including increasing the public and private garden spaces.

We are keen to tell you about the changes we have made before we submit a planning application to the council.

We will be hosting an event on 5 March (see details overleaf) where you can find out more information, view new visuals and put your questions to the team.

Scan here for
more information



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Exhibition details:

Tuesday 5 March 2024
14:00 - 20:00

South Street Arts Centre,
21 South Street,
Reading, RG1 4QU

Feel free to contact us directly at
info@JLPmillanereading.co.uk

or by post at
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We look forward to
hearing your views.

Transforming such a well connected, brownfield site would create around 200 energy-efficient homes, all of which would be managed by the John Lewis Partnership for years to come.

We are also proposing a variety of community benefits, including affordable housing, new and improved public spaces and community partnerships.

We look forward to receiving any further comments and discussing what else we can do to ensure our plans would make a positive difference to the local area.

For more information, please visit our dedicated project website:
JLPmillanereading.co.uk

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Appendix 5 – Newspaper advert advertising second consultation

As discussed in Section 3, a half-page newspaper advert regarding the initial stage of the public consultation was published in the *Reading Chronicle* in the print edition of Thursday 29 February 2024.

JLP JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

EXHIBITION INVITATION

Proposed New Homes - Mill Lane, Reading

Earlier this year we shared our initial plans to transform the vacant John Lewis warehouse site on Mill Lane, located next to the A329 and opposite the Oracle car park, into a thriving new rental community.

Following feedback from our initial consultation with the local residents, community groups, and Reading Borough Council, we have evolved our designs, including increasing the public and private garden spaces.

We are keen to tell you about the changes we have made before we submit a planning application to the council.

We will be hosting an event on 5 March where you can find out more information, view new visuals and put your questions to the team.

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Tuesday 5 March 2024 14:00 - 20:00

South Street Arts Centre,
21 South Street, Reading, RG1 4QU

For more information, please visit our dedicated project website: JLPmillanereading.co.uk

Feel free to contact us directly at info@JLPmillanereading.co.uk

or by post at
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We look forward to hearing your views.

Scan here for more information

Appendix 6 – Pull-up banners presented at first consultation event

THE JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP WELCOMES YOUR VIEWS

Creating a new rental community

We own a warehouse site between Mill Lane and Crossland Road, opposite the Oracle car park, which is no longer in use. We'd like to turn it into a new rental community.

Our proposals could create around 200 high-quality, energy-efficient apartments, purpose-designed for rent. We would manage these homes and their creation will help ease local housing pressures.



Please consider our initial proposals and speak to our team, who will be able to answer your questions.

After today, we will host a webinar on Tuesday 30 January from 6.30 pm-8.00 pm, providing another opportunity to learn about our plans and put your questions to us.

We will carefully consider your feedback over the coming weeks. We'd like suggestions on how you think we can reflect local needs and also support Reading's wider requirements.

We will host another event like this soon, before we submit our planning application in the spring.

To sign up for the webinar, please scan the below QR code, or visit the sign-up page on the consultation website.



Scan for webinar



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JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP AND RENTAL HOUSING

We believe there is an opportunity to do more with some of the buildings and land we own.

By investing to transform some of these sites, we can provide professionally managed rental housing as well as create new and improved public spaces.

The benefit for our Partners, as our employees are known, is being able to do more to help strengthen those areas we serve, while generating stable income from renting homes to support ongoing investment back into John Lewis and Waitrose.

We believe it is socially responsible to make the best use of sites like this that are close to transport links and large employers given the increased demand for housing and rental homes across the UK.

We would develop and manage the homes ourselves, which means it's in our interest to deliver high-quality buildings that are thoughtfully designed and managed, with the same commitment to high standards as we apply in our nearby John Lewis and Waitrose shops.

Residents would rent directly from a trusted brand, providing them with greater certainty of tenure.

We are proposing to invest for the long term, solidifying our future commitment to Reading and allowing us to provide both great experiences in retail and home rental for local people.

Professionally managed Build to Rent homes

Our plans include 200 Build to Rent homes. These are apartments purpose-designed for renting, which include shared areas to grow communities and are professionally managed with round-the-clock security.

Benefits of Build to Rent include:

- Helping to alleviate some of the growing pressures on the UK's rental market where many buy-to-let landlords are selling up and many people cannot afford to buy.
- Residents can agree rental durations up front with longer term tenancies for greater security.
- Rents that include access to amenities such as a gym, high-speed WiFi, residents lounge, co-working space and landscaped gardens with no hidden fees.
- True mixed tenure where all residents, including those in affordable homes, have access to the same amenities and services.



The John Lewis store on Letcombe Street in Reading

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MILL LANE

THE STORY SO FAR

The Mill Lane site has had a front-row seat to the development of Reading - a story which reaches back centuries. The name 'Mill Lane' refers to the old St. Giles' Mill, the largest mill serving the town, which is recorded as far back as the Domesday Book of 1086.

The water tower which served the mill stood about where the Oracle car park is today, and was a striking feature of the local skyline before it was demolished in 1901.



View looking west down St. Giles' Mill Race, c.1800

For much of the 20th century the site was home to a clothing factory, first built to aid production of servicemen's trench-coats during World War I before being used as a John Lewis customer collection depot from 1996-2021.



Aerial view of JLP site, 1950 (John Lewis, Reading)

The site is just one part of JLP's long standing connection to the town. We have had a major presence at the heart of Reading since we acquired the iconic Heelas store on Broad Street in 1953.

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MEETING THE NEEDS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

Job opportunities, a thriving university, cultural vibrancy and easy access to green infrastructure are among the many reasons why Reading continues to be an attractive place to live and work.

The latest Census (2021) highlighted that the town's population grew by 12% between 2011-2021 - one of the highest increases in the South East - and that 48% of the population rent, compared to an average of almost 38% across England.



The Census also reported that Reading is in the top five towns for good economic growth and the top ten for business numbers, private sector jobs and qualifications.

Software companies such as Microsoft and Oracle have contributed to its place at the heart of the UK's 'Silicon Corridor', whilst the opening of the Elizabeth Line in 2022 reinforced the town's position as a regional rail hub.

For Reading to keep on attracting world-leading firms and retaining talent, it needs high-quality housing. Our development zone isn't going to solve Reading's housing problems - but it would create a new rental community that can make a contribution.



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THE SITE TODAY

The site is located on the edge of central Reading, between Mill Lane and Crossland Road – next to the A329 and directly opposite the Orade car park.



The site links urban and higher density townscape in central Reading to the north and the intimate character of the London Street Conservation Area to the south.



As a former customer collection facility, it is a typical mid-1990s warehouse and car park. The building has little architectural merit and doesn't positively contribute to the setting of the area.

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JLP HOMES AT MILL LANE

There is a well-documented need for new homes nationally and locally.

Delivering new homes in a sustainable town centre location, such as this, can help alleviate pressure to deliver homes elsewhere in the town.

We would deliver approximately 200 homes at varying rent levels to meet the needs of the local community, providing a variety of homes for singles, sharers, couples and families.



Our homes

- Tech-enabled apartments for different size households thoughtfully designed and built to our high standards
- Nature-based designed homes which incorporate natural lighting, ventilation and landscape features to create a more productive, spacious and comfortable living environment
- Shared green spaces, including play areas for children, with rooftop/podium gardens for residents to socialise and relax
- Resident amenities, including gyms, resident lounge/kitchens, work hubs and other services
- Homes managed and furnished by the John Lewis Partnership with a 24/7 on-site team
- Options for long-term tenancies provide residents with the opportunity to put down roots locally

Affordable Housing

As a socially responsible business, it is our intention to provide as much affordable housing for local key workers as possible.

The affordable homes would be rented at a discount to the market rent and managed by us.

The eligibility criteria would be agreed with Reading Borough Council and are likely to focus on local key workers, such as nurses, paramedics, teachers, police officers, social workers and carers, within the borough.

All affordable homes would be the same specification as the market rent homes and distributed throughout the development, ensuring all residents have access to the same facilities and amenities.



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MILL LANE

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Our emerging design proposals for new homes at Mill Lane are guided by a series of key principles:

-  Thoughtfully designed, sustainable development
-  Creation of 'Healthy homes'
-  Regeneration of under-utilised brownfield site
-  Community centred, outward facing development

Our proposed development has been designed from the ground up:

-  To reinforce the frontage along Mill Lane and the Inner Distribution Road (IDR)
-  To incorporate active ground floor uses and residential accommodation above
-  To create generous landscaped public realm along Mill Lane, providing a safer and more pleasant environment
-  To deliver new landscaped courtyards to the south for the benefit of residents and the wider community

The building's massing and appearance has been carefully crafted to reflect the character of the surrounding area, being located between the more urban town centre, and the London Road Conservation Area.

We want this building to stand out as an attractive, locally distinctive and thoughtfully designed development which welcomes people into the centre of town.



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DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Establishing a healthy community

- Create a contemporary urban living environment for people and the planet

Provide a distinctive place for residents and the community

- Thoughtful indoor amenity spaces that offer flexibility for socialising, working, relaxing and learning
- A development that reaches out to the surrounding community and looks for opportunities to invite them into the development
- Make back of house areas into exciting spaces and edges that add to the developments visual identity

Homes for the way people live

- Design homes for all ages and abilities
- Create a more useable space using multi-use furniture and clever storage design



Height principles established based on analysis of the existing context and key local view points

Mass removed to create efficient layouts around south-facing courtyards

Building mass broken down into different elements based on adjacent context conditions and character areas

Height reduced to the south in response to the London Road conservation area

Introduction of ground floor porch and further articulation through semi-detached details

Street frontages enhanced through the internal order of high-quality landscaping and active frontage

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PROPOSED PLANS



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APPEARANCE



To sensitively address the site's proximity to the London Street Conservation Area, nearby heritage views and following engagement with Reading Borough Council's officers, the building has been scaled back so it is in keeping with the Oracle car park at its tallest point.



The material palette for the building facades has been informed by both JLP's history in the town and the neighbouring conservation area.



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CREATING SOCIAL VALUE

JLP currently employs approximately **700 people** across the Broad Street store and the Waitrose shops in Caversham and Oxford Road.

We want our proposals for Mill Lane to build on their work of establishing community partnerships and to deliver a scheme of unique quality for residents in Reading with a Cultural and Social Value Strategy.



We would like your feedback on how our plans for rental housing we can maximise the social value for local residents.

- **Community Matters** - Our charitable giving scheme that runs through our shops, supporting local charities and organisations
- **Building Happier Futures** - Supporting young people who have experienced care through our Happier Futures employment programme
- **Partner Volunteering** - Partnerships with local community groups and organisations
- **John Lewis Foundation** - Investment in vulnerable children and young adults to enable access to education and skills, to sustain employment

We want your input on how we can maximise the social value for local residents.

- Are there local groups and initiatives that you feel are particularly deserving of support?
- Is there a way our development could positively contribute to the needs of local communities, such as a new physical space or an outreach programme?
- How can we establish Mill Lane as a good neighbour for the decades to come?



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SUSTAINABILITY



Urban Greening

Landscaped courtyards provide external amenity space for residents and, health, happiness and well-being.



Sustainable Drainage

Landscaped courtyards and permeable roofs will be used to add a sustainable drainage strategy.



Clean Energy

Renewable resources will be targeted within the energy strategy using solar panels and air source heat pumps.



Form, Shading and Insulation

A courtyard typology is adopted providing solar shading at different parts of the day to avoid overheating in summer months. High specification insulation (positive heat loss to winter months).



Sustainable Transport Links

Provision of a network of sustainable, greenways, cycle paths and strong links to local transport connections.



Home Quality Mark

4 Stars targeted for Home Quality Mark to ensure homes are well designed, well built and cost effective to run.



Optimising for the Future

Designing with future flexibility in mind, utilising high performance materials and insulation.



Safety

Proposals are designed for increased safety with access to two means of escape and no excessive travel distances.

Our evolving proposals are being guided by key principles set out by the John Lewis Partnership's sustainability framework.

The detail of the internal spaces and the landscape has been led by the concept of biophilic design, to enhance the focus on nature and wellbeing and to connect residents with the natural environment.

- Aim to divert 100% of demolition waste from landfill and reusing materials where possible
- Applying circular economy principles to all existing materials
- Undertaking whole life carbon analysis on the scheme to understand how the building will perform when constructed



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THANK YOU AND FUTURE ACTIVITY

Thank you for taking the time to attend
this exhibition.

We're grateful for your feedback on our
emerging proposals and look forward to
discussing our plans for Mill Lane with
you in more detail.

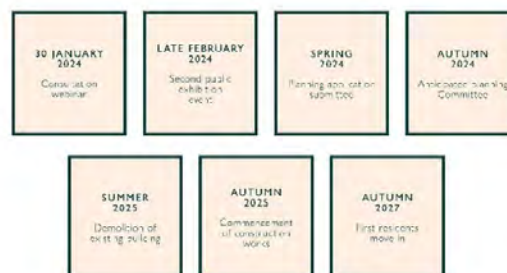
If you would like to speak with us further,
please get in touch at:
info@JLPmillanereading.co.uk,
or by post at:

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Following today's event, and
our webinar next week, we will
take some time to review the
community's feedback.

We intend to submit a planning
application to Reading Borough
Council in the spring this year.

The timeline for the next stages of
the process are as follows:



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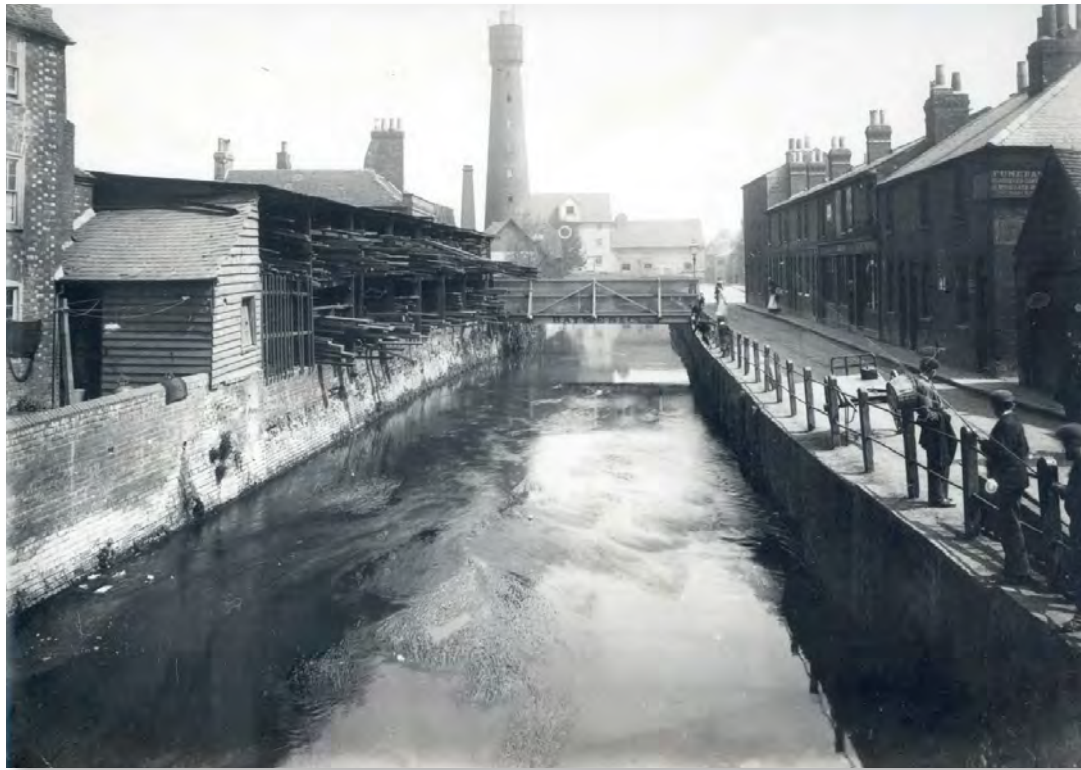


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Appendix 7 – A1 boards displayed at first consultation event





Appendix 8 – Pull-up banners from second consultation

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

Creating a new rental community

We would like to thank everyone who attended our previous consultation events and provided feedback. This has been invaluable as we have continued to develop the proposals.

We have considered all the comments received and are sharing our updated plans today, for a new rental community of over 200 high quality homes to rent. We intend to submit a planning application to Reading Borough Council in the next few months.



View along A30 from Looking West

We have been careful to consider your feedback on everything from the design to local needs and requirements specific to Reading.

Once our plans have been submitted, Reading Borough Council will host their own statutory consultation process where you will be able to provide feedback on the proposals.

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JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP AND RENTAL HOUSING

We believe there is an opportunity to do more with some of the buildings and brownfield land we own.

By investing to transform some of these sites, we can provide much-needed rental housing, as well as create new and improved public spaces.

We would develop and manage the homes ourselves, which means it's in our interest to deliver high-quality buildings that are thoughtfully designed with the same commitment to high standards as we apply in our nearby John Lewis and Waitrose shops.

Residents would rent directly from a trusted brand, providing them with greater certainty of tenure.

We are proposing to invest for the long term, solidifying our future commitment to Reading, and allowing us to provide both great experiences in retail and home rental for local people.

Professionally managed Build to Rent homes

Our plans include over 200 Build to Rent homes. These apartments will be professionally managed with round the clock security, purpose designed for rent, with shared communal areas to foster a real sense of community.

Benefits of Build to Rent include:

- Helping to alleviate some of the growing pressures on the UK's rental market where many buy-to-let landlords are selling up and many people cannot afford to buy
- Residents can agree rental durations up front with longer term tenancies
- Rents that include access to amenities such as a gym, high speed Wi Fi, residents lounge, working from home hub and landscaped gardens with no hidden fees
- True mixed tenure where all residents, including those in affordable homes, have access to the same amenities and services



The Old Depot

JLP HOMES AT MILL LANE

There is a well-documented need for new homes nationally and locally.

Delivering new homes in a sustainable town centre location, such as this, can help alleviate pressure to deliver homes elsewhere in the borough. This aligns with the broad political consensus and current Government consultation which looks to prioritise development on brownfield land, to improve the supply of housing.

We will deliver over 200 new homes for singles, sharers, couples and families at varying rent levels, to meet the needs of the local community.



Our homes

- Tech-enabled apartments for different size households thoughtfully designed and built to our high standards.
- Nature-based designed homes which incorporate natural lighting, ventilation and landscape features to create a more productive, spacious and comfortable living environment.
- Public and private gardens, including play space for children, for the benefit of residents and the community.
- Resident amenities, including gyms, resident lounge/kitchen and work hubs.
- Homes managed and furnished by the John Lewis Partnership with a 24/7 on site team.
- Long-term tenancies which provide residents with the opportunity to put down roots locally.

Affordable Housing

- As a socially responsible business, we will provide as much affordable housing as possible.
- The affordable homes would be rented at a discount to the market rent and managed by us. We are intending to prioritise the affordable homes for local key workers such as nurses, paramedics, teachers, police officers, social workers and carers, within the borough.
- All affordable homes will be the same specification as the market rent homes and distributed throughout the development, ensuring all residents have access to the same facilities and amenities.
- We are continuing to work with Reading Council on the delivery of and eligibility for the affordable homes. We will provide more information ahead of submission of the application.



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KEY BENEFITS



Redevelopment of an under-used, sustainable town centre site to provide much-needed housing in Reading.



Over 200 new rental homes, owned and managed by the John Lewis Partnership.



Proportion of affordable homes dedicated for local key workers.



Creation of a low carbon development.



Improved links around the site to enhance accessibility and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.



New public and private landscaped spaces with increased tree planting and accessible play areas.



Estimated £520,000 (net additional) towards council tax each year.



Long term community involvement as part of the Cultural and Social Value Strategy.



Over £1.9m household spend per year, supporting local goods and services.



Over 130 full time construction jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities per year.



Biodiversity Net Gain of a minimum of 10%.



Over £3m of financial contributions for the benefit of local people (£106/CIL).

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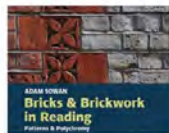
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ARCHITECTURE

A Building for Reading

We wanted to create a building which addresses the history of the site, John Lewis' history in Reading and is respectful of the nearby London Street Conservation Area. The design of the building responds to this rich heritage in a locally distinctive way, creating a building for Reading.



Architectural Character & Context

For a new building to be successful, it must respond to its context. This includes the building's location, its history, and the surrounding environment.



Context Character 1

Adjacent to the site, the building is surrounded by a mix of historic and modern architecture. The design aims to blend with the surrounding context.



Context Character 2

The building is located in a historic area, and the design aims to respect the local character and heritage.



Context Character 3

The building is located in a historic area, and the design aims to respect the local character and heritage.



Bay Study 1 - Typology 1 Top



Bay Study 2 - Typology 3 Top



Bay Study 3 - Typology 3 Top



Bay Study 4 - Typology 2 Middle



Bay Study 5 - Entrance



Material Palette



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SUSTAINABILITY

Our evolving proposals are being guided by key principles set out by the John Lewis Partnership's Sustainability Framework.

Our Key Principles



Aim to divert 100% of demolition waste from landfill and reusing materials where possible;



Applying circular economy principles to all existing materials;



Undertaking whole life carbon analysis on the scheme to understand how the building will perform when constructed.



Urban Greening

Landscaped courtyards provide outdoor amenity space for residents and staff, supporting well-being.



Sustainable Drainage

Landscaped courtyards and brown roofs will be used to aid a sustainable drainage strategy.



Clean Energy

Renewable resources will be targeted within the energy strategy, including solar panels and air source heat pumps.



Form, Shading and Insulation

The building is arranged around courtyards providing solar shading to avoid overheating in summer months. High specification insulation prevents heat loss in winter months.



Sustainable Transport Links

Provision of a car-free scheme environment, generous cycle parking and strong links to local transport connections.



Home Quality Mark

4 stars targeted for Home Quality Mark to ensure homes are well designed, well built and cost effective to run.



Optimising for the Future

Designing with the future in mind, utilising high performance materials and insulation.



Safety

Proposals are designed for increased safety with access to two means of escape and no excessive travel distances.



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LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Biophilic Design

Biophilic design is a concept to increase occupant connectivity to the natural environment through the use of direct and indirect nature and the experience of spaces.

We put biophilic design at the heart of our ambition for residential development. At Mill Lane, this will not only benefit residents but the local community and wider environment also.



Key Principles:

- Soft green landscape as default
- Planting to soften straight edges
- Variation in scale, texture and colour of plants and materials
- Natural materials
- Considered layouts and natural light
- Features to engage the widest range of people
- Biodiversity

Wellness Garden

A courtyard garden with focus on wellbeing. The wellness garden provides a series of green and sunny spaces for a range of organised and informal activity, encouraging residents to spend more time outside.



Neighbourhood Garden

A courtyard garden for the benefit of the local community. The neighbourhood garden provides a space for a number of different uses, including children's play and relaxation.



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VIEWS



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CREATING SOCIAL VALUE

Making a difference

We want our proposals to establish community partnerships and to deliver a package of benefits unique to the residents of Reading.

Following feedback from several local groups and residents, we have started discussions with a number of groups and organisations as we bring forward our Cultural and Social Value Strategy.



Sustainable Transport



Community Participation



Education



Social Care



Housing



Doing the Right Thing



Key Workers



Respect and Responsibility

From our early discussions, we have developed the following key themes which our strategy will be based upon:



Health and Wellbeing



Sustainability



Young People



Community

We will continue to engage with these groups over the course of the next few months as we develop short, medium and long term initiatives which our new rental community in Reading can play a central role in.

We are always on the lookout for new ideas so please do continue to let us know how we can make a difference.



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CONSTRUCTION AND LOGISTICS

Following a successful planning permission, we are working towards construction starting in Autumn 2025 with first residents moving in during 2028.

We are committed to reducing the impact of the construction phase on our neighbours and will be working closely with the community, our contractors and the local council to minimise the disruption to local people.

We will:

- Employ an industry-leading building contractor to deliver the project;
- Employ a Social Impact Manager to provide a single point of contact for our neighbours;
- Prepare a logistics plan to ensure construction traffic is managed effectively;
- Register the project with the Considerate Contractors Scheme;
- Look to maximise the use of offsite construction to reduce the number of vehicle movements and programme;
- Install site wide hoarding for safety and security, including CCTV, site alarm and biometric access control;
- Implement dust and vibration control measures;
- Restrict noisy works to working hours only;
- Implement a Just-In-Time (JIT) delivery booking system to reduce vehicle congestion and waiting times;
- Undertake wheel washing for construction vehicles to keep our roads clean and safe;
- Encourage personnel travelling to site to use public transport.

We will be submitting a **Construction Management Plan** with our planning application with details of our proposed construction methodology and mitigation measures.



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THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS

Thank you for taking the time to attend
our exhibition.

We're grateful for your continued
involvement and hope you agree the
changes we have made have been
positive.

If you would like to speak with us
further, please get in touch at:
info@JLPmillanereading.co.uk

or by post at: **Freepost CRATUS
COMMUNICATIONS**

Following today's event, we will
continue to engage with local
groups as we develop our Cultural
and Social Value Strategy and
consider any further feedback.

We are working towards finalising
plans for a planning submission to
Reading Borough Council over the
next few months.

The timeline for the next stages of
the process are as follows:



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Appendix 9 – Feedback form from first consultation event

MILL LANE, READING

FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for attending our public exhibition today. Our proposals will deliver around 200 high quality rental homes and improved public spaces. Using this form, you can give your feedback on our plans to revitalise the site at Mill Lane.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

Postcode:

What is your relationship to the site?

☐ Live nearby
☐ Work nearby
☐ I'm a member of Reading Borough Council
☐ I represent a local community group
☐ Other/Prefer not to say

1. Do you agree there is a need for high quality rental homes in Reading?

Strongly opposed ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly supportive

2. When thinking about the new rental homes, which features do you think are most important? Tick as appropriate.

☐ Design
☐ Affordable housing
☐ New public spaces and routes
☐ Social spaces for residents
☐ New spaces for community groups
☐ Good public transport links
☐ Other

3. Thoughtfully designed public spaces are key to our proposals. What would you like to see provided at Mill Lane?

☐ Fountains & sculpture
☐ Places to sit and relax
☐ Children's play areas
☐ Educational displays
☐ Space for creative activities
☐ Open equipment and play spaces
☐ Other

4. Do you believe new homes are best located on sustainable, brownfield sites?

Strongly opposed ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly supportive

5. We have sought to design the scheme to reflect the history of the site and to consider the surrounding context. Do you agree with our approach?

Strongly opposed ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly supportive

6. Do you agree with our vision for long term, sustainable and energy efficient homes?

Strongly opposed ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly supportive

7. Please let us know your thoughts on how our new homes can support local charities and groups in the town?

8. Overall, how do you feel about our plans to redevelop the site at Mill Lane, to provide a new and exciting rental community?

Strongly opposed ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 Strongly supportive

If you wish to use your feedback form today to complete, we kindly request you return it to us by email or post by Wednesday 7th February 2024.

GET IN TOUCH

0203 026 3143
 Freephone 0800 131 1313
 For further information, or to express interest

#milllanereading.co.uk
 info@milllanereading.co.uk

DATA PROTECTION: This will be collected and held securely by Cratus Communications Ltd on behalf of the John Lewis Partnership in accordance with the latest data protection legislation. Any personal comments will be processed in Reading through Council as part of a future planning application.

Appendix 10 – Feedback form from second consultation event

MILL LANE, READING

FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for attending our public exhibition today. We are grateful for the feedback already received on our plans to deliver over 200 high-quality rental homes and improved public spaces on Mill Lane. Using this form, you can give your feedback on our updated proposals.

What is your relationship to the site?

☐ I live nearby
 ☐ I work nearby
 ☐ I'm a member of Reading Borough Council
 ☐ I represent a local community group
 ☐ Other/prefer not to say

1. Have you previously engaged with our plans for a new rental community on Mill Lane?

☐ Yes
 ☐ No

2. Since our first exhibition in January, we have made some changes to the design of the building, including more dual aspect apartments and changes to the massing. Would you say you are supportive of these changes?

Strongly opposed

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly supportive

3. We have also made changes to the public realm and landscaping – including by increasing the size of the neighbourhood and wellness gardens. Would you say you are supportive of these changes?

Strongly opposed

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly supportive

4. Our updated plans take cues from the history of the site, John Lewis' history in Reading, and the nearby conservation area for its material palette. Are you supportive of the building's appearance?

Strongly opposed

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly supportive

5. We have set out our plans for a Cultural and Social Value Strategy to maximise our positive contribution to the local area. Do you approve of our strategy?

Strongly opposed

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly supportive

5a. Are there any additional groups, initiatives or issues in the local area with whom you think we should engage regarding cultural and social value?

6. We want the affordable housing in the development to primarily serve local key workers, in agreement with Reading Borough Council. Do you approve of this approach?

Strongly opposed

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly supportive

7. Do you have any further comments on our updated proposals?

If you wish to take your feedback form away today to complete, we kindly request you return it to us by email or freepost by Friday 22nd March 2024.

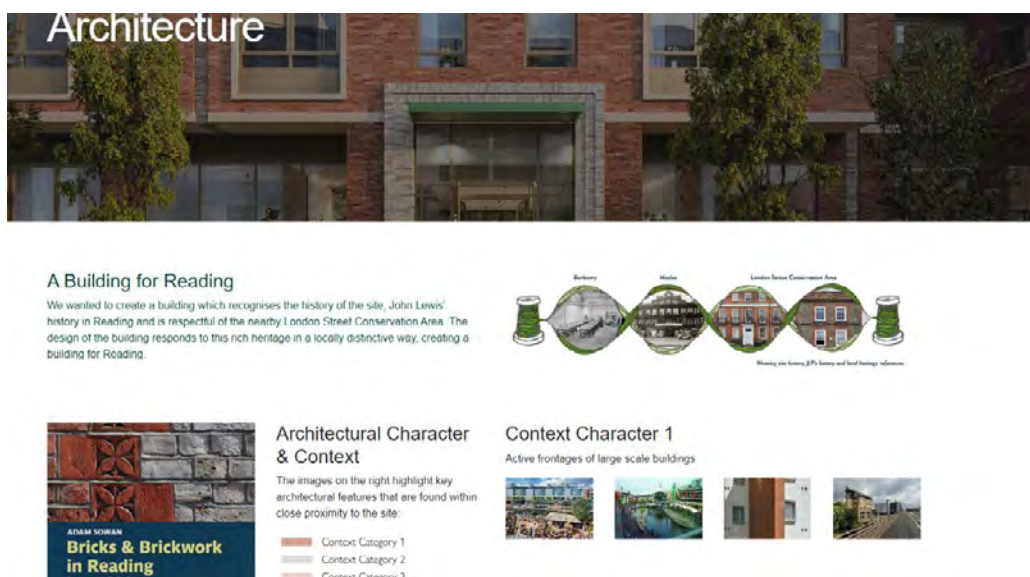
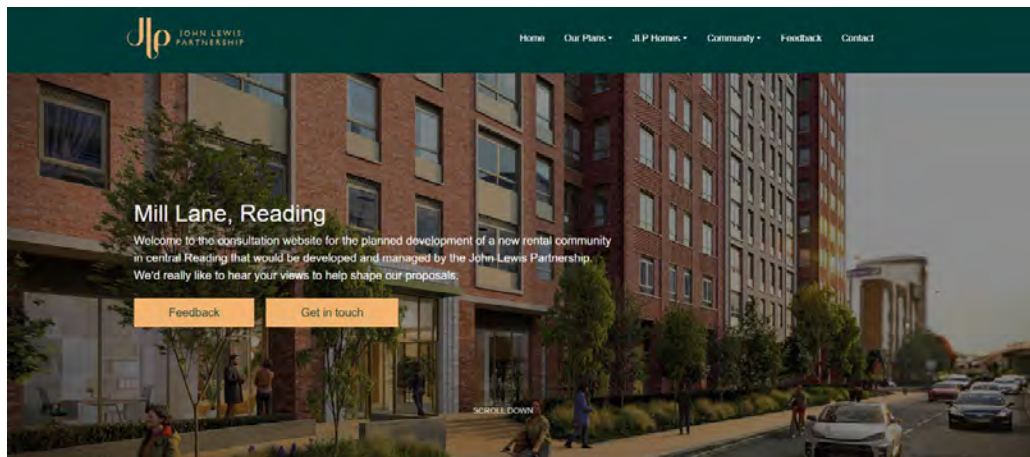
GET IN TOUCH

0203 026 3143
 jlpmillanereading.co.uk

Freepost CRATUS COMMUNICATIONS
(No further address details or stamps required)
 info@jlpmillanereading.co.uk

DATA PROTECTION: Data will be collected and held in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of collection. Data will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of collection. Data will be held for a period of 12 months from the date of collection.

Appendix 11 – Screenshots from consultation website, April 2024



FORMER JOHN LEWIS DEPOT, LETCOMBE STREET, READING
(ALSO KNOWN AS JLP MILL LANE)

Statement of Community Involvement - August 2024

Cratus
group