

AMENITY USERS OF THE RIVER KENNET PATH

- 7.42

View 8 has been identified to illustrate the pattern of pedestrian movement along the northern bank of the River Kennet.
- 7.43

Receptors are likely to be pedestrians and amenity users of the pathway, as well as local residents.
- 7.44

The pathway follows the trajectory of the River Kennet, which flows on an east to west axis through the centre of Reading. From further west along the path (articulated by AVR View 9) the experience of the receptor is characterised predominantly by the residential housing estate on the northern side of the river, the body of water and the infrastructure that comprises the elevated IDR. From this direction, the pathway has a more informal character, comprising areas of grassy scrubland and lacking in street furniture or designated areas of public realm.
- 7.45

Whilst the presence of smaller scale housing, some of which is historic, reinforces the residential character on the northern side of the River, views to the opposing side are characterised by the urban nature of the IDR, as well as taller scale commercial and retail development which is perceptible aligning either side of it. The infrastructure of the IDR provides some sense of visual enclosure to the southern side of the River, however, views outwards are still afforded above this, to the taller scale development on the opposing side of the River, as well as the spire of the Church of St Giles.
- 7.46

Linear views looking eastwards enable the receptor to become aware of the proximity of the town centre, the urban forms of which are distinguishable by their large scale and higher density; marking receptors transition from the more residential areas to the east and the busier, retail and commercial core to the west.
- 7.47

As receptors travel eastwards, towards the town centre, the topography of the pathway becomes more elevated and formalised; now comprising areas of paved public realm, seating and landscaping. The change in the character of development is perceptible, now comprising higher density, modern retail development of a larger urban footprint. The scale of development provides more visual enclosure, obstructing any long or open views outwards to the development beyond. The urban nature of Reading town centre is readily appreciable from this area of visual amenity.



Figure 7.16 View 8: River Kennet (north bank) looking east. Source: Cityscape

AMENITY USERS OF ST GILES CHURCHYARD

- 7.48

View 15 has been selected to demonstrate the experience of amenity users of the churchyard of St Giles, as well as visitors to the Grade II listed church.
- 7.49

The churchyard is densely vegetated comprising a number of mature trees as well as shrubbery and planting. A narrow path to the south of the church provides a direct east to west access route, from the surrounding residential areas to the retail and commercial outlets on London Street.
- 7.50

From within the courtyard, receptors will have an awareness of the surrounding urban character, including the busy A-road to the immediate west of the church, and the IDR and associated development to the north.
- 7.51

Receptors using the church and churchyard are likely to have an appreciation of St Giles Church as a heritage asset. Yet in direct views from the church's principal entrance, it's location on the busy A-road is discernible, including the proximity of the urban infrastructure of the IDR and associated commercial/retail development to the north.
- 7.52

Gaps in the treeline will provide visibility to the surrounding residential development, of varying scales, styles and eras. The change in character from the modern development to the north and east and the historic character to the south and west will be particularly pertinent. The difference in character of development will also be noticeable, given the commercial, more urban development which is located along the IDR.



Figure 7.17 View 15: St Giles Churchyard. Source: Cityscape

- 7.53

These changes in the surrounding urban form will be noticeable from the northern part of the churchyard, where the more significant gaps in the tree line allow for such an appreciation. From here, the experience of receptors is likely to be similar to that of a urban 'pocket park', with trees marginally screening the wider, busy and urban environs.
- 7.54

To the south of the churchyard, the experience of the receptor differs, with a much more limited understanding for the surrounding area. Development to the south is located within closer proximity to the church, creating a sense of enclosure within this area, with users of Church Street having a more limited awareness for the urban, modern development to the north. The southern part of the churchyard also has a more historic character, given the presence of the grade II listed St Giles Vicarage.
- 7.55

Visual Amenity Value: **Medium**
- 7.56

In views from along the River Kennet Path, the presence of the IDR and taller scale development which aligns it is more perceptible to receptors, and
- 7.57

Visual Amenity Value: **Low to Medium**

REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS

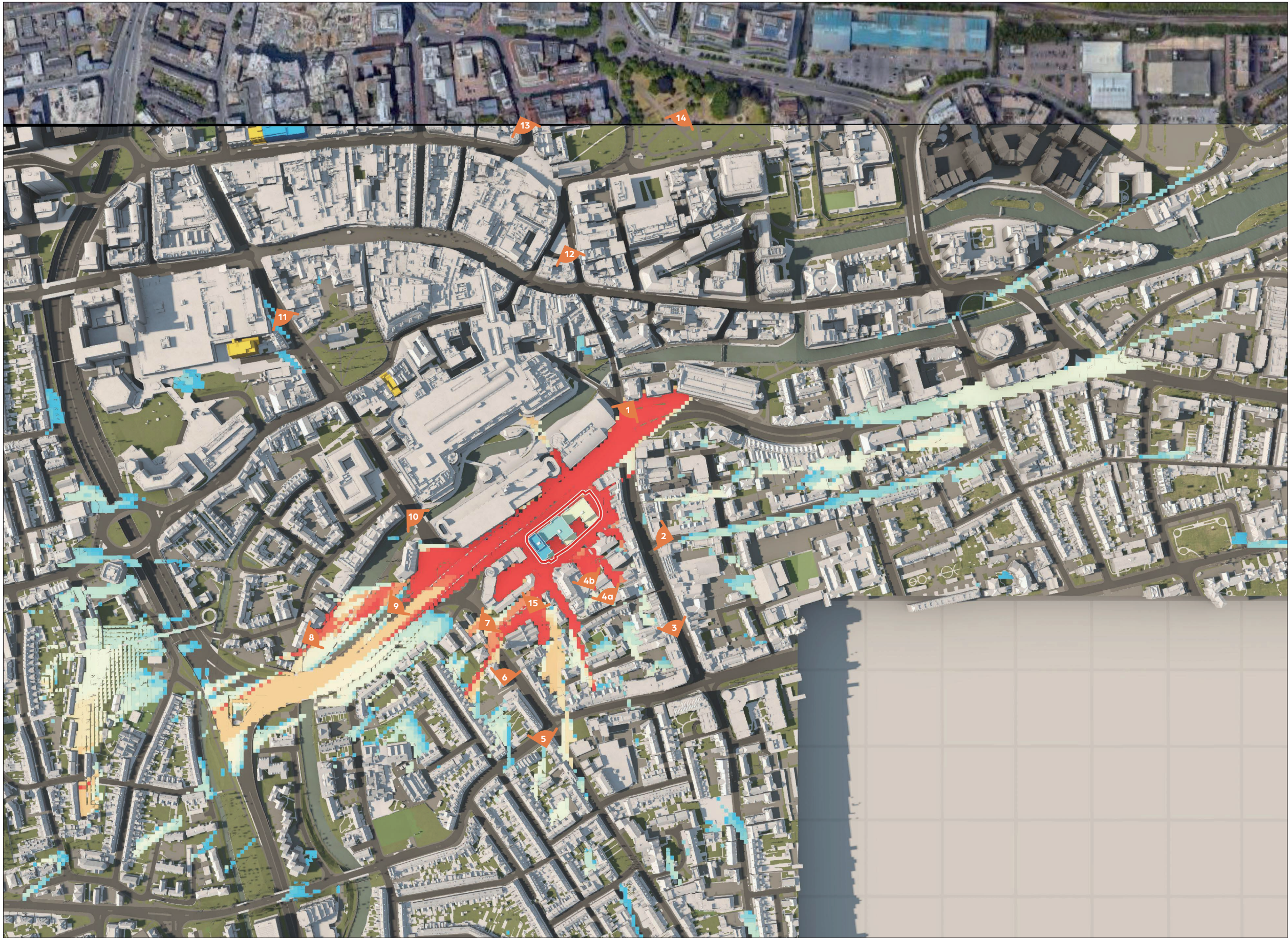
- 7.58Pre-application discussions with the LPA identified 15 AVRs to support the assessment. The location of the representative views has been informed by the preparation of the ZTV and the two sets of data are overlaid at **Figure 7.2**. The existing and proposed photography for each view is provided at **Appendix 1.o**.
- 7.59The views are representative of the experience of visual receptors within an area. The rationale for the selection of each view is provided at **Table 7.1**.

SUMMARY

- 7.60**Table 7.1** below provides an overview of the visual receptor considerations, including any additional considerations such as the proximity to key transport nodes.

Table 7.1 Summary of Visual Receptor Baseline.

REF	VISUAL RECEPTOR / STATIC VIEW	REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS AND RATIONALE FOR SELECTION	VISUAL AMENITY VALUE
2,3, 5 6, 7	Local Residents	Views selected are based on the experience of residents living to the west and the south of the town centre. Owing to the tight street pattern, scale of built form and enclosed nature of development, viewpoints have been located where residents are likely to experience some visibility of the Proposed Development.	Medium
9	Road Users	Views selected are based on the experience of road users travelling along the IDR, the ring-road around the town centre.	Very Low
1, 10, 11, 12, 13	Commerce Users of Reading Town Centre	Viewpoints selected are representative of the pattern of pedestrian movement into and around Reading town centre. Viewpoints selected to show the maximum impact of the Proposed Development on users of vehicular routes through the area.	Low to Medium
14	Amenity Users of Forbury Gardens	View 14 is located on a principal pedestrian route through Forbury Gardens, where there is potential for impact on users of the amenity space stemming from the Proposed Development.	Medium
4a, 4b	Amenity users of Quaker Meeting House and Burial Ground	Viewpoint selected to demonstrate the experience of users of the Quaker Burial Ground to the immediate south of the Site.	Medium
8	Amenity Users of River Kennet Path	Views selected are representative of the experience of amenity users of the River Kennet Path.	Low to Medium
15	Amenity Users of St Giles Churchyard	Viewpoint selected to demonstrate the experience of users of St Giles Churchyard to the immediate south of the Site.	Medium



VIEWS LOCATION PLAN

- Application Site
1. Queen's Road / A329 looking west
 2. Junction with South Street / A327
 3. A327 looking north
 - 4a. View north on Church Lane (Quaker Meeting House)
 - 4b. View north from burial ground (Quaker Meeting House)
 5. Junction with Pell Street / A327
 6. St Giles Church
 7. Deansgate Road
 8. River Kennet (north bank) looking east
 9. Bridge Street / A329 looking east
 10. Bridge Street junction looking south
 11. The Minster (Grade I) looking south
 12. Market Place looking south
 13. Town Hall looking south
 14. Forbury Gardens looking south
 15. St Giles Churchyard

LOCATION:
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:
May 2024

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 7.18 View Location Plan with overlay of the ZTV. Source: Montagu Evans.

▲ NORTH



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8.0

PRE-APPLICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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

PRE-APPLICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

- 8.1
- The proposals have been subject to extensive pre-application engagement with RBC in order to refine the proposals and their design in advance of the planning submission. Pre-application engagement was begun in December 2020 when an initial meeting was held with RBC to discuss the scope of the proposals. After a further pre application scoping meeting was held with Council officers in December 2021, pre-application engagement continued on a PPA arrangement throughout the course of 2023 and 2024. Montagu Evans were appointed on the project in October 2023 and from then on were involved in the pre-application process.
- 8.2
- Meetings were held in August, October and November 2023, and in January and March 2024 (8 pre-application meetings in total), of which Montagu Evans were involved with from October 2023. The comments from each pre-application meeting are summarised in **Section 4.0.** of the Design and Access Statement prepared by CJCT.
- 8.3
- As a result of comments received during the pre-application stage, a number of design changes were undertaken, which are summarised in **Table 8.1.** This also summarises the consultation comments received through the pre-application process in respect of the townscape, visual and built heritage assessment and the responses to demonstrate where the comments have been addressed within the assessment.
- 8.4
- The Council's pre-application advice has been reviewed to inform the design development process and current proposals.
- 8.5
- The key topics of townscape and heritage that were discussed at pre-application stage comprised the following:
 - Impact on the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area;
 - Impact on views of the spire of the Church of St Giles;
 - Industrial history of this area of Reading;
 - Agreed viewpoint locations, informed by the production of a ZTV;
 - The impact on the immediate townscape character areas including the IDR to the north and the residential to the south.

- 8.6
- The CA comprises buildings of a lower height and mass and it was thus considered important and necessary to reduce the massing of those elements closest to the Conservation Area boundary, both to the south and to the east. This is reflected in the layout of the building which is four to six storeys to the east and 11 storeys to the west.
- 8.7
- The setback of the uppermost storeys has further mitigated the height of the taller bocks, along with the three fingered layout which breaks up the building's massing, particularly in views from within the CA, namely from the rear of the Quaker Meeting House.
- 8.8
- The chosen materiality for the building evokes the vernacular palette and industrial heritage of Reading, contextualising its appearance within the context of the London Street and Market Place CA.
- 8.9
- The placement of the building's tallest elements to the north of the Site, fronting the IDR, is appropriate given the increased height of buildings along this frontage and their less sensitive nature. The IDR is a dividing feature which requires a robust response on the northern frontage of the Site, which the Proposed Development achieves, complementing the scale of development to the north.
-
- DESIGN REVIEW PANEL
- 8.10
- In addition to pre-application engagement with the Council, the Design Southeast Review Panel was consulted in February 2024. Their feedback and subsequent design changes are summarised in **Table 8.1.**
- 8.11
- As part of the pre-application process, The Mid Thames Quakers and St Giles Church group were also engaged with, the details of which are included within the Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Cratus.

CONSULTEE AND FORM/ DATE OF CONSULTATION	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	SUMMARY OF DESIGN CHANGES	WHERE IN THIS VOLUME COMMENTS ARE ADDRESSED
Pre-Application 01 December 2020		C11 storeys Could be arranged in 3 wings	N/A
Pre-Application 02 December 2021		Refinement of massing Reduction in height to the east and increasing to the west Distinct step to south to emphasise primary frontage on IDR Articulation of north façade	N/A
Pre-Application 03 August 2023	Montagu Evans not in attendance, design-focused pre-app.	Scale reduced across whole site Fine grain expressed through articulation of wings Step in scale to provide contextual scale to south Roofline refined to add interest in medium-range views	N/A
Pre-Application 04 October 2023	Montagu Evans presented the historic analysis of the Site (including historic map regressions), identified heritage assets in the surrounding area, as well as VuCity model shots which demonstrated visual impact of the scheme.	Setback to the tenth floor to reduce the height along Mill Lane Transition in height introduced from East to West along Mill Lane	
Pre-Application 05 November 2023	Montagu Evans presented the view location plan as well as VuCity analysis of a series of massing studies produced by CJTCT. The massing study articulated how the design had changed from the previous iteration.	Massing revised to provide better transition to the London Street Conservation Area Increased setbacks to south façade Reduced height to west façade	Impact on London Street CA is included in the heritage assessment at Section 9.0. of this report.
Pre-Application 06 January 2024	Montagu Evans not in attendance, design-focused pre-app.	Improved elevation strategy based on character area analysis Improved landscape strategy and greening to Mill Lane	Character area analysis is included within the Townscape Baseline at Section 6.0. of this report.
Design Review Panel South East January 2024	Further exploration of the appropriate form, scale and massing of the development was recommender in order to ensure the development contributes to local townscape and provides high-quality living environments Further consideration of the experience and amenity of residents in relation to sunlight, daylight and outlook was recommender Further review of the ground floor layout was recommender to consider the location of the entrances and active frontages; It was recommended to undertake a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping exercise to ascertain the impact on sensitive viewpoints.	Massing of the building has been amended More activation to the Mill Lane frontage through introduction of a community/commercial space at ground floor One of the stair-cores has been relocated to maximise activation to the SW corner of the building More of the apartments have been designed to be dual aspect, through the introduction of an access deck on the south elevation of the building Improvement in the journey through the communal entrance to the apartment front doors through the introduction of access and connections to the neighbourhood garden at ground floor The materiality used in the building façade has been further refined, taking cues from the history of Reading and the context of the London Street CA	A ZTV using VuCity (as per the methodology set out in Section 2.0.) was produced as part of the scoping process and is contained at Figure 2.1 of this report. Comments around scale, height and massing have been addressed in the relevant heritage, townscape and visual assessments within this report (Sections 9.0–11.0).
Pre- Application 08 March 2024	Montagu Evans presented view location plan, to seek agreement with officers Consideration should be given to making the entrance more prominent	Massing redistributed across the scheme Access decks introduced to provide dual aspect units to the central parts of the building Neighbourhood and Wellness Gardens sizes increased to provide additional external amenity space for residents and the local community	Visual assessment has been undertaken at Section 11.0 of this report.

CONSULTEE AND FORM/ DATE OF CONSULTATION	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	SUMMARY OF DESIGN CHANGES	WHERE IN THIS VOLUME COMMENTS ARE ADDRESSED
Written Pre-Application Advice dated 25th May 2024	The proposal should step down from the larger scale buildings on the north side of the IDR and have a more intimate relationship with the smaller scale buildings on the southern side of the IDR. The hotel to the west of the site, whilst not of a particularly high-quality design, nonetheless demonstrates a significant drop in height and bulk across the IDR/flyover, addressing the transition in scale between the two-character areas more appropriately. When viewed from the east, the proposals appear to create a canyon-like effect when viewed in conjunction with the existing Oracle buildings, particularly given the similarity in height across the IDR. Furthermore, the disparity between the tallest part of the proposals at the western end of the site (11 storeys) and the three/four storey hotel and residential buildings beyond is uncomfortable and would not read well in townscape terms when viewed from the IDR, Letcombe Street or Church Street, and should be reconsidered. The proposed development, by reason of its scale, building form, massing and height, would have a low to moderate degree of harm to the settings of listed buildings, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the view of the spire of St Giles Church. Given the location of the site in such close proximity to a number of Listed Buildings, the Conservation Area, and its visibility within several longer views, any proposal on this site would likely have an impact on these assets. It is therefore important to ensure that the impact is either to enhance the heritage assets, or where that is not possible, harm is minimised and that the public benefits of the scheme would outweigh any harm arising. Many of the issues with the proposals identified in the preceding section (Design and Townscape) directly relate to the consequent impact of the proposals on the heritage assets surrounding the site. The scale, height and massing of the proposals, in particular the maximum height of 11 storeys, which adds to the bulky and out of scale appearance of the proposal, the proposal would result in harm to the Conservation Area. It is therefore considered that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to at a low to moderate degree to the character of the Conservation Area. The design approach in terms of materials, details, ground floor layout and provision of green space is supported, and would complement the character of the Conservation Area, however, this would not be sufficient to overcome the harm caused by the scale and bulk of the proposed building.	The massing and form of the building has been developed in conjunction with RBC through the 7 x design Pre-Application. The west of the site was the agreed location for height on the site to ensure the building was not see from London Street (Market Place & London Street Conservation Area). The massing has been revised several times through the design evolution to provide a better transition to the Market Place & London Street Conservation Area.	These comments have been addressed in the townscape assessment section at Section 10.0. of this report. For the sake of clarity, the key points are reiterated here: • The placement of the building’s greater massing to the less sensitive, northern parts of the Site responds to the surrounding taller scale of buildings which align the IDR. The massing has been reduced in height, towards the low-scale character of buildings comprising the CA. • The arrangement of storey heights has incorporated lower scale blocks of six and four storeys to the east of the Site, in closest proximity with the surrounding residential development. This has mitigated the scale of the building in key views from within the CA, as well as the breaking up of massing blocks through a three-fingered approach. • A setback to the uppermost storey and use of a lighter brick tonality at upper levels, allows the taller components to appear as more subtle additions on the skyline. The locations of verified views for the application have been agreed with RBC. The visual assessment for this has been undertaken at Section 11.0. of this report. Comments in relation to the identified harm to the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of nearby listed buildings have been addressed in the heritage assessment section of the report (Section 9.0). For the sake of clarity, the key points are reiterated here: • As demonstrated by the ZTV at Figure 5.2, there will be no intervisibility between the principal façades of the listed buildings on London Street and the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would be visible only from the rear of these buildings, along the boundary of the CA. The existing condition of this outlook is poor, characterised by modern infrastructure, large scale commercial development and light industrial buildings. Were therefore identify no harm to the listed buildings on London Street. • Through the introduction of the Proposed Development, the spire of St Giles would be occluded from views from the north of London Street, as shown in Figure 11.13. The primacy of the spire, a quality which contributes to its interest, would be preserved in the local area, notably in views on Church Street and Southampton Street (Local View 2) would be maintained. • The Proposed Development would be visible within the setting of the Church of St Giles, notably within the church yard to the north. In this location the Proposed Development would be understood as part of the existing urban setting of the church and the high quality of its design would be appreciated. The Proposed Development would be separated physically from the church yard by intervening roads and development. In the principal views of the church from the north and west, the Proposed Development would be occluded. The relationship between the church and the elements of its setting which contribute to its special interest, notably the churchyard, monuments, vicarage and hall, would be preserved. This report, as explained in full at Section 9.0, does not find harm to the significance of the Church of St Giles. • The Proposed Development would introduce a new building in the setting of the Meeting House. From within the courtyard and on Church Lane, the Proposed Development would be viewed in conjunction with the listed building in views of the south elevation. The impact of the Proposed Development in the setting of the Meeting House has been mitigated through the variation in its massing, which steps away from the meeting house, and the use of contextual materiality. A full assessment is provided in Section 9.0 of this report.

CONSULTEE AND FORM/ DATE OF CONSULTATION	SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/DISCUSSION	SUMMARY OF DESIGN CHANGES	WHERE IN THIS VOLUME COMMENTS ARE ADDRESSED
	The Quaker Meeting House outlook from this part of the Listed Building would be significantly altered by the proposals, which would result in less than substantial harm at a moderate level to the setting of this Listed Building. A Views Assessment, with the Zone of Theoretical Visibility information as suggested by the DRP, should be submitted alongside the application to address the above concerns. A full Heritage Statement should also be submitted which addresses the harm caused to the various heritage assets. Overall, whilst the scheme has positive aspects in terms of the detailed design approach, ground floor layout and provision of green space at ground floor level, the scale and massing of the scheme would result in a scheme which would sit uncomfortably in its context, failing to fully relate to the more sensitive area to the south of the IDR. The proposal would fail to appropriate address the townscape, from both longer views and from a more immediate context. Due to the scale, mass and bulk of the building, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm at a low to moderate level to several heritage assets.		• Despite the introduction of the Proposed Development, the elements of its setting which contribute to its interest are maintained and its intrinsic value preserved. Overall, we have identified a low level of less than substantial harm to the Meeting House. • The Proposed Development would appropriately address the townscape, in the immediate context by the following: • The design of the exterior facade comprises vertical proportions and columns, which seek to provide a strong vertical frontage opposite the large-scale buildings immediately opposite, including that of The Oracle Shopping Centre. • The vertical articulation not only contextualises the scale of the building but adds architectural interest and quality to the TCA. The retainment of this building line to the IDR is a key characteristic of the TCA and one that is further enforced by the introduction of active frontages at ground floor level, on the northern elevation. • The introduction of an open ground floor, with a well-defined principal entrance will provide better visual permeability and will enhance the building's relationship with the street. The proposed design and uses at ground floor will create vibrant and active frontage which will serve a placemaking function and improve the appearance of the Site boundary to the immediate north. • And in the wider context, and in more longer views: • The incorporation of a distinguished base, middle and crown seek to mitigate the impact of scale, adding a human proportionality to the building. The top of the building will be particularly distinguishable through the use of vertical corbels and parapet detailing. The visibility of this element of the building from the wider townscape, will have a wayfinding function and thus increased permeability towards the Site.

Table 8.1 Summary of Consultation

9.0

ASSESSMENT: HERITAGE

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

ASSESSMENT: HERITAGE

9.1 The following section assesses the effect of the Proposed Development on the identified heritage assets.

LISTED BUILDINGS

LISTED BUILDINGS ON LONDON STREET

- 9.2 The Proposed Development would be located 15m to the west and northwest of heritage assets in this group at the closest point. The group includes:
- 54–58, London Street – Map Ref 17
 - 48–52, London Street – Map Ref 18
 - 62–66, London Street – Map Ref 19
 - 44 and 46, London Street – Map Ref 20
 - 68, 70, and 72, London Street – Map Ref 22
 - Nos 49–53 London Street – Map Ref 24
 - 41, London Street – Map Ref 25
 - 37 and 39, London Street – Map Ref 26
 - 35, London Street – Map Ref 31
 - No 33 (Former Everyman Theatre) – Map Ref 32
- 9.3 The Proposed Development will introduce a new residential building to the wider setting of the listed buildings on London Street.
- 9.4 The new building would be visible only at the rear of the listed buildings on the west side of Southampton Street. The Proposed Development has been designed to mitigate its impact on the setting of the listed buildings on London Street, within the CA. The massing of the building steps down considerably towards the east end of the Site, in response to the established building height of the historic ribbon development on London Street. The Proposed Development will replace unattractive warehouses, palisade fencing and hardstanding on the Site with a high-quality residential building and landscaped gardens. The Proposed Development would therefore improve the setting to the rear of the listed buildings.

- 9.5 The rear of the buildings on Crossland Road are secondary in interest to the principal elevations on London Street. In this location, the Proposed Development would be almost entirely occluded except for at the northern end of London Street.
- 9.6 The Proposed Development will preserve the intrinsic interest of the buildings in this group and the important historic and visual setting relationship between the heritage assets which line the thoroughfare would be maintained.

QUAKERS' MEETING HOUSE (GRADE II) – MAP REF 21

- 9.7 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 50m to the north of the Site.
- 9.8 The Proposed Development would introduce a new building in the setting of the Meeting House. Through the Proposed Development, tall modern development would be brought closer to the listed building, therefore intensifying the established urban context to the north. From within the courtyard and on Church Lane, the Proposed Development would be viewed in conjunction with the listed building in views of the south elevation.
- 9.9 The Proposed Development has been designed to reduce the impact of a building of increased scale on the setting of heritage assets to the south and west. The building has been designed to mitigate the impact of the Proposed Development in this view, through its mass, form and materiality. The massing of the building has been distributed to focus on the northern boundary of the Site, along Mill Lane. The southern elevation steps down to the south towards the burial ground and to the east towards the Market Street/London Street CA.
- 9.10 The Proposed Development would occlude views of the Oracle Shopping Centre from within the setting of the listed building, the materiality and form of which is incongruous in views north from the burial ground. The high-quality façade treatment of the Proposed Development will introduce greater variation and a materiality which responds positively to the established urban context. Through increased height and mass within the Site, the Proposed Development may reduce noise pollution arising from the A329, contributing to the tranquil setting within the garden of the Quaker Meeting House.
- 9.11 The spatial and functional relationship between the Meeting House and the burial ground which contributes to the special interest of the listed

building would be maintained. Through the Proposed Development, the intrinsic special interest of the listed building, lying primarily in its association with the Quakers movement, is preserved.

- 9.12 The enclosed character of the courtyard and burial ground which contributes to the quiet and contemplative character of the Meeting House complex would be maintained through the historic boundary wall, mature trees and the separating distance afforded by Crossland Road. Nevertheless, as described, the Proposed Development will result in an intensification of the existing urban setting and bring modern development closer to the boundary of the burial ground.
- 9.13 Whilst there will be some beneficial changes within the setting of the Quaker Meeting House as a result of the proposals, and the design quality is acknowledged, overall, we identify a low level of a less than substantial harm to the ability to ability to appreciate the significance of the Meeting House, through changes in its setting.

LISTED BUILDINGS ON CHURCH STREET

- 9.14 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 75m to the north of the group at the closest point. This assets in this group includes:
- 6b, Church Street – Map Ref 27
 - 6a, Church Street – Map Ref 28
 - 6c, Church Street – Map Ref 30
 - 11, Church Street – Map Ref 34
 - 7 and 9, Church Street – Map Ref 36
- 9.15 The Proposed Development would introduce a new building to the north of the Church Street. The building would be largely occluded by interposing development and visibility would be limited to building gaps, principally the entrance to the Meeting House complex. Where visible, only the top two to three storeys of the Proposed Development would appear and would be understood as an incidental feature of the existing urban context to the north.
- 9.16 The introduction of a new building and increased density within the Site would have no effect on the setting of these heritage assets, nor their intrinsic interest as examples of 18th and 19th century domestic development. Through the Proposed Development, the setting relationship between the assets within the group, and importantly the ribbon development of London Street and the Church of St Giles to the west is preserved.

LISTED BUILDINGS IN CHURCH OF ST GILES GROUP

- 9.17
- The Church of St Giles and the associated group of heritage assets is located approximately 70m to the southwest of the Site, on Southampton Street. This group includes:
 - Wall Enclosing St Giles' Vicarage (Grade II) – Map Ref 38
 - Church of and Churchyard Tombs (Grade II) – Map Ref 39
 - St Giles Vicarage (Grade II) – Map Ref 41
 - St Giles War Shrine (Grade II) – Map Ref 45
- 9.18
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 70m to the northeast of the heritage assets in this group. The heritage assets form a distinct group with a shared functional and visual relationship associated with their ecclesiastical use.
- 9.19
- The Proposed Development would introduce a new building in the wider setting of the heritage assets, which would be intermittently visible, primarily in and around the churchyard of St Giles. The immediate setting of the Church of St Giles is formed by the churchyard, which is planted with mature trees which create a sense of green enclosure in an otherwise intensely urban environment.
- 9.20
- Views out of the churchyard, to the north and east, are characterised by modern and large-scale development, and the Proposed Development would be understood as part of this established context. In views out of the church yard and east on Deansgate Road, the high-quality architecture of the western façade would be discernible. Through the Proposed Development the intimate setting relationship between the church and the church yard is preserved.
- 9.21
- Through the introduction of the Proposed Development, the spire of St Giles would be occluded from views from the north of London Street, as shown in **Figure 11.13**. The pre-application advice letter identified harm from the loss of views of the spire in this location. We do not identify any harm in the loss of visibility of the spire in this location, as it is not considered a key view that best displays the historic or architectural interest of the listed church. We note also that the consented scheme to the east of the Site will occlude the spire in this view. The primacy of the spire, a quality which contributes to its interest, would be preserved throughout the local area, notably in views on Church Street and Southampton Street (Local View 2).
- 9.22
- In close range views of the heritage assets, the Proposed Development would be largely occluded. On Church Street, where there is a setting

interaction between the church and the Vicarage, there would be no intervisibility between the Development and the listed buildings.

- 9.23
- As described, the contribution made by setting to the special interest of the heritage assets within this groups lies primarily in their close historic functional and visual relationship, and the enclosed character of the church yard. Through the Proposed Development, this important setting relationship would be preserved as the new building would be separated physically and visually from the group by roadways and interposing development. The Proposed Development would not affect the intrinsic special interest of the heritage assets in the group.

26, SOUTHAMPTON STREET (GRADE II), AND 28, SOUTHAMPTON STREET (GRADE II) - MAP REFS 42 AND 43

- 9.24
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 185m to the east of the listed buildings.
- 9.25
- The setting of the listed buildings has been entirely eroded through modern development and infrastructure. The Proposed Development would appear as a peripheral and incidental feature of the wider urban setting of the listed buildings. When looking west at the principal façades of the buildings, the Proposed Development would be entirely out of view.
- 9.26
- Through the Proposed Development, the Site would continue to make a neutral contribution to the setting and therefore significance of the listed buildings. The intrinsic special interest of the buildings is preserved.
- 9.27
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 185m to the north of the listed building.
- 9.28
- The Proposed Development would introduce a modern building of scale to the setting of the building and the two buildings would be viewed in conjunction. In longer distant views looking north on Southampton Street, the upper two to three storeys of the new building would be partially visible above the roofline of 63 Southampton Street and 50 Crown Street.
- 9.29
- In this location, the separating distance between the listed building and the Development would be discernible and the roofline of the building, including the chimneys, would remain visible. Moving north on Southampton Street towards the principal façade of the building, the Proposed would be entirely occluded.
- 9.30
- Through the Proposed Development the intrinsic interest of the listed building as an example of vernacular architecture would be preserved.

The setting relationship between the listed building and the historic development which lines Southampton Street would be maintained.

92-96 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, AND ROSE COTTAGE, AND 106 SOUTHAMPTON STREET - MAP REF 64, 70 AND 75

- 9.31
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 230m to the north of the listed buildings.
- 9.32
- The Proposed Development would appear as a new building in the wider setting of the listed buildings in this group. Looking north on Southampton Street there would be a kinetic experience of the Proposed Development, with the upper two to three storeys of the Proposed Development coming in and out of view. There would be no direct interaction between the listed buildings on the west side of Southampton Street and the Development. Looking west at the principal façades of the buildings in this group, the Proposed Development would be entirely out of view.
- 9.33
- Where visible, the Proposed Development would be appreciated as an incidental feature of the wider skyline. There is an established character of modern and tall development in views north towards the commercial centre of Reading and the Proposed Development would be understood in this context.
- 9.34
- Through the Proposed Development, the special interest of the listed buildings as examples of 18th and 19th century development would be preserved. The setting relationship between the buildings and other historic development on Southampton Road, which contributes to its interest would be maintained.
- 9.35
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 205m to the west of the listed buildings on Queen's Crescent.
- 9.36
- The Proposed Development would introduce a new building to the wider setting of the listed buildings, separated physically and visually by interposing development.
- 9.37
- Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the terrace would be extremely limited, with only the crown of the tallest element of the Proposed Development visible above the roofline of the crescent in longer distance views from the east. In this location, the Proposed Development would be experienced kinetically and would be occluded as one moves west on Queen's Road. In closer range views, where the architectural quality of the Georgian terrace is best appreciated, the Proposed Development would be entirely occluded.

9.38 The existing setting of the listed buildings has been extensively altered and the relationship between the crescent and other historic development has been obscured. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be understood as an incidental feature of the established wider urban, modern context.

9.39 Through the Proposed Development the intrinsic interest of the buildings, lying primarily in their Georgian detailing and form, is preserved. The setting relationship between the individual buildings within the crescent is preserved and the introduction of a new building in the wider setting of the listed terrace will maintain the neutral contribution made to the listed buildings special interest.

BUILDING NOW PART OF COURAGE’S BREWERY – MAP REF 68

9.40 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 250m to the east of the listed building.

9.41 The Proposed Development would be visible in the wider setting of the listed building, separated by the River Kennet and A329. The new building would be obscured by interposing modern development, infrastructure and mature trees. The Proposed Development would be understood in the context of existing large-scale buildings and the neutral contribution made by the Site to the setting of the building would be maintained.

9.42 Through the Proposed Development, the intrinsic special interest of the former brewery building, as an example of a once prolific industry, would be preserved and the important historic relationship between the building and the River Kennet would remain unchanged.

Listed Buildings on South Street and Sidmouth Street

9.43 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 265m to the west of the heritage assets in this group at the closest point. This group includes:

- 43-49 South Street – Map Ref 77
- 3 and 5 Sidmouth Street – Map Ref 101
- 9 Sidmouth Street – Map Ref 102
- Wesley Methodist Church – Map Ref 138

9.44 At this distance, the Proposed Development would be largely occluded by interposing development and the separating distance between the heritage assets on South Street and Sidmouth Street, and the new building would be readily appreciated. Intervisibility between the heritage

assets and the Proposed Development would be extremely limited, confined to building gaps and axial views on roads. In longer distance views from within the setting of these assets, only the upper two to three storeys would be visible and would appear as an incidental feature in the wider roofscape of Reading.

9.45 Through the Proposed Development, the setting relationship between the heritage assets within this group and other non-designated buildings within the residential suburb would be maintained and the contribution made by setting preserved. The Proposed Development would have no effect on the intrinsic interest of the listed buildings in the group.

CONSERVATION AREAS
LONDON STREET/ MARKET PLACE CONSERVATION AREA – MAP REF A

9.46 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 10m to the north and west of the CA at the closest point.

9.47 The Proposed Development would introduce a tall modern building to the setting of the CA. In Sub Area 2 of the CA, there would be intermittent visibility of the Proposed Development, focused on the north end of Southampton Street, the A329 and around the church of St Giles. The Proposed Development would come in and out of focus in building gaps and axial views on Church Lane and the principal façade of the Development would be appreciated from the junction of the A329.

9.48 The Proposed Development may be visible in conjunction with the Buildings of Townscape Merit on Church Lane. The Proposed Development would be largely occluded by the Quakers Meeting House and would be separated physically by intervening distance. Where visible, the Proposed Development would be understood as part of the existing modern development to the north of the CA and the relationship between the designated and non-designated heritage assets would be preserved.

9.49 The CAA identifies three local views within Sub Area 2, looking west to the Spire of St Giles on Church Lane, and looking north and south on London Street. In these views, the Proposed Development would be occluded from view. The Proposed Development would; however, be visible in two areas of open green space identified in the CAA, within the churchyard of St Giles and burial ground of the Meeting House.

9.50 The CA boundary defines an enclave of historic development which is enclosed to the north, east and west by modern large-scale development.

In the context of this established setting, the Proposed Development represents a high-quality replacement for the unattractive light-industrial structures on Site presently. Along the north-and-western boundary of the CA, the Proposed Development offers the opportunity to enhance the detracting appearance of the IDR and Oracle Shopping centre through high-quality design, amenity space and urban greening.

9.51 The IDR and the modern development which lines it to the north and south has a character that is distinct from the historic development of the CA. There is an existing character of modern and larger scale development in this location and the Proposed Development sits comfortably between the low scale of development at the eastern end of the Site and modern development to the north and west.

9.52 Through the Proposed Development, the character and appearance of the CA, defined by fine historic urban grain and ecclesiastical buildings, would be preserved.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

9.53 The cumulative scheme (Central Club, planning ref. 221364) set out in **Section 2.0** has been considered in terms of potential effects on heritage assets within the study area. This scheme is illustrated in the diametric image at **Figure 2.2**.

9.54 The cumulative scheme is a four-storey residential and community use building located within the CA boundary, on the opposite side of Crossland Road to the Site. The Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with the adjacent cumulative scheme, particularly in views from the northeast, within the Castle Street CA.

9.55 The IDR and the adjacent development has an modern urban character which is distinct from the historic development of the CA. The Proposed Development alongside the cumulative scheme would be read and understood alongside the existing and emerging development on the IDR.

9.56 We note that views of the church of St Giles from the north of London Street would be occluded by the neighbouring cumulative scheme. The committee report for this consented scheme does not identify harm from the loss of visibility of the spire in this view.

9.57 In the cumulative scenario, the judgements of impact on the heritage assets found in this assessment would remain the same.

10.0

ASSESSMENT: TOWNSCAPE

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

ASSESSMENT: TOWNSCAPE

- 10.1
- The following section assess the effect of the Proposed Development on the identified townscape character set out in **Section 6.0**.
- 10.2
- The Design and Access Statement prepared by CJCT provides a detailed discussion on the design rationale and architectural approach. The immediate townscape environs of the Site comprise the busy, urban IDR to the north, with the built form comprising the Oracle Shopping Centre and Reading town centre beyond. The Site is in a highly sustainable location, being a 13-minute walk to Reading Station, which provides links to London and the south-west.
- 10.3
- The Site is located within close proximity to the Market Place and London Street CA, to the immediate east, which includes a high number of grade II* and II listed buildings. To the immediate south is the grade II Reading Quaker Meeting House, and to the southwest is the grade II listed Church of St Giles, beyond which is a large-scale residential area.

CHARACTER AREA 1: LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL

- 10.4
- TCA1 has a **High** susceptibility to the Proposed Development, given the Site is located within this Character Area. When calibrated with the Low value of the area, the subsequent sensitivity is **Medium**.
- 10.5
- The Proposed Development will provide a new residential building of up to 11 storeys, replacing the former John Lewis warehouse on Site. The new building on Site will provide 215 new build to rent homes, which is line with the emerging residential use of TCA1, as evidenced by the emerging policy and recently submitted planning applications within the area.
- 10.6
- The scale of the building at 11 storeys, whilst an increase from the current building on Site, is in keeping with the existing mid to tall scale building heights prevalent throughout the TCA, which have emerged to the north and south of the IDR. This is indicated by the areas identified 'low' sensitivity to tall building development within *Reading's Tall Building Strategy (2018)*.
- 10.7
- The placement of the building's massing to the less sensitive, northern parts of the Site responds to the surrounding taller scale of buildings which align the IDR, including The Oracle Shopping Centre and Vue Cinema (9 storeys). The taller elements on the northern frontage of the Site, mirror the building line and scale of the Oracle opposite; maintaining consistency to the streetscape. Slight variation in the building line on this frontage, with several minor setbacks assists adds visual interest, creating a layered effect in lateral views from the west and east, along the IDR.
- 10.8
- The mid-rise scale of the 7 storey Premier Inn to the immediate west of the Site, balances the transition in scale of development between that which aligns the IDR and the smaller scale development to the south. This is reflected in the step down in storey height from the northern element of the Site to the south.
- 10.9
- The scale has been further mitigated with the use of a three-finger approach to the massing blocks, with a setback to the uppermost floor. The articulated datum lines on the exterior facade of the building establish a clear base, middle and top with vertical corbels and parapet detailing establishing a clear top to the building, which is visible from views along the IDR. These design features have established a mid-rise

height relationship with The Oracle directly opposite and ensure that the Proposed Development sits contextually within the scale of its surroundings.

10.10

The design of the exterior facade comprises vertical proportions and columns, which seek to provide a strong vertical frontage opposite the large-scale buildings immediately opposite, including that of The Oracle Shopping Centre. The vertical articulation not only contextualises the scale of the building but adds architectural interest and quality to the TCA. The retainment of this building line to the IDR is a key characteristic of the TCA and one that is further enforced by the introduction of active frontages at ground floor level, on the northern elevation. The introduction of an open ground floor, with a well-defined principal entrance will provide better visual permeability and will enhance the building's relationship with the street. The proposed design and uses at ground floor will create vibrant and active frontage which will serve a placemaking function and improve the appearance of the Site boundary to the immediate north.

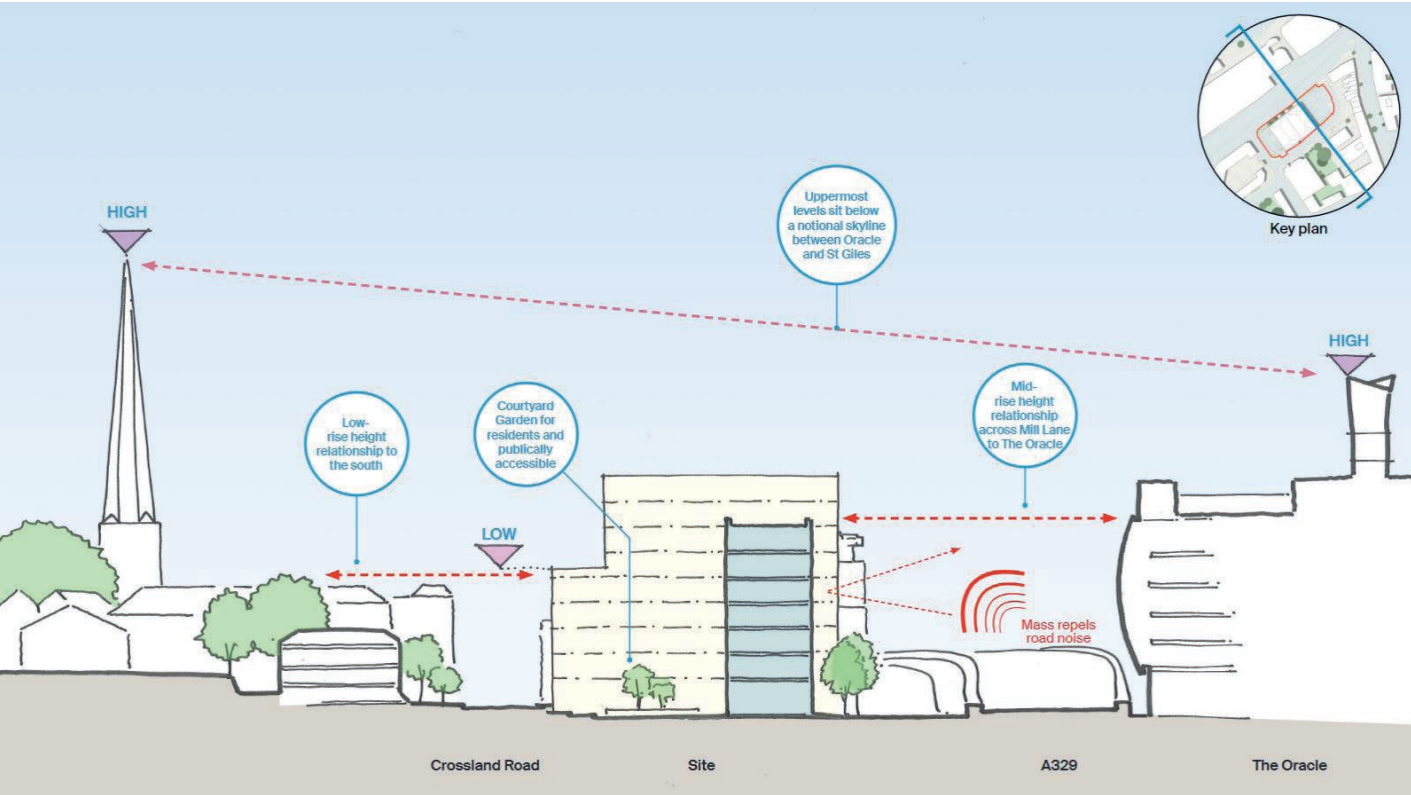


Figure 10.1 Illustration showing the mid-rise height relationship maintained with The Oracle Shopping Centre located opposite. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.



Figure 10.2 Illustration showing the use of vertical corbelling on the northern elevation. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.



Figure 10.3 Elevation showing the larger ground floor proportions which allow for the introduction of active frontages, revitalising the streetscene. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.

- 10.11 The high-quality design of the proposal which incorporates materiality that references the industrial heritage of the TCA, and particularly the history of furniture making on Site will enhance the architectural quality of the TCA. These sorts of character references are reinforced through the use of material and architectural features including a Flemish bond corbelling using brown and buff bricks, which weave through the principal elevation.
- 10.12 The introduction of a new building on the Site will also bring significant improvements to the public realm and landscaping condition. These include the removal of the green railings which currently provide a hard boundary to the Site and their replacement with a low boundary buff brick wall with associated tree and shrub planting.
- 10.13 The integration of two areas of amenity space, including a Neighbourhood Garden and a Wellness Garden, offers an area of amenity space in an otherwise densely urban area, which is lacking in green space. The amenity space, comprising a mix of small trees, shrubs, herbaceous planting and landscaped areas, will improve permeability and wayfinding functions towards this part of the TCA.
- 10.14 For the reasons outlined above, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Medium** magnitude of impact on TCA1, resulting in an effect **of Moderate Beneficial**. A beneficial nature of effect is identified for the redevelopment of a Site which is currently a detracting feature within the TCA, and its replacement with a building of a high-quality, contextual design, which revitalises the Site and surrounding townscape with a use that is more aligned to the emerging policy aspirations for the area.



Figure 10.4 CGI illustrating the improvements to the public realm and boundary treatment along the IDR. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.

