

ELDER

GREYFRIARS HOUSE
20 - 30 GREYFRIARS ROAD , READING

BUILT HERITAGE, TOWNSCAPE & VISUAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT
MONTAGU EVANS



BUILT HERITAGE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1

Montagu Evans has been instructed by Elder Developments (Greyfriars) Ltd (hereafter referred to as the ‘Applicant’) to provide consultancy services and produce this Built Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (the ‘BHTVIA’) in support of proposals which are subject to a detailed planning application for the redevelopment of 20–30 Greyfriars Road, Reading, RG1 1NS (the ‘Site’).
- 1.2

The description of development (the ‘Proposed Development’) is as follows:

“Demolition of the existing building and the erection of a part-7, part-13 storey building comprising 266 co-living units (Sui Generis) and associated communal amenity facilities, refuse storage, cycle parking and plant equipment.”
- 1.3

The Site is located in Reading Borough Council (the ‘Council’). The Site is described within the Design and Access Statement (DAS) prepared by Darling Associates. **Figure 1.1** shows the boundary of the Site, and an aerial view is provided at **Figure 1.2**.

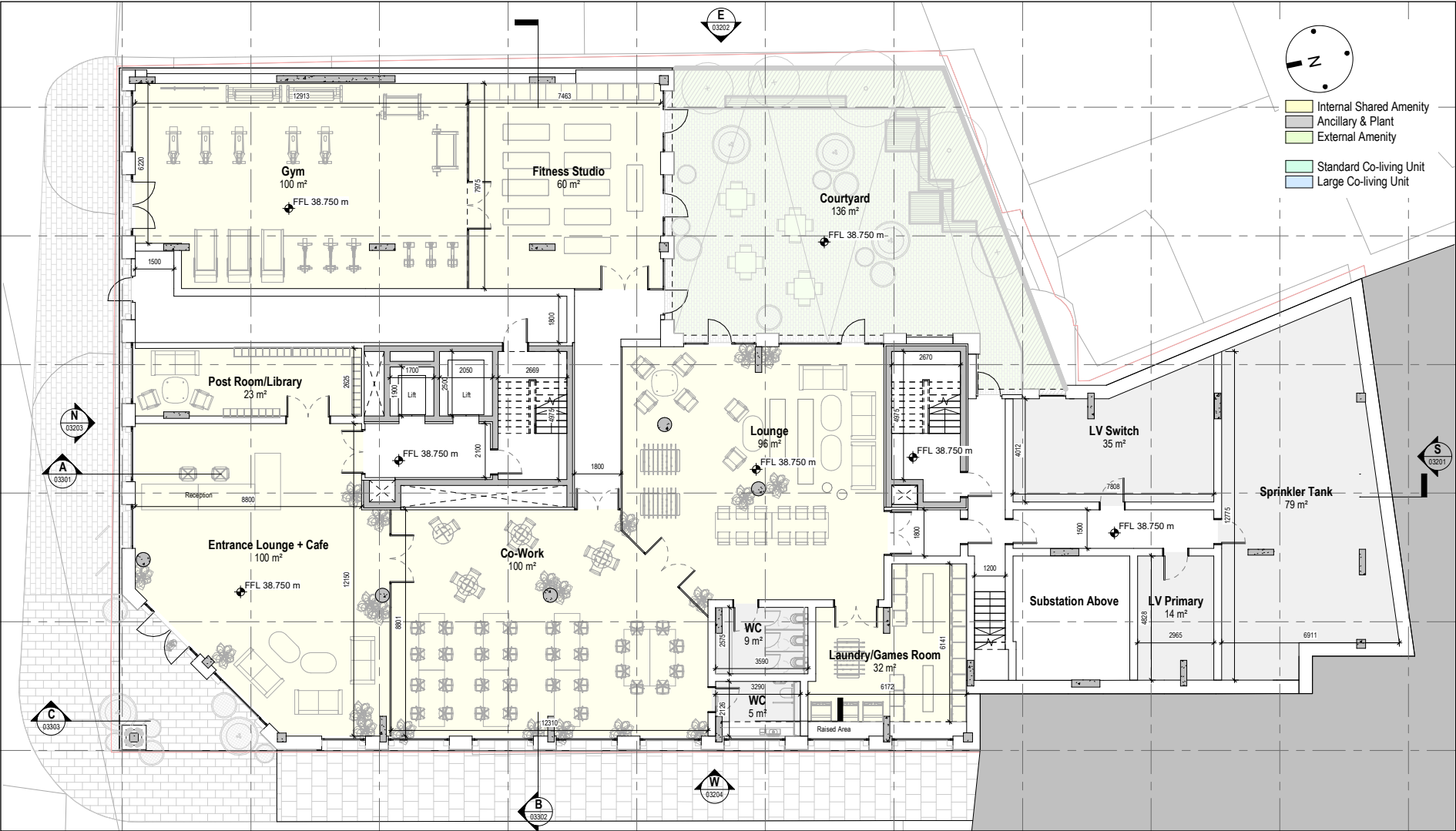


Figure 1.1 Site Plan



Figure 1.2 Aerial View. Source: Google (base map)

PURPOSE OF THE BHTVIA

- 1.4 The BHTVIA provides an assessment of likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on heritage (the historic environment), townscape and visual receptors. Separate assessments are provided for each discipline (heritage, and townscape and visual) using separate methodologies.
- 1.5 The (built) heritage assessment describes the significance of any heritage assets affected by the Proposed Development, including any contribution made by their setting. The Site does not contain any heritage assets, and neither is it located in a conservation area.
- 1.6 The townscape assessment will consider the Proposed Development within its urban context, including the buildings, the relationships between them, the different types of urban open spaces, including green spaces and the relationship between buildings and open spaces.
- 1.7 The visual assessment will consider the impact of the Proposed Development upon visual receptors e.g. people. The assessment relates to how the amenity of people in the area affected by development will change (positive, negative or neutral). Visual receptors are always people (although usually visual receptors are defined according to use e.g. residential, business, road, footpath etc.), rather than landscape features. Impact on landscape components is treated under the heading townscape (when in cities).
- 1.8 The assessment as a whole is informed by visual tools, including a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV), and accurate visual representations ('AVRs'). The tools inform the assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on heritage, townscape and visual receptors e.g. they allow an understanding of the geographical extent and magnitude of visibility from representative locations. The tools are not receptors themselves, unless comprising strategic views designated in the development plan.

STRUCTURE OF THE BHTVIA

- 1.9
- The BHTVIA is structured as follows:
- The methodology for undertaking the BHTVIA is provided at **Section 2.0**;
 - Legislation, planning policy and guidance relevant to the assessment of likely effects on heritage, townscape and visual receptors is set out at **Section 3.0**;
 - A description of the historical development of the Site and surrounding area is provided at **Section 4.0**;
 - An assessment of the significance of heritage assets which have been identified for assessment is provided at **Section 5.0**;
 - A description of the existing townscape character and visual amenity is provided at **Section 6.0**;
 - A description of the existing visual amenity is provided at **Section 7.0**;
 - **Section 8.0** provides an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on the significance of heritage assets;
 - The impact of the Proposed Development on townscape receptors is assessed at **Section 9.0**;
 - An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on visual receptors is provided at **Section 10.0**;
 - The BHTVIA is concluded at **Section 11.0**.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This section describes the framework for heritage assessment, and townscape and visual assessment. The method for each discipline is the product of legislation, policy and best practice guidance set out in **Section 3.0**. The assessment is proportionate and no longer than is necessary to assess properly the potential likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. All impacts deemed relevant or material to planning are identified and the consequent effects appraised.
- 2.2 Throughout this analysis, and across all disciplines, the reader will be presented with the words impact and effect. ‘Impact’ is defined as the action being taken, and ‘effect’ is the change resulting from the action. The overall effect is also given a nature of effect (beneficial, adverse or neutral). There is no direct correlation between magnitude of impact and nature of effect, since change is by definition not necessarily adverse or beneficial. Similarly, and dependent on context, one can have a high magnitude of impact which is neutral in effect, which may strike some readers as peculiar or perverse. For example, however, it is possible for a major change to be so similar to others that have occurred and are anticipated that practically speaking it is neither beneficial or detrimental to the value of the receiving receptor (and hence is neutral).
- 2.3 A field survey of the baseline situation was undertaken by Montagu Evans during June 2024.
- 2.4 The study area for the BHTVIA comprises:
 - All heritage receptors up to 250 m from the Site and grade II* and grade I up to 500 m from the Site;
 - Townscape character areas up to 500 m from the Site;
 - Visual receptors up to 500 m from the Site.
- 2.5 The plans at the respective baseline sections identify all of the receptors identified in the study area.

SITE VISITS

STUDY AREA

- 2.6 Site observations, a manual desk-based review of OS maps, characterisation studies and relevant heritage receptors were used to determine the study area. It has been informed by building locations and heights, topography and townscape features, and an understanding of the scale of the Proposed Development.
- 2.7 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been produced to outline the potential areas where the Proposed Development may be visible, covering an area of 2 km2 with the Site at the centre (**Figure 2.1**). The ZTV has been produced using topographically referenced three-dimensional models from VuCity software. It is a tool for a high-level understanding of the extent of visibility, which was further interrogated through review of individual viewpoints using field surveys and digital software.
- 2.8 The assessment of each discipline is informed by AVRs. The location of the viewpoints has been agreed with the Council during the pre-application process.
- 2.9 The AVRs are provided in the following scenarios:
 - Existing = baseline photography
 - Proposed = Existing plus the Proposed Development
 - Cumulative = Proposed Development plus schemes in the surrounding area that are subject to an extant consent
- 2.10 The AVRs are independently prepared by Cityscape Digital according to an industry standard method provided at **Appendix 3.0**. The variables include angle of lens, framing of shot and orientation. TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals Technical Guidance Note (2019) prepared by Landscape Institute recommend one set of considerations, but these are not universally applied and are not suited often to certain urban environments because the angle of lens, 50 degrees, often eliminates context in close and medium-distance shots.
- 2.11 AVRs are merely tools of assessment, to be applied on site, and to act as aide memoires afterwards. They do not represent visual perception. The objective of an AVR is to simulate the likely visual changes that would result from a proposed development. AVRs are two-dimensional and cannot capture the complexity of the visual experience. It is an approximation of the three-dimensional visual experience the observer

ACCURATE VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS AND VISUAL AIDS

- 2.12 Artists’ impressions based on geometrically accurate information (models) or characteristics of computer-generated images (CGIs) may sometimes be used. Whilst not independently verified, these can be very helpful in establishing and assessing the way a proposal will affect its immediate environment (to take one example only) and/or convey particular characteristics of development. This is because the AVR methodology is generally less helpful for assessing up close effects or, for example, in capturing the interaction of new landscape with buildings. Illustrative views are not used to inform the assessment of applications for outline permission but may be provided as a useful reference of what could be achieved through implementation of a design code.
- 2.13 The qualitative text accompanying the visual assessment seeks to contextualise the views. Inevitably one must accept that professional judgement is involved in this specialist area on the basis of the above and the importance of design quality in the operation of policy. A visit to the location from which the photographs were taken is required to appreciate and understand the visual impact.
- 2.14 Changes to visual amenity should not be judged in relation to static views (which are abstractions and not real) but in relation to the overall experience of an area and dependent upon the particular experiences and expectations of different receptors. The modelled viewpoints are often selected to show schemes at their maximum impact and not capture their typical impact in a receiving area or location. The impact assessment considers both the particular impact illustrated and the overall impact to come to a net assessment which more accurately reflects the overall experience than a single view.

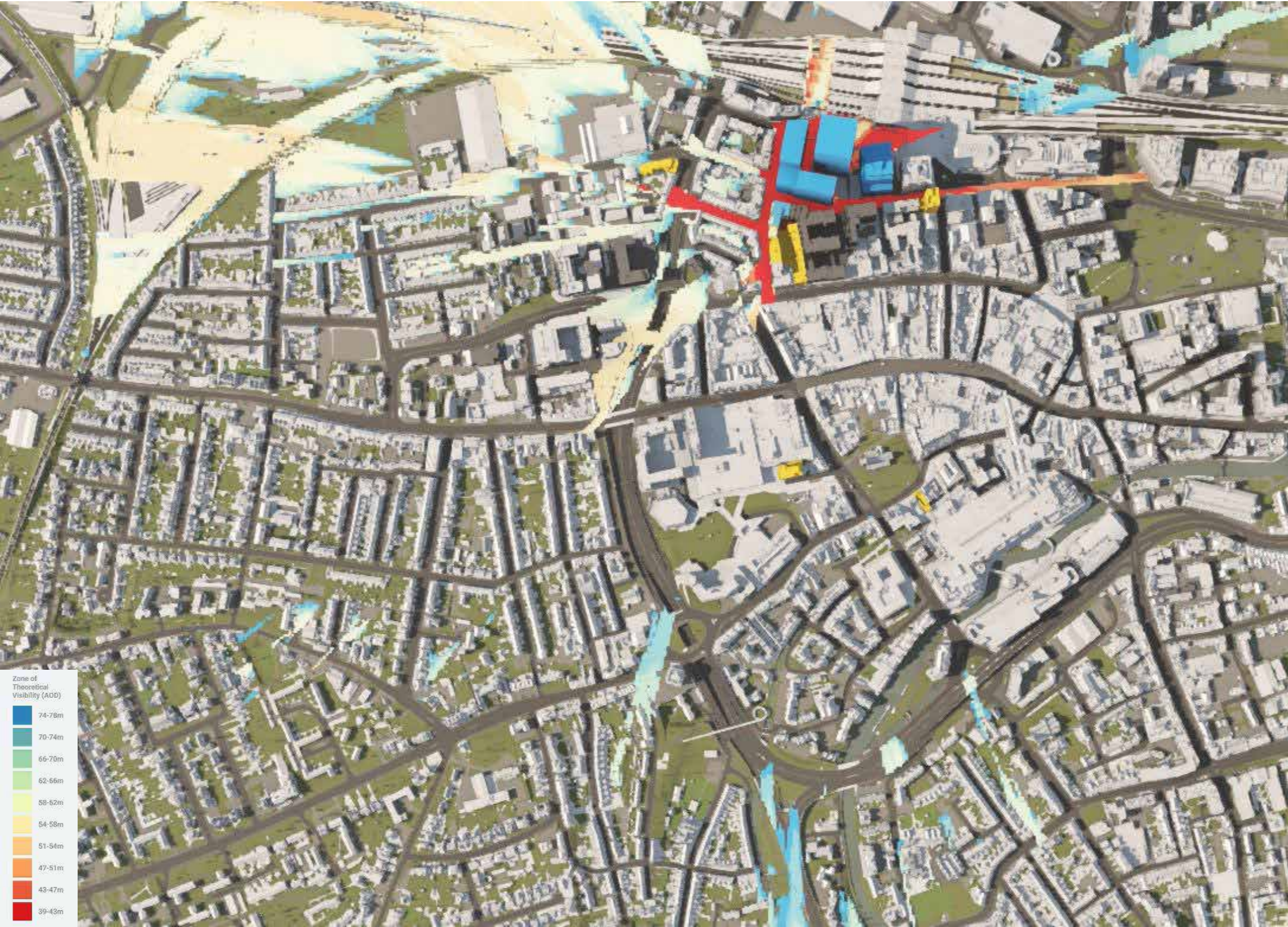


Figure 2.1 ZTV of the Proposed Development using VuCity.

HERITAGE

- 2.15
- The term ‘heritage asset’ is used within this assessment to describe both designated (e.g. Listed Buildings, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area) or non–designated (identified by the local authority e.g. building of townscape merit etc.) assets. For the purposes of this HTVIA, built heritage receptors do not include archaeological remains.
- 2.16
- Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states:
In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 2.17
- ‘Significance’ (for heritage policy) is defined in the NPPF (Annex 2) as:
the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.
- 2.18
- This is reaffirmed by Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision–Taking in the Historic Environment (2015).
- 2.19
- Where a proposal may have an effect on the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced, a qualitative assessment is made of whether, how and to what degree setting contributes to the significance of heritage assets. Setting is defined in the NPPF as:
the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

- 2.20
- The assessment of setting is informed by the check-list of potential attributes outlined by the Historic England guidance document Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017) (hereafter “GPA3: Setting”).
- 2.21
- GPA3: Setting identifies five steps towards assessing the implications of development proposals which may affect the setting of heritage assets (it is consistent with other guidance):
a. Identify the assets affected
b. Assessing the contribution setting makes to significance
c. Assessing the effect of the proposed development
d. Maximising enhancement and minimising harm
e. Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes
- 2.22
- Part e is incumbent on the decision maker, through the provision of conditions.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL

- 2.23
- The framework for assessment of townscape and visual impact has been prepared using the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) (‘GLVIA3’). The two components of townscape and visual assessment are:
1. The assessment of townscape effects: assessing effects on the townscape as a resource in its own right; and
2. The assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on the general visual amenity experienced by people. Specific views are also assessed where they form strategic views designated in the development plan, or where agreed with the competent authority.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL VALUE

TOWNSCAPE VALUE

- 2.24
- The townscape baseline assessment describes character areas/types and their characteristics. It defines the distinct and recognisable patterns of elements, or characteristics that make one area different from another, rather than better or worse. Areas are defined and mapped with boundaries that suggest a sharp change from one townscape area to another; however, on site, changes can be more subtle and practically, this often represents a zone of transition. Criteria to assess townscape character areas and apportion value is contained in **Table 2.1**.
- 2.25
- Assessment is informed by an understanding of how an area has evolved, the use of aerial photography and field survey, along with desk-based research as appropriate and to a level commensurate with the sensitivity of the receptor and its susceptibility to change. Important published sources will normally comprise formal character assessments prepared, for example, as part of local plan making or agencies or county authorities.
- 2.26
- The objective of identifying the existing context is to provide an understanding of the townscape in the area that may be affected – its constituent elements, its character and the way this varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history, its condition, the way the townscape is experienced and the value attached to it. This assessment cannot practically and objectively capture what local people in an area feel about their area (unless of course this has been subject to a specific study which is produced in an objective or reflective manner). Thus, this value analysis reflects professional judgment.

TOWNSCAPE RECEPTOR VALUE			
Value	Importance	Typical Criteria	Typical Features / Characteristics
Very High	International / National	Unique or outstanding townscape with clearly distinctive characteristics, features and elements; Widespread use of quality materials; Very strong urban structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of built form and open space; Appropriate management for land use; No, or very limited, detracting features.	International or national designation, and/or designated heritage receptors of significant importance
High	National / Regional / Local	Distinctive or unusual townscape with notable features and elements; Evident use of quality materials; Strong urban structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of built form and open space; Appropriate management for land use with limited scope to improve; Limited detracting features.	National or regional designation, and/or designated heritage receptors
Medium	Regional / Local	Attractive townscape with occasional distinctive features; Recognisable urban structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of built form and open space; Scope to improve management for land use; Some detracting features.	Regional or local recognition, including local plan designations, with value possibly expressed through literature and cultural associations.
Low	Local	Commonplace or ordinary townscape with limited variety or distinctiveness; Distinguishable urban structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of built form and open space, although often fragmented; Scope to improve management or land use; Potentially some dominant detracting features and areas of very low value.	Some positive townscape features but largely degraded and may benefit from regeneration, restoration or enhancement.
Very Low	Local	Very common townscape, often in decline; Weak or degraded urban structure, characteristic patterns and combination of built form and open space; Lack of management has resulted in degradation; Frequent dominant detracting features; Disturbed or derelict land requires treatment.	Heavily degraded townscape and/or identified for change.

Table 2.1 Townscape Receptor Value Criteria

VISUAL AMENITY VALUE

- 2.27

The visual baseline assessment established the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points.
- 2.28

The baseline study identifies individuals and/or defined groups of people within the area who will be affected by changes in the views, ‘visual receptors’. The following visual receptors are identified by GLVIA3 as being likely to be the most susceptible to change:
 - Residents and other frequent users of the area;
 - People, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, attractions or those whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views; and
 - Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.
- 2.29

Representative viewpoints are identified based on a comprehensive review of the surrounding area, including the following criteria:
 - Heritage receptors;
 - Townscape character;
 - Where the development may be prominent;
 - Be visible from concentrations of residential areas;
 - Open spaces (parkland, publicly accessible space);
 - Potentially sensitive receptors (e.g. schools);
 - Accessibility to the public;
 - The viewing direction, distance and elevation;
 - Townscape and transport nodes.
- 2.30

The identification of viewpoints also considers any strategic or local viewpoints identified by the local planning authorities or other relevant bodies.

- 2.31 The visual amenity value of locations is assessed using the criteria contained in **Table 2.2**. Amenity is a broad concept in planning, and the Planning Portal [online] defines it as “A positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.”¹ Changes in amenity are typically assessed through changes to what people see and perceive, and the shorthand for this are ‘views’ and ‘visual impact’.
- 2.32 The places at which or in which these individuals will experience a change will always be a publicly accessible place, in line with best practice. The visual assessment is therefore separate to a ‘residential amenity assessment’, which considers private viewpoints from residential properties (refer to GLVIA3, paragraph 6.17). In some instances, the visual impact assessment will address impacts from private land, but that is only where this topic has been scoped with the decision maker and a specific methodology agreed. Such private land amenity assessments often rely on other concepts in town planning/measures such as privacy and enclosure or overbearing.

VISUAL AMENITY VALUE	
Value	Criteria / Examples
Very High	Areas of national or international importance and/or identified strategic views of national or international importance. Very enjoyable area with multiple positive elements and/or Very High townscape value.
High	Areas of national or regional importance, or particular local importance and/or static view identified in the development plan. Enjoyable area with several positive elements and/or High townscape value.
Medium	Areas of regional or local importance and/or static view identified in planning guidance, including conservation area appraisals. Pleasant area with some positive elements and/or Medium townscape value.
Low	Commonplace areas with limited positive elements and/or Low townscape value, often with detracting elements.
Very Low	Area of Very Low townscape value (e.g. industrial areas/busy main roads) that has very few positive characteristics, usually with significant detracting elements.

Table 2.2 Visual Amenity Value Criteria

¹ <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/services/help/glossary#amenity>

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY

- 2.33 The first stage in the assessment of the Proposed Development on a townscape or visual receptor is to identify its sensitivity to the Proposed Development. Sensitivity is identified by calibrating the baseline value of the receptor with its susceptibility, defined as the ability to accommodate the particular type and/or nature of development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of planning policies and strategies. The criteria for determining townscape susceptibility is described at **Table 2.3** and visual susceptibility at **Table 2.4**.
- 2.34 GLVIA3 explains landscape susceptibility at pages 88–89. There is no specific definition of townscape susceptibility. Professional judgement is applied based on the understanding of landscape susceptibility to reach judgements on townscape susceptibility.
- 2.35 GLVIA3 describes susceptibility to change of landscape receptors as “the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.”
- 2.36 Susceptibility is relative to the general type of development proposed e.g. a receptor may be more or less susceptible to a proposal for an industrial facility as opposed to a residential building depending on the receiving environment. Equally, a receptor may be more or less susceptible to a tall building than a low-rise development depending on the receiving environment.
- 2.37 Effects are particular to the specific landscape / townscape in question, which includes reference to aspects such as the quality, nature and condition of the receptor, or, existing scale and grain e.g. if the existing townscape is of a similar scale and / or grain as the proposed development, it may have a greater ability to accommodate the proposed development and thus a lower susceptibility to change, subject to those existing characteristics not undermining or undue consequence arising from that baseline condition or anticipated achievement of relevant

TOWNSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY

townscape / landscape planning policies, which includes site allocations or anticipated development identified in the statutory development plan.

TOWNSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE CRITERIA	
High	The receptor has a low ability to accommodate the specific proposed change e.g. the existing townscape / landscape comprises very limited or no similar types of development to that proposed and/or the townscape / landscape policies do not anticipate this type of development.
Medium	The receptor has a moderate ability to accommodate the specific proposed change e.g. the existing townscape / landscape comprises some similar types of development to that proposed and/or the townscape / landscape policies anticipate some of this type of development.
Low	The receptor has a high ability to accommodate the specific proposed change e.g. the existing townscape / landscape comprises several similar types of development to that proposed and/or the townscape / landscape policies anticipate this type of development.

Table 2.3 Susceptibility of Townscape Receptor to Change Criteria

VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY

- 2.38 GLVIA3 explains visual susceptibility at pages 113–114. Page 113 sets out that susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:
 - The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations;
 - The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.
- 2.39 Visual receptors who are more likely to have a high susceptibility to change include residents at home, people who are engaged in activities that involve an appreciation of the surrounding landscape or townscape, and visitors to heritage assets or other attractions. This is the advice of GLVIA3; however, the guidance also makes it clear that this will not be true in all cases since susceptibility to change is to some extent, as noted, a function of context.

2.40 Again, and subject to that qualification, visual receptors who are more likely to have a low susceptibility to change include users of amenity space that does not depend on or involve an appreciation of the surrounding landscape / townscape such as people engaged in sports activities. GLVIA3 states that “each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on views and visual amenity.”

VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE CRITERIA	
High	The receptor has a low ability to accommodate the specific proposed change e.g. the visual receptor is likely to be heavily engaged on the view/visual amenity and/or the type of development is incongruent to the baseline condition or would undermine the enjoyment of the visual receptor.
Medium	The receptor has a moderate ability to accommodate the specific proposed change e.g. the visual receptor is likely to be partially engaged on the view / visual amenity and/or the type of development is congruent to aspects of the baseline condition or would undermine some aspects of the enjoyment of the visual receptor.
Low	The receptor has a high ability to accommodate the specific proposed change e.g. the visual receptor is likely to be not engaged on the view / visual amenity and/or the type of development is congruent to the baseline condition or would not undermine the enjoyment of the visual receptor.

Table 2.4 Susceptibility of Visual Receptor to Change Criteria

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL SENSITIVITY

2.41 The baseline value of the receptor and its susceptibility are calibrated using the matrix at Table 2.5. Sensitivity is recorded in a verbal scale (high, medium or low), supported by the clear narrative linked to evidence from the baseline study and an assessment of susceptibility.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL SENSITIVITY			
Receptor Value	Susceptibility of Receptor to Change		
	Low	Medium	High
Very Low	Low	Low	Low/Medium
Low	Low	Low/Medium	Medium
Medium	Low/Medium	Medium	Medium/High
High	Medium	Medium/High	High
Exceptional	Medium/High	High	High

Table 2.5 Townscape and Visual Sensitivity (Nature of Receptor Likely to be Affected)

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL MAGNITUDE

2.42 The magnitude of impact is a qualitative judgement supported by the narrative text within the assessment. The professional judgement is quantified using criteria at Table 2.6. The judgement of magnitude considers the size or scale, geographical extent or duration and reversibility of the impact.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL MAGNITUDE OF IMPACT	
High	Major change to the value of the townscape receptor or visual amenity. The proposals would be very noticeable, comprising a notable change over an extensive area or an intensive change over a more limited area. May comprise major alteration to key elements/features/characteristics of the receptor. The duration of this impact may be permanent and non-reversible.
Medium	Moderate change to the value of the townscape receptor or visual amenity. The proposals would be noticeable, comprising a recognisable change over a large area or a moderate change over a more limited area. May comprise alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the receptor. The duration of this impact may be semi-permanent and partially reversible.
Low	Minor change to the value of the townscape receptor or visual amenity. The proposals would be noticeable, although comprising a small change over a limited area or similar to a main component of the receptor. May comprise minor alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the receptor. The duration of this impact may be temporary and reversible.
Very Low	Barely discernible change to the value of the townscape receptor or visual amenity. The proposals would not be noticeable, although comprising a very small change over a very limited area or very similar to the main components of the receptor. May comprise very minor alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the receptor. The duration of this impact may be temporary and reversible.
Nil	No change to the value of the townscape receptor or visual amenity.

Table 2.6 Magnitude of Impact Criteria

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL LIKELY EFFECTS

2.43 Likely effects are determined by combining the judgements of sensitivity and the magnitude of impact using a common matrix shared across all topic areas (Table 2.7). Criteria defining the scale of effect is provided at Table 2.8.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL LIKELY EFFECT ON RECEPTOR			
Magnitude	Sensitivity		
	Low	Medium	High
Nil	None	None	None
Very Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible / Minor
Low	Minor	Minor / Moderate	Moderate
Medium	Minor / Moderate	Moderate	Moderate / Major
High	Moderate	Moderate / Major	Major

Table 2.7 Likely Effect on Receptor Matrix

2.44 Professional judgement is required to determine the nature of the likely effects. Criteria defining the nature of effect is provided at Table 2.9. For example, there will be cases where a high magnitude of impact produces a major scale of effect, on the basis that the component is prominent or noticeable, but notwithstanding that the quality of effect is beneficial as a consequence of design quality or other benefits. This approach arises most often as a consequence of major developments in areas positively identified for transformational change. Often, such impacts will have varied effects such that a hard and fast categorisation of an effects quality is finely balanced as between beneficial or harmful. In many instances, therefore, the final identification of impact and effect will turn on discursive analysis. This makes a necessary professional adjustment to the tabular analysis format which can produce inaccurate reporting.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL SCALE OF AN EFFECT	
Major	The change resulting from the impact of the Proposed Development upon the receptor would give rise to a very significant effect.
Moderate	The change resulting from the impact of the Proposed Development upon the receptor would give rise to a significant effect.
Minor	The change resulting from the impact of the Proposed Development upon the receptor would give rise to an effect, but this would not be significant.
Negligible	The change resulting from the impact of the Proposed Development upon the receptor would give rise to a barely discernible effect. This would not be significant
None	The change resulting from the impact of the Proposed Development upon the receptor would have no effect.

Table 2.8 Scale of an Effect

2.45 The assessment of nature of effect also requires a qualitative discussion to describe and elucidate this judgement to the reader. This is necessary because townscape and visual assessment is not a strict quantitative process and some of these considerations will depend on expert judgements. Accordingly, there is an emphasis on qualitative text throughout the assessment to describe the receptors and the judgements in regard to the significance of the identified effects.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL NATURE OF AN EFFECT	
Beneficial	An advantageous effect to a receptor
Neutral	An effect that on balance is neither beneficial nor adverse to a receptor.
Adverse	A detrimental effect to a receptor

Table 2.9 Nature of an Effect

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS
CUMULATIVE SCHEMES

2.46 The cumulative schemes for inclusion in this HTVIA were provided by the planning consultants, Savills. Apart from the redevelopment proposals for Nos. 35–39 Friars Street (planning reference: 220933), the cumulative schemes discussed in this report form part of the Station Hill redevelopment; they are listed below. An overview image is shown at **Figure 2.2**.

PHASE 1 (GREY AREA ABOVE):

- 201536 – Outline application Granted (22/07/2021).
- 201533 – Approval of reserved matters for Plot F within Station Hill. The proposals comprise the construction of a ground plus 12 storey building comprising 184 Build to Rent residential units, 762 sqm (GEA) of flexible retail, leisure and business floorspace (Use Class E, Sui Generis, F.1 and F.2), cycle storage, car parking, servicing, plant areas, landscaping, new public realm and other associated works. Granted (23/07/2021).
- 201537 – Application for the approval of reserved matters for Plot E

within Station Hill. The proposals comprise the construction of a 12 storey building, plus basement storey, comprising 415 Build to Rent residential units, 722 sqm (GEA) of flexible commercial and leisure (Use Class E (a),(b) (c),(d),(e), (f), (g)(i), and (g)(ii), Use Class F.1 and Use Class F.2); the following sui generis uses: Drinking establishments; Hot food. Granted (23/07/2023).

PHASE 2 (RED AND BLUE AREA ABOVE):

- 192032 – Hybrid application comprising (i) application for Full Planning Permission for Phase 2 (Plot G and public realm) including demolition of existing structures, erection of an eighteen storey building containing office use (Class B1) and flexible retail, non-residential institution and assembly and leisure uses (Class A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2). Provision of podium deck, vehicular access and parking. New public open space and landscaping. Bridge link over Garrard St and(ii) Application for Outline Planning Permission for Phase 3 (all Matters reserved) for four building Plots (A, B, C and D). Demolition of existing buildings and structures. Mixed-use redevelopment. Granted (22/07/2021).



Figure 2.2 Dimetric View of Cumulative Schemes

HERITAGE

- 2.47

Paragraph 36 of GPA3 states in relation to cumulative assessment:

Its purpose is to identify impacts that are the result of introducing the development into the view in combination with other existing and proposed developments. The combined impact may not simply be the sum of the impacts of individual developments; it may be more, or less.
- 2.48

The word ‘cumulative’ in this context should be taken to mean incremental and the practical effect of this would generally be to increase the degree of harmful impact in specific cases, judged on a qualitative basis. Instances of incremental harm have as matters of practice normally come about when previous development is recognised to have created a harmful condition, to which a specific proposal adds, so potentially augmenting the pre-existing harm. In all cases, however, a freestanding assessment is required.
- 2.49

GPA3 states:

Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development affecting its setting, to accord with NPPF policies consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset. Negative change could include severing the last link between an asset and its original setting; positive change could include the restoration of a building's original designed landscape or the removal of structures impairing key views of it.
- 2.50

Paragraph 40 of GPA3 states:

Where attributes of a development affecting setting may cause some harm to significance and cannot be adjusted, screening may have a part to play in reducing harm. As screening can only mitigate negative impacts, rather than removing impacts or providing enhancement, it ought never to be regarded as a substitute for well-designed developments within the setting of heritage assets.

- 2.51

GPA3 and other guidance (for example, the Greater London Authority’s guidance on World Heritage Sites) uses the word cumulative differently, and in relation to past impacts which have been negative. Thus, according to this approach (which is accepted in decision making), the assessor should consider whether past changes are positive or negative and, if the latter, whether the proposed new change adds to pre-existing harm, and so increases the overall harm caused by proposals. This form of assessment is fact specific and often relies on published documents confirming there has been past harm and why. There is no requirement, however, for such external validation and the matter can arise in individual assessments or through discussions with the competent authority and other stakeholders.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL

- 2.52

GLVIA3 sets out two main approaches to inter-project effects between any given proposed development and cumulative schemes (See GLVIA, paragraph 7.18). The first approach is to focus:

primarily on the additional effects of the main project under consideration... on top of the cumulative baseline
- 2.53

The second approach is to focus:

on the combined effects of all the past, present and future proposals together with the new project
- 2.54

This assessment takes the first approach, which is to focus on the additional effects of the Proposed Development on top of the cumulative baseline. It is considered that this approach is best suited to an urban environment, in which the cumulative effects between the Proposed Development and other cumulative schemes may be complex (including situations in which the effect of the Proposed Development could be lessened or removed entirely by cumulative schemes) and because, as also acknowledged in the GLVIA3, it may not be considered reasonable to assess the effect of many complex schemes other than the Proposed Development in the manner required by the ‘combined effects’ approach.

3.0

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

3.1 The following section sets out the planning policy context for the Site and for the context of the assessment process.

LEGISLATION

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)

3.2 The Site does not comprise any statutorily listed buildings and is not it located within a conservation area. There are statutorily listed buildings in the study area which may experience a change to their heritage significance as a result of the Proposed Development changing their setting. The relevant statutory provision is set out below.

3.3 Section 66(1) of the 1990 Act which states that:
In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the building or its setting or any features of special architectural and historical interest which it possesses.

3.4 Section 72 of the 1990 PLBCA Act requires decision makers to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation areas which may be affected by the proposed development. The Proposed Development does not comprise any buildings or other land in a conservation area and, therefore, section 72 of the 1990 PLBCA Act is not engaged. There is no statutory duty relating to the setting of conservation areas within the 1990 PLBCA Act.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.5 Section 38(6) to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise.

3.6 The statutory development plan and the policies relevant to the assessment of heritage, townscape and visual considerations are set out at **Table 3.1** below.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY	KEY PROVISIONS
Reading Local Plan (2019)	• Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development • Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm • Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment • Policy EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets • Policy EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest • Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

Table 3.10 Development Plan Policy Relevant to HTVIA

NATIONAL POLICY

3.7 The development plan is supported by the planning policies set out in the NPPF. The relevant provisions are set out at **Table 3.2**.

NATIONAL POLICY	KEY PROVISIONS
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023	Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places) • Paragraph 131 • Paragraph 135–139 Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) • Paragraph 200 • Paragraph 201 • Paragraph 203 • Paragraph 205–208 • Paragraph 209 • Paragraph 212

Table 3.11 National Planning Policy Relevant to HTVIA

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.8 In addition to legislation and policy, the assessment will take into consideration relevant planning guidance and any material considerations, including:

- National Planning Practice Guidance (online);
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA) (2013);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014);
- TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals Technical Guidance Note (2019) prepared by Landscape Institute;
- Historic England, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (2015);
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017);
- Tall Buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4 (2022);
- IEMA, ClfA and IHBC (2021) Principles for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Reading’s Historic Area Assessment (2023);
- Reading Conservation Area Appraisals; and
- Reading Local Plan Partial Update (Regulation 18) (November 2023).

POLICY DISCUSSION

3.9 The Site is located in the Reading Central Area, the Station/River Major Opportunity Area and the Station Area Tall Buildings cluster, which is designated to have “some townscape capacity for tall buildings”. The Site forms part of site allocation CR11b (‘Greyfriars Road Corner’), defined in the 2019 Reading Borough Local Plan (the ‘RBLP’) and is covered by the Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009 (the ‘RCAAP’) and Reading Station Area Framework, emphasising active frontage at ground floor, a focus on leisure and a mix of uses at upper floors. The RBLP sets out design criteria for Central Reading in terms of local context and distinctiveness, particularly in relation to housing.

TALL BUILDINGS

- 3.10 Tall buildings are informed by the 2008 Tall Buildings Strategy (the ‘TBS’). The TBS was reviewed by the 2018 Update Note. The Update Note concludes that the overall evidence and approach that was set out by the TBS and resulting RCAAP policy is still generally valid. As a result, the TBS, accompanied by the Update Note, remains a valid piece of evidence for policy making, and it should continue to underpin the policy approach of the Local Plan.
- 3.11 The TBS settled on a definition that a building of more than 36 m is considered tall. It follows that a proposal of c.12 to 14 storeys on the Site would be a tall building development and Policy CR10: Tall Buildings of the RBLP applies.

RELATIONSHIP WITH STATION HILL

- 3.12 The Site is located to the immediate south and west of Reading’s major on-going regeneration project opposite the station that is subject to a consent. The consent has undergone various updates and amendments. The most recent and relevant is the hybrid planning application ‘Station Hill North’ (reference 192032, approved on 22 July 2021), comprising buildings that range in height, with the highest being163 m AOD, equivalent to a c.30 storey office building, and the lowest being 62 m AOD. Station Hill North will provide the tallest building in Reading and be part of the emerging cluster at Reading station. Thames Tower, a fourteen-storey office development, was completed in 2016. One Station Hill is currently under construction and will have 17 office floors in total (122 m AOD). There are other tall buildings located to the north and south of the railway, plus some across longer distances (Chatham Place and Kings Point).
- 3.13 Phase 3 (aka Plots A–D) form part of the wider application, with Plot C being the tallest. The maximum heights step down anti-clockwise from this point with Plot A rising to a maximum of 126.5 m (AOD) with Plot B at the corner of Greyfriars Rd and Garrard Street (potentially joined to the building on Plot A) set at a maximum 97.4 m AOD, before stepping up again to a maximum of 116.5 m on Plot D fronting Garrard Street (77.5 m tall relative to Garrard Street).

- 3.14 Plot E to the immediate east (forming part of the wider consent for Station Hill North) has a consent for 86 m AOD, which is c. 41.2 m in real terms. It is also noted that the Station Hill North consent steps down at the junction between Garrard St and Greyfriars Road, while the recently constructed Brick Works development at Stanshawe Road also has a low-rise development.
- 3.15 Historic England objected to the Station Hill North application, citing the impacts on the Grade I listed buildings Greyfriars Church and Reading Minster as the principal reasons. Some concern was also raised with regard to the Castle Street/St Mary’s Butts Conservation Area and Plot E, which is subject to a different planning application. Subsequently, the height of Block A was materially reduced.
- 3.16 In summary, the consents for the Station Hill regeneration projects demonstrate the on-going direction of travel for this part of Reading. The proposals at 20–30 Greyfriars Road would be much smaller than the cumulative schemes at Station Hill.

EMERGING LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

- 3.17 The Council agreed in March 2023 to undertake a partial review of its adopted Local Plan (2019), following the publication of the NPPF 2021 which superseded the 2019 development plan. The 2021 revision of the NPPF included updates in relation to local housing needs and updates to the standard methodology for calculating housing needs, pertinent to urban centres including Reading.
- 3.18 The Council’s review identified the need to update the Local Plan site allocation relating to the site (policy CR12: West Side Major Opportunity Area) in line with national and local policy changes. In terms of amount of development delivered and committed, the review states that ‘progress on achieving the level of development outlined in the policy has been reasonable and the policy does not require revision for this reason’.
- 3.19 In reference to the site allocations of policy CR12, the review states that where planning permissions have already been granted on the sites covered by policy CR12 (CR12d Broad Street Mall), ‘It is considered that allocations should not necessarily be removed where permissions have been granted in case alternative applications are made. There may be a need to amend the allocation to reflect what has been permitted’.

- 3.20 The review concludes:
‘Policy CR12 should be subject to update due to:
 - Changes to the circumstances on individual sites, including the progress of development and the award of funds for the Hexagon; and*
 - Potential impacts of changing national policy, including on matters such as increasing densities in town centres.’*
- 3.21 More generally, to responds positively and proactively to the 2023 NPPF, the Local Plan update proposes the delivery of higher numbers of housing over the plan period and a greater proportion of larger units across the Borough, including the town centre.

4.0

BASELINE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

BASELINE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1
- This section provides a description of the historical development of the Site and that of the surrounding area. The section and the heritage baseline at **Section 5.0** has been informed by secondary sources, including:

 - Bridget Cherry and Nikolas Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Berkshire (2010)
 - The National Heritage List for England maintained by Historic England;
 - Reading Borough Council, Register of Locally Listed Buildings;
 - Conservation area appraisals; and
 - Reading Historic Area Assessment (2023)

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF READING

- 4.2
- By the 11th century, Reading was an established urban settlement at a strategic crossing over the River Kennet near the confluence with the Thames and the junction of the roads from London to Bath and from Oxford to Southampton. The church now known as the Church of St Mary (Reading Minster) stood at the centre of this early settlement, however, after the founding of Reading Abbey by Henry I in 1121, the centre of the settlement moved away from St Mary's and Castle Street towards the Abbey, located further in the north-east.
- 4.3
- As one of the largest monasteries in England, Reading became a place of pilgrimage, and a new market was established by the Abbey from the 13th century. The town grew in prosperity due to its successful silk, wool and leather trades. John Speed's 1610 map of Reading (**Figure 4.1**) shows the town to the north of the river Kennet, bound to the north by Gutter Lane, now Friar Street, and Reading Abbey to the east. The 17th century map illustrates ribbon development extending beyond the medieval core, following Castle Street to the west and Shoemakers Row, now London Street, to the south. The irregular street pattern of this medieval core is still discernible around Broad Street.
- 4.4
- Despite early prosperity, Reading remained within its medieval boundaries until the end of the 18th century following the aftermath of the Civil War and the decline in its textile industry. By the end of the 18th century, several turnpikes converged at Reading, making it a popular stopping place and Thames River crossing, particularly between London in the east and Bristol or Bath in the west. Consequently, there were a great number of coaching inns in the town, such as the Grade II listed George Hotel, 2-4 King Street.
- 4.5
- In the 19th century, Reading was connected to other cities by canal and rail. By 1810 the 87-mile Kennet and Avon Canal was completed, providing a waterway from the Bristol Channel to Reading, where the River Kennet joins the River Thames towards London. In 1841 the Great Western Railway superseded the canal system, connecting Reading to London by rail. Reading was made further accessible by South Eastern Railway and South Western Railway, in 1849 and 1856 respectively. Reading began to prosper again as a market town, as a result of the improved trade and transport links, and flourishing industries.

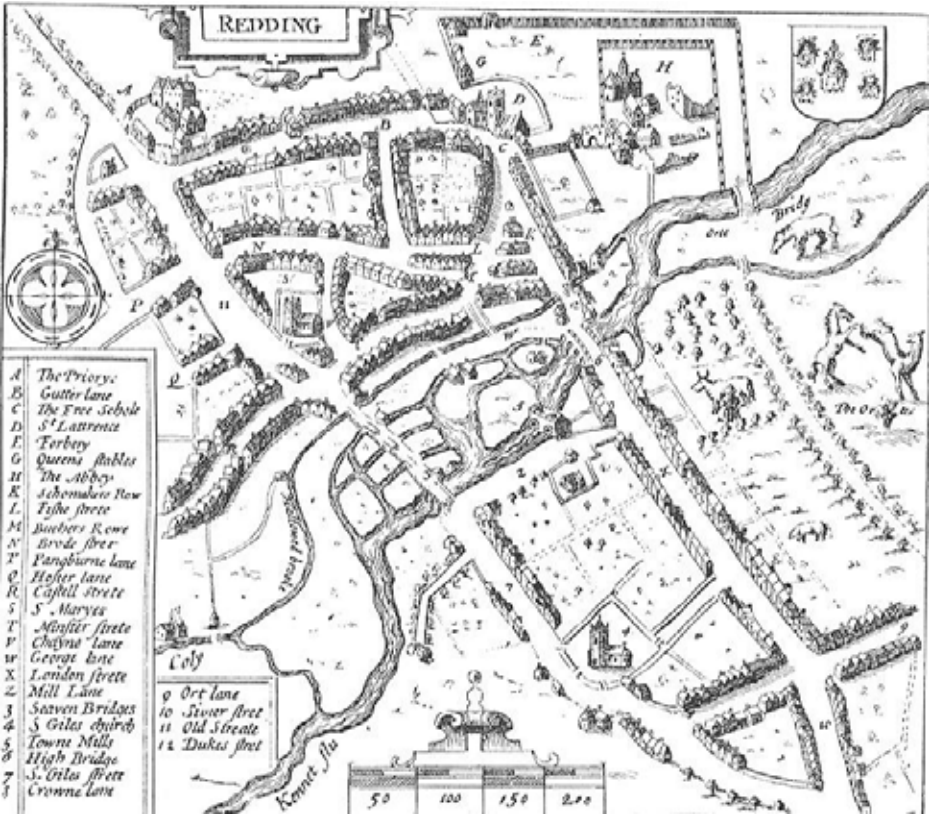


Figure 4.1 1610 John Speed's Map of Reading (Source: Berkshire History).

- 4.6
- The town expanded rapidly in the 19th century, spreading out from the medieval core to the west, south and east. Between 1850 and 1900, the population of Reading increased from 21,450 to 72,000. This expansion can be traced in the linear street pattern of Victorian and Edwardian suburbs, particularly along Oxford Road in West Reading and London Road in East Reading, and New Town (**Figures 4.2 and 4.3**).



Figure 4.2 Reading during the Victorian era (Source: 1879 OS map)

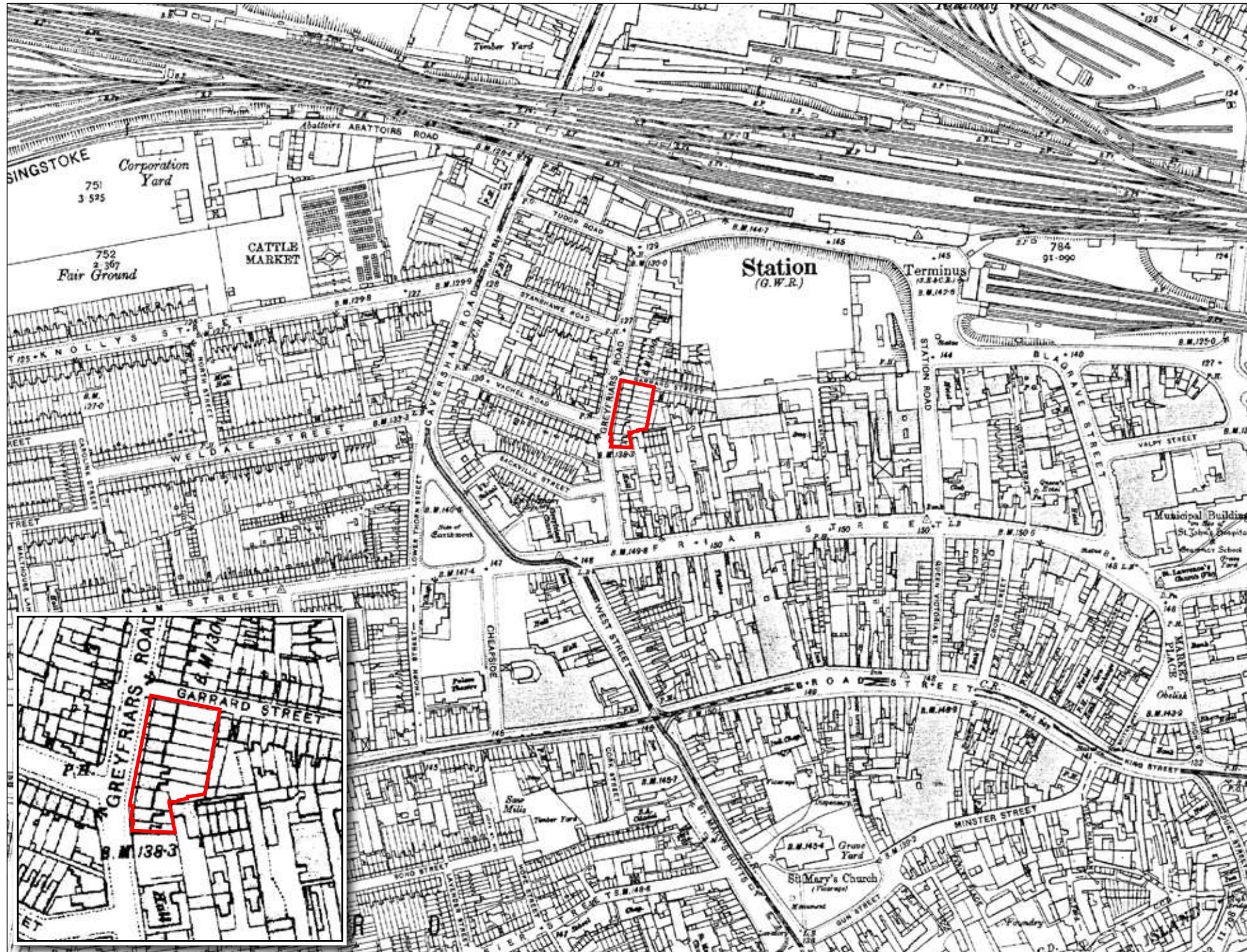


Figure 4.3 Reading before World War I (Source: 1912-13 OS map)

- 4.7 In the 18th century, malting and brewing were prominent industries. Simond's Brewery was founded in 1785 and later came to occupy a large riverside site with brewery buildings designed by Sir John Soane. The brewery complex was demolished, and the Oracle shopping centre constructed on the site, opening in 1999.
- 4.8 Owing to its geographical position in the Chilterns, brick making was a historically prominent industry in Reading since medieval times. This industry grew in the 18th and 19th centuries with the popularity of brick as a building material. Expansion and prosperity at this time led to the redevelopment or refacing of most of the 16th and 17th century timber framed buildings, and by the mid-19th century the predominant building material in Reading was brick. Throughout Reading there are examples of the distinctive red brick produced from the Reading Beds, often used in decorative and elaborate brickwork.
- 4.9 Further prosperous industries developed in Reading at this time, including bulb growing and biscuit manufacturing. Reading was known for a period as "Biscuit Town", with the largest employer in Reading being Huntley and Palmers, founded as a small bakery in 1822.
- 4.10 In the 20th century, Reading continued to expand, absorbing radial settlements including Caversham to the north by 1911 and becoming a large urban settlement (Figure 4.4).

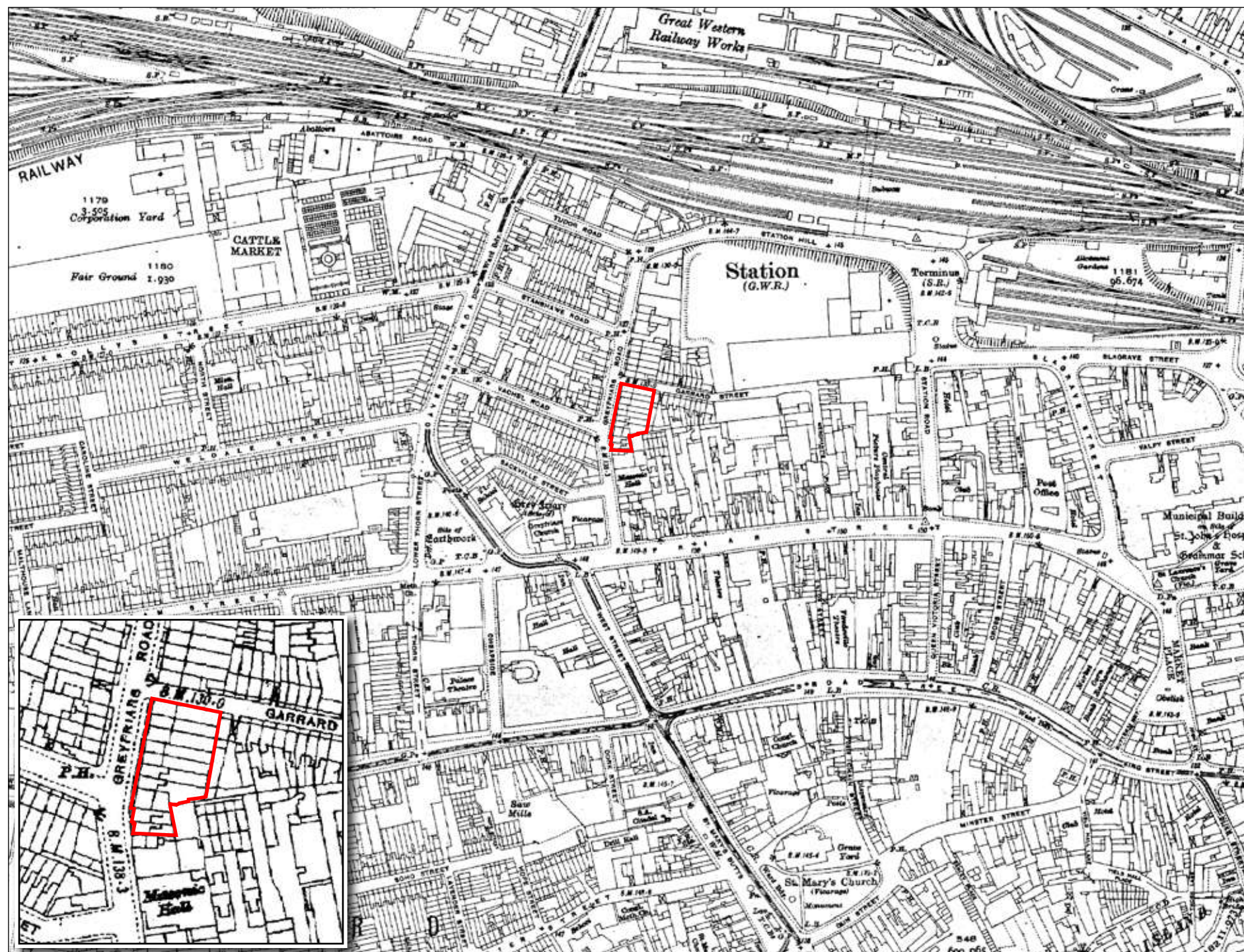


Figure 4.4 Reading before World War II (Source: 1931-32 OS map)

4.11 Having escaped the bombings of the Second World War, Reading experienced significant change in its built environment and infrastructure in the post-war period, including the construction of the Inner Distribution Road (the 'IDR') which opened in 1969 (Figure 4.5). A high demand for housing, exacerbated by the London overspill, resulted in rampant residential and civic development in the centre and outskirts of Reading.



Figure 4.5 Aerial photograph of Broad Street Mall and the Inner Distribution Road, from the north, 1971 (source: Historic England).

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

- 4.12

The Greyfriars arrived at Reading in the early 13th century; the site at the junction of what is today Friars Street and Greyfriars Road was offered in 1285 by Reading Abbey. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the old Greyfriars church was used as Guildhall for Reading, hospital and gaol until it became a church again in 1862. Originally located at the northwestern fringes of the medieval settlement, Greyfriars Road became swallowed up the growing modern town and Georgian and Victorian developments.
- 4.13

Reading station opened at Station Hill at the northern end of Greyfriars Road in 1840. Major roadworks eventually dissected the historic townscape to connect the station and Broad Street, Reading’s primary commercial street.
- 4.14

Much of the area between Friars Street and Station Hill was redeveloped during the second half of the 20th century, leading to the demolition to most of the town centre. The area between Station Hill and Garrard Street forms part of the current Station Hill regeneration project. Greyfriars House, designed by the Terry Farrell Partnership, was completed in 1981–84 and has since then been refurbished, altering much of the original design. The Buildings of England dedicate (2010) it an entry:
“Terry Farrell’s Partnership’s Greyfriars House of 1981–4, from the adolescence of Postmodernism. Such details as the stretched lunettes were still fresh then, but the composition is weak.”

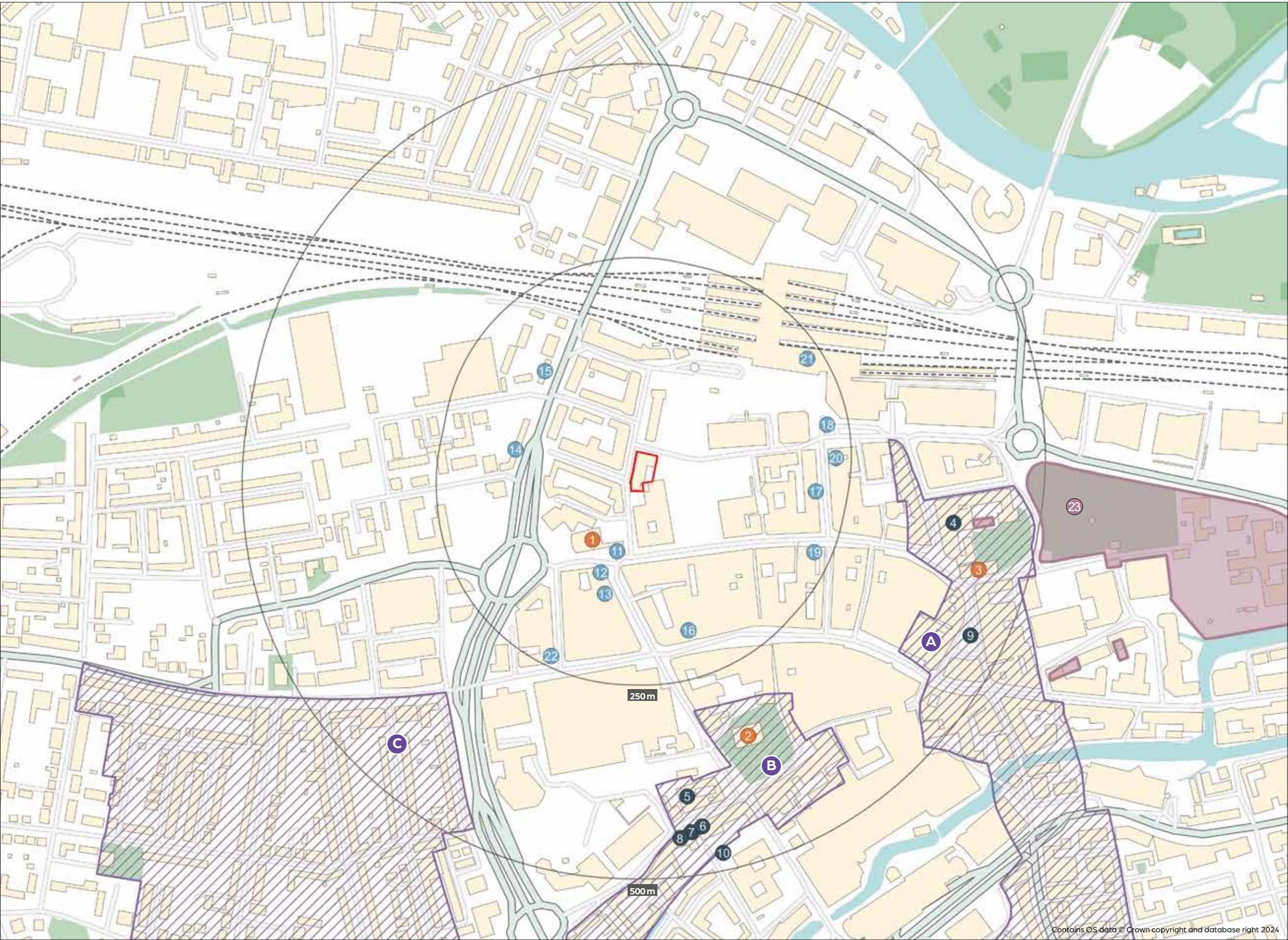
5.0

BASELINE: BUILT HERITAGE

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

BASELINE: BUILT HERITAGE

- 5.1 This section identifies the value of heritage assets in the baseline that may be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 5.2 The Heritage Asset Plan at **Figure 5.1** shows the location of all heritage assets within the identified study area. The ZTV with an overlay of the heritage assets identified in the 500m study area is provided at **Figure 5.2**. Listing descriptions are provided at **Appendix 1.o**.
- 5.3 The built heritage baseline is summarised at **Table 5.1**, including assets scoped in and out of the full assessment. The ZTV and non-verified massing studies were used to identify at baseline stage if there were any heritage assets which could be scoped out from further assessment. Assets were scoped out based on there being no intervisibility with the Proposed Development, or where there would be no change to their setting or heritage value by any other means, including historical associations. On this basis, the following assets have been scoped out at this stage of the assessment:
 - Church of St Mary, grade II* (Map ref.: 5)
 - 15 Castle Street, grade II* (Map ref.: 6)
 - 17 Castle Street, front railings and mounting block, grade II* (Map ref.: 7)
 - 19 Castle Street and associated front railings, grade II* (Map ref.: 8)
 - The Simeon Monument, grade II* (Map ref.: 9)
 - Culvert on Holy Brook, grade II* (Map ref.: 10)
 - Regent Place, grade II (Map ref.: 15)
 - Nos. 67 and 68 Broad Street, grade II (Map ref.: 16)
 - Nos. 13 and 15 Station Road, grade II (Map ref.: 17)
 - The Statue of King Edward VII, grade II (Map ref.: 18)
 - 147 Friar Street, grade II (Map ref.: 19)
 - Great Western House, grade II (Map ref.: 20)
 - Main Building of Reading General Station, grade II (Map ref.: 21)
 - Nos. 3 and 5 Cheapside, grade II (Map ref.: 22)



HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

- Application Site
- Conservation Areas
- A. Market Place and London Street
 - B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
 - C. Russell Street and Castle Hill
- Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- 1. Greyfriars Church
 - 2. Church of St Mary
 - 3. Church of St Laurence
- Grade II*
- 4. Reading Town Hall
 - 5. Church of St Mary
 - 6. 15, Castle Street
 - 7. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block
 - 8. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings
 - 9. The Simeon Monument
 - 10. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From SU71441/73234 to 71327/73133
- Grade II
- 11. Quadrant Walls and Railings to Former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage)
 - 12. The Former Mitre Inn
 - 13. W I Palmer Memorial Hall
 - 14. 29 and 31, Caversham Road
 - 15. Regent Place
 - 16. 67 and 68, Broad Street
 - 17. 13 and 15, Station Road
 - 18. The Statue of King Edward VII
 - 19. 147, Friar Street
 - 20. Great Western House
 - 21. Main Building of Reading General Station
 - 22. 3 and 5, Cheapside
- Scheduled Monuments
- 23. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork

LOCATION:
20-30 Greyfriars Road, Reading

DATE:
October 2024

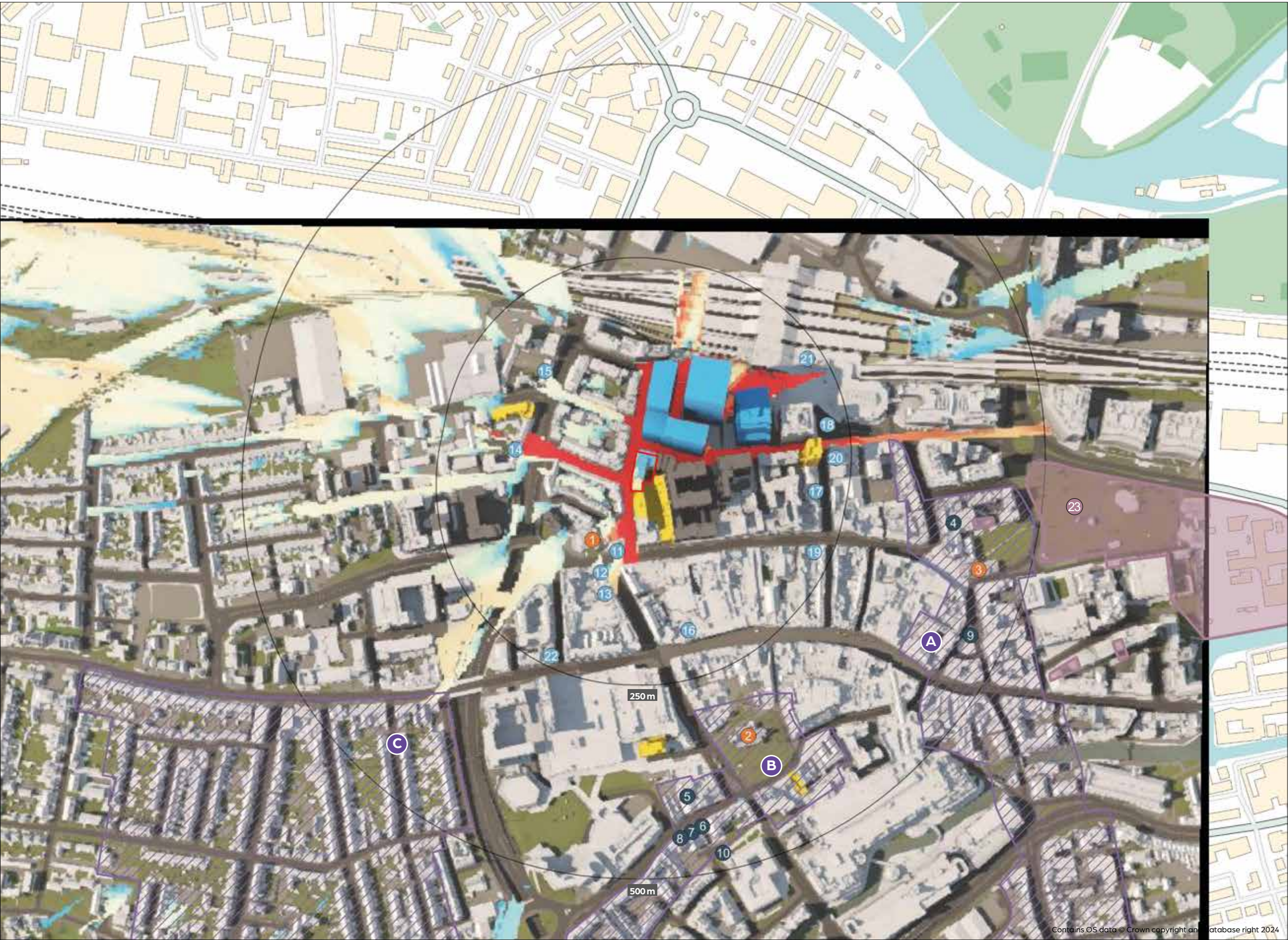
SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 5.1 Heritage Asset Plan

▲ NORTH



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HERITAGE ASSET PLAN WITH ZTV OVERLAY

- Application Site**
- Conservation Areas**
- A. Market Place and London Street
 - B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
 - C. Russell Street and Castle Hill
- Listed Buildings**
- Grade I**
- 1. Greyfriars Church
 - 2. Church of St Mary
 - 3. Church of St Laurence
- Grade II***
- 4. Reading Town Hall
 - 5. Church of St Mary
 - 6. 15, Castle Street
 - 7. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block
 - 8. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings
 - 9. The Simeon Monument
 - 10. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From SU71441/73234 to 71327/73133
- Grade II**
- 11. Quadrant Walls and Railings to Former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage)
 - 12. The Former Mitre Inn
 - 13. W I Palmer Memorial Hall
 - 14. 29 and 31, Caversham Road
 - 15. Regent Place
 - 16. 67 and 68, Broad Street
 - 17. 13 and 15, Station Road
 - 18. The Statue of King Edward VII
 - 19. 147, Friar Street
 - 20. Great Western House
 - 21. Main Building of Reading General Station
 - 22. 3 and 5, Cheapside
- Scheduled Monuments**
- 23. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork

LOCATION:
20-30 Greyfriars Road, Reading

DATE:
October 2024

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 5.2 Heritage Asset Plan with overlay of the ZTV. Source: VuCity

▲ NORTH



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DESIGNATED HERITAGE RECEPTORS

LISTED BUILDINGS

GREYFRIARS CHURCH, GRADE I (MAP REF.: 1)

- 5.4

Greyfriars Church was designated in 1957 and is approximately 70m from the Site. The church was built for the Franciscan order on the outskirts of the town between 1285 and 1311. It is constructed in square knapped flints with stone buttresses and dressings. A number of tracery windows survive, notably the five light west window in Decorated Gothic style. The church has a modern glazed extension to the west.
- 5.5

Dissolved in 1538, the friary became Reading’s guildhall and was then used as prison and hospital before it was reconsecrated as a church in 1860s, following considerable restoration works.
- 5.6

The Quadrant Walls and Railings were constructed around the end of the 18th century and are attributed to Sir John Soane. Soane designed the demolished Greyfriars Vicarage, with the walls and railings forming a quadrant.
- 5.7

The building’s principal significance lies in the fact that it is *“believed to be the best-preserved English Franciscan church which is still in use as a place of public worship”* as outlined by the listing description. It holds historical significance as an indicator of the Franciscan Order in England prior to the Reformation.
- 5.8

The Church was first constructed at the turn of the 14th century and has lost much of its historic setting. Immediate to the west is the gyratory, connecting Friar Street with the IDR, and the recently finished block of the Greyfriars Centre. Motor traffic, noise and pollution compromise the experience of the heritage asset. The immediate setting of the Church is thus compromised by 20th century roadworks and makes a negative contribution to its significance.
- 5.9

Friar Street is the main east-west thoroughfare of Reading and the main access route from the west into the town. Some historic buildings on Friar Street, including the listed former Mitre Inn and the Quadrant Walls and Railings of the former vicarage next door, survive nearby. In the Sackville Street to the north is one of the few enclaves of late 19th century Reading can be found.
- 5.10

The current building on the Site, which lies approximately 60m to the north, is integrated into the late 20th century townscape of Greyfriars Road.

Greyfriars Road is characterised by the delivery and servicing areas of the shops on Friar Street and construction site. The current building makes a neutral contribution to the setting of the Greyfriars Church.

CHURCH OF ST MARY, GRADE I (MAP REF: 2)

- 5.11

The Church of St Mary was designated in 1957 and is approximately 370m from the Site.
- 5.12

The Church of St Mary (Reading Minster) is a medieval church with Norman origins. The present church was first constructed in the 13th century, with 14th century additions. The church was altered and extended in the 16th century, the west tower and Decorated Gothic style window tracery survive from this period. Alterations were made in the mid-19th century, notably the addition of the chancel and north aisle. The church was constructed in a distinctive chequered flint and Taynton stone.
- 5.13

The architectural and historical significance of the church derives from the survival of 13th to 16th century fabric. The church has historical significance in its associations with an earlier, Norman church on the same site, and its position at the centre of the medieval settlement in Reading. The distinct chequerboard tower is prominent in the historic streetscape of Reading.
- 5.14

The immediate setting of the church contributes positively to its historic and architectural interest. The church is set within its original churchyard, which comprises mature trees and several tombs. The churchyard is enclosed in part by buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries creating an enclosed setting around the church yard, which helps to illustrate the historical context of the church. St Mary’s Butts, to the west of the church detracts from the significance of the church; it is a busy vehicular route characterised by mixed modern development of low architectural or townscape interest. In the wider setting of the church, notably on Castle Street, a number of 15th and 16th century buildings survive, which together with the church contribute to the historic context of the medieval centre of Reading.
- 5.15

The wider setting of the church comprises modern development to the west, north west and east. This wider townscape is unsympathetic to the character and scale of the church and the loss of historic context detracts from an appreciation of the interest of the highly designated church.
- 5.16

The Site has no visual or spatial relationship with the listed building.

CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE, GRADE I (MAP REF.: 3)

- 5.17

Listed on 22 March 1957, St Laurence is one of the three ancient parish churches of Reading and goes back to the Norman period. It stands in the eastern part of the town next to Reading Abbey and the old Market Place, approximately 430m to the southwest of the Site. The listing description states that *“the principal interest of this church is that it was built at the Abbey gate. The circa 1200 work may possibly be in connection with foundation of St John's Hospice (qv Blagrove St Municipal Buildings).”*
- 5.18

The Norman structure was rebuilt in the 15th century when the three stage tower was added. It was heavily restored in 1867. The building is constructed in flint with Bath stone ashlar quoins and dressing sin gothic Decorated style. Various original Norman elements survive, such as a Norman window and a late 12th century round headed doorway with waterleaf capitals survive. The north aisle and chancel aisle were probably added in 1521.
- 5.19

The interiors comprise a number of Norman fragments and various later features such as an 18th century pulpit and a *“very fine”*, as the listing description states, organ case from 1741. Among the brasses and memorials, the memorial to John Blagrove (died 1611, author of "The Mathematical Jewell") is particularly noteworthy.
- 5.20

The church has historic significance as a place of worship that has survived since the Normans and as the parish church next to Reading Abbey. Its architectural significance derives from the many medieval artefacts that survive and the very fine interior fittings.
- 5.21

The setting of the Church of St Laurence is formed by the buildings that emerged out of the ruins of Reading Abbey and the old Market Place or Town Hall Square and Friar Street/Blagrove Street at whose eastern end the church stands. The church still stands at the centre of the town, next to the retail quarter to the west and its former civic and religious heart.
- 5.22

The church tower, flanked by the Town Hall tower, retains its role as a marker building among the commercial buildings, dating form the 20th century to the Georgian era, which are generally lower.
- 5.23

The setting makes an important contribution to the significance of the asset, allowing the viewer to appreciate the relationship between the church and the other key buildings in the town.
- 5.24

The current building on the Site is not visible from the church.

READING TOWN HALL, GRADE II* (MAP REF.: 4)

5.25 The Town Hall was added to the National Heritage List in 1957, and the entry last amended on 09 May 2023. It is a grand Victorian building, located approximately 390 m to the southwest of the Site. Originally, the town hall functions were housed at the Guild Hall, then at the former Greyfriars Church and eventually within the walls of a surviving building of Reading Abbey. A purpose-built town hall was constructed to designs by Charles Poulton at the end of the 18th century; it was remodelled in 1863 by William Henry Woodman.

5.26 Renowned architect Alfred Waterhouse was commissioned to the design the new town hall in the early 1870s. He conceived a medieval-style complex that integrated the Georgian town hall and the former vicarage of St Laurence. The building was extended in 1879–82 by T Lainson. An art gallery to designs by JJ Cooper and W Howell was added in 1896–97. The resulting town hall is a picturesque Victorian building complex with a varied roofscape, gables, dormers, turrets and arched windows. It is constructed in grey or blue brick with red brick, moulded brick, terracotta and sandstone dressings.

5.27 Some of the interiors of the 18th century town hall survive. Overall, the complex comprises high quality late 19th century spaces including the former Council Chamber and concert hall with lavish decorative elements such as a coffered ceiling and an organ in a Baroque style casing.

5.28 The Town Hall has architectural interest as a fine example of Victorian civic architecture by one of the era’s most renowned architects. Most of the interiors survive in good condition. The building’s significance also derives from the historic interest, reflecting Reading’s development in the 19th century.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE

5.29 The Town Hall stands next to the Church of St Laurence and the ruins of Reading Abbey. Located at the eastern end of the town’s main commercial thoroughfare next to the church, the town hall can still be understood as the municipal administrative centre next to the former religious hub and the Market Square which has existed here for many centuries.

5.30 The Town Hall’s grand architecture, surmounted by the tower, still stands out within the varied streetscape, comprising commercial building from the 20th, 19th and 19th centuries.

5.31 As such, the setting makes an important contribution to the significance of the heritage asset, helping tell the story of Reading and the development of its civic heart.

5.32 The current building on the Site is not visible from the Town Hall.

QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), GRADE I (MAP REF.: 11)

5.33 The walls and railings were listed on 22 March 1957. Located 70m from the Site, they date from the late 18th century and are likely to be by John Soane who was responsible for the design of the house for Lancelot Austwick, former mayor of Reading, on Friar Street, which was later replaced by the current vicarage, now nursery, building.

5.34 Built in brick, the curved garden wall comprises two entrances, emphasised by brick piers and semi-circular arches with plastered tympana. The cast iron rails are decorated with spearhead and urns.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE

5.35 While the building that the walls and railings once enclosed has been replaced, the overall setting of the heritage assets has remained remarkably unchanged.

5.36 The garden wall abuts the grade I listed Greyfriars Church. The grade II listed former Mitre Inn, see below, stands opposite.

5.37 As a result, the setting makes a positive contribution to the appreciation of the asset.

5.38 Nevertheless, the proximity of the roundabout connecting the IDR and Friar Street, only 60 m to the west, would be noticeable, impacting on the appreciation of the heritage assets.

5.39 The current building on the Site, located only approximately 40 m to the north of the garden wall, is integrated into the established townscape and makes a neutral contribution to the setting of the garden wall.

THE FORMER MITRE INN, GRADE II (MAP REF.: 12)

5.40 The former Mitre Inn was listed on 14 December 1978. The building, a mid-C19 public house, now a restaurant, stands approximately 130 m to the south of the Site at the corner of Friar Street and West Street opposite the Greyfriars church.

5.41 The former inn is a three storey, white-washed building, constructed in brick with a clay tile roof. The main frontage faces onto West Street where

the entrance is located. Apart from a decorative open-pedimented feature, architectural ornaments are limited. The building has two tall chimney stacks.

5.42 The listing description highlights the “*well-proportioned and architecturally refined façade onto West Street*” and “*the late-C19 shopfront on Friar Street*”. The building is considered to be “*a good example of a mid-C19 public house on a prominent corner location, adding value to the townscape of this part of Reading*”.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE

5.43 The Former Mitre Inn is adjacent to the WI Palmer Memorial Hall on West Street and near the Greyfriars Church on the opposite side of Friar Street. The inn has group value with these other heritage assets.

5.44 There are several buildings of townscape merit nearby which contribute positively to the setting of the former inn and help understand the building in its historic context.

5.45 The presence of the IDR can be felt, moving further west beyond the corner with Friar Street. Traffic noise distracts from the appreciation of the historic building.

5.46 The current building on the Site is not visible from the former inn.

W I PALMER MEMORIAL HALL, GRADE II (MAP REF.: 13)

5.47 Listed on 24 October 1974, the former temperance hall lies approximately 150 m to the south of the Site next to the Former Mitre Inn on the corner with Friar Street.

5.48 The former memorial hall is a three storey building in brown brick, built in 1862 to designs by William Henry Woodman and embellished and rebuilt between 1887 and 1899 by F W Albury. The listing description calls it “*an eye-catching and flamboyant design using good quality terracotta detailing and ironwork*” in a style often used for pubs and banks at that time. W I Palmer’s name, a Reading philanthropist and promoter of temperance, is inscribed above the first floor window. The entrance has a “*Romanesque-type doorway of two orders and alternating buff and red terracotta tile dressings*”, as described in the listing description. The building was built for the Reading branch of the British and Foreign Temperance Society, which promoted sober refreshment and recreation.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE

5.49 Despite being built in different periods, the former hall has group value with the adjoining Mitre Inn (grade II) and the grade I listed Greyfriars Church to the north. While the immediate setting of the historic streetscape of West Street and the juxtaposition with the medieval church make a positive contribution to the building’s heritage value, the IDR to the west negatively impacts on the heritage assets in the area.

5.50 The current building on the Site is not visible from the memorial hall.

29 AND 31, CAVERSHAM ROAD, GRADE II (MAP REF.: 14)

5.51 Nos. 29 and 31 Caversham Road were listed in December 1978.

5.52 Built round the middle of the 19th century, they form the two halves of a residential building, each with a single storey porch to the side. Architectural detailing is limited, apart from a horizontal band above the first floor and an urn above the arched entrances. The buildings has three storeys and a basement and is built in red brick with a slate roof.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE

5.53 The historic setting of the heritage asset was completely lost when the IDR was built. The listed building now overlooks the multi-lane ring road, severed from the town centre to the east. Motor traffic, noise and pollution detract from the appreciation of the building’s significance.

5.54 The adjoining buildings to the north and south are similar in height and allow the heritage assets to be understood as part of a traditional street frontage.

5.55 The current building on the Site is visible across the IDR at the end of Vachel Road, approximately 160 m to the east. It makes no contribution to the asset’s setting.

CONSERVATION AREAS

MARKET PLACE AND LONDON STREET CONSERVATION AREA (MAP REF.: A)

5.56 The Market Place and London Street Conservation Area lies approximately 320m to the east of the Site. Designated in 1972 and extended in 1982, the conservation area comprises four character areas. It covers a linear area along the eastern edge of Reading town centre, comprising the buildings around the historic marketplace next to the ancient Reading Abbey, two of the three medieval churches, St Laurence (grade I), and St Giles (grade II) and the town hall (grade II*). London Street runs from the Town Hall Square across the River Kennet southwards.

5.57 Despite comprehensive rebuilding of large parts of the town centre and the construction of the IDR in the post-World War II decades, many buildings in the conservation area are listed and have historic and architectural significance. The streets within the conservation area are, apart from London Street, narrow, based on a tightly knit, medieval pattern.

5.58 Apart from the medieval churches and a few surviving 16th and 17th century timber framed buildings, most of the building stock within the conservation area dates from the Victorian era onwards, the town hall being an outstanding example of 19th century civic architecture. Further south on London Street are several elegant Georgian town houses.

5.59 Brick was the most popular building material in the conservation area in the 18th and 19th centuries. The two churches were built with local stones and flint.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE

5.60 The conservation area forms the eastern edge of the town centre and abuts the modern shopping streets to the west, comprising large-scale commercial buildings. The Station Hill development and some of Reading’s tallest buildings are to the north. The IDR, which runs parallel to the River Kennet, cuts the conservation area into northern and southern part.

5.61 The spires of St Laurence and St Giles and the clock tower of the town hall are key landmarks of Reading, visible above the roofscape of the conservation area. The conservation area appraisal highlights the view long distance view of St Laurence from the north end of Duke Street.

5.62 The current building on the Site is not visible in the key views from the conservation area.

ST MARY’S BUTTS AND CASTLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA (MAP REF: B)

5.63 The conservation area is located approximately 370m to the south and east of the Site. The conservation area was first designated in 1972.

5.64 The conservation area comprises the historic core of Reading and medieval town centre. Overall, the appearance of the conservation area varies; however, the prevailing character is that of 16th to 19th century residential, religious and commercial buildings.

5.65 The street pattern of medieval Reading is discernible within the conservation area, and the meeting of Castle Street, St Mary’s Butts and Gun Street constitutes the north-south and east-west crossroads of the medieval settlement.

5.66 The conservation area appraisal identifies six ‘Landmark Buildings’ within the conservation area, including Reading Minster (grade I), the Church of St Mary’s (grade II*), the Sun Inn (grade II), Nos. 1 (grade II), 15 (grade II*) and 17 Castle Street (grade II*) and the former Cross Keys public house.

5.67 Castle Street, Gun Street and the south of St Mary’s Butts are characterised predominantly by two to three storey buildings with brick facades and timber sash windows, dating from the early 18th to 19th centuries. The south side of Castle Street retains an important consecutive series of historic buildings. Castle Street retains a number of earlier timber-framed and jettied buildings, rare survivals of 16th and 17th century Reading, notably Nos. 15 and 17 Castle Street.

5.68 The conservation area excludes the north end and west side of Castle Street, as these are dominated by 20th century redevelopment. The Police Station (1976) and the Magistrates Court (1968) have large street frontages and negatively impact the historical character of the conservation area. To the west, the conservation area is bound by the A329.

5.69 Reading Minster forms the focal point of the conservation area, signified by the sequence of key views identified in the conservation area appraisal. These views look south from Castle Street at the Vachel Almshouses, east along Castle Street and east from St Mary’s Butts towards Reading Minster.

- 5.70

Reading Minster churchyard provides important green space within this area of Reading. The 18th and 19th century residential buildings lining Gun Street and Chain Street overlook the churchyard, creating an enclosed space. The churchyard is planted with mature trees. St Mary’s Butts is a wide and busy thoroughfare, and the presence of vehicular traffic detracts from the tranquillity of the churchyard.
- 5.71

The special interest of the conservation area is derived from the arrangement, age and varied architectural style of the religious, residential and commercial buildings which together illustrate the historic development of the medieval settlement of Reading. The conservation area demonstrates how the medieval settlement formed at an important river crossing and grew up around the Minster, with ribbon development along the main thoroughfares. Former townhouses are arranged in narrow terraced plots along these thoroughfares, as was typical in market towns where street frontages were highly valuable. The conservation area has a high number of listed buildings, representing the architectural quality of the area.
- CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE**
- 5.72

The St Mary’s Butts and Castle Street Conservation Area comprises the remnants of the historic core of Reading. The conservation area boundary is defined by modern development and infrastructure to the north, east, south and west. The wider setting of the conservation area contributes negatively to the character and appearance of the conservation area, in the erosion of historic fine grain development and poor-quality townscape.
- 5.73

Between the Site and the Conservation Area, the townscape and architectural quality of the Broad Street Mall complex detracts from the high historic and architectural interest of the area. The conservation area appraisal does not identify any views looking out of the conservation area into its wider setting, views are instead focused within the conservation area, looking east towards the Minster.
- 5.74

The current building on the Site is not visible from the conservation area.

RUSSELL ST. AND CASTLE HILL CONSERVATION AREA (MAP REF: C)

- 5.75

The conservation area is located approximately 200m to the south-west of the Site.
- 5.76

The conservation area was designated in 1974 and extended in November 2019. It is a large conservation area, encompassing historic development on and to the south of Oxford Road, west of the IDR and north of Mansfield Road.
- 5.77

The area as a whole varies in character and appearance; however, the prevailing character comprises late 18th and 19th century residential buildings, with the best examples lying along Castle Hill (historic route westwards out of the medieval town centre).
- 5.78

The 2019 conservation area extension extended further west along the Oxford Road, to the railway bridge, as well as encompassing some of the buildings of architectural merit on the northern side of the Oxford Road. This extension was undertaken owing to the historical justification of the Oxford Road as a major route westward out of Reading town centre. The area is characterised by buildings dating from the Victorian and Georgian periods, predominantly long and narrow style burgage plots of residential housing. Towards the western end of the Oxford Road, mid Victorian housing becomes the dominant building typology.
- 5.79

Residential suburbs to the north of Castle Hill are more urban in character, with continuous terraces of predominantly early to late 19th century red brick two/three storey houses. Oxford Road is more varied with more commercial uses and better-quality listed terraces located to the west, between Russell Street and Prospect Street. The character of the conservation area is predominantly residential with shops and offices/flats along Oxford Road. Oxford Road is a major route into and out of Reading. The predominant material is red brick, made locally and clay tiles and slate used for roofing.
- 5.80

The special interest of the conservation area is derived from its composition of residential buildings from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods. The area developed as a suburb to the historic core, which illustrates the growth of Reading beyond that of a market town, encouraged by the development of industry and improved transport links in the 18th and 19th centuries.

- 5.81

The architectural quality of the area has been eroded in places, notably Oxford Road, where modern development and heavy vehicular traffic detract from an appreciation of the fine historic grain that characterises the areas. In November 2018 the conservation area was placed on the Heritage At Risk Register, owing to the deterioration in character and built form.
- CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO HERITAGE VALUE**
- 5.82

The setting of the conservation area is varied. The eastern boundary of the conservation area is defined by modern infrastructure and development which form a physical barrier between the historic development of the CA and the historic core of the town. The hard standing and busy vehicular traffic of the IDR in particular is a detracting feature of the conservation area. To the north, there has been piecemeal redevelopment along Oxford Road which has eroded the historic grain of the conservation area. To the west and south, the boundary of the conservation area is defined by 20th century residential development.
- 5.83

The Site is separated from the conservation area by the IDR, which creates severance between this area and development to the east. The current building on the Site is not visible from the conservation area.

MAP REF.	NAME	GRADE (IF APPLICABLE)	FULL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?
1	Greyfriars Church	I	Yes
2	Church of St Mary	I	No
3	Church of St Laurence	I	Yes – as part of A
4	Reading Town Hall	II*	Yes – as part of A
5	Church of St Mary	II*	No
6	15, Castle Street	II*	No
7	17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block	II*	No
8	19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings	II*	No
9	The Simeon Monument	II*	No
10	Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards	II*	No
11	Quadrant Walls and Railings to Former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage)	II	Yes
12	The Former Mitre Inn	II	Yes
13	W I Palmer Memorial Hall	II	Yes
14	29 and 31, Caversham Road	II	Yes
15	Regent Place	II	No
16	67 and 68, Broad Street	II	No
17	13 and 15, Station Road	II	No
18	The Statue of King Edward VII	II	No
19	147, Friar Street	II	No
20	Great Western House	II	No
21	Main Building of Reading General Station	II	No
22	3 and 5, Cheapside	II	No
23	Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork	II	No
A	Market Place and London Street Conservation Area	n/a	Yes
B	St Mary's Butts and Castle Street Conservation Area	n/a	Yes
C	Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area	n/a	Yes

Table 5.1Summary of Built Heritage Baseline

6.0

BASELINE: TOWNSCAPE

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

BASELINE: TOWNSCAPE

6.1 This section provides analysis of the townscape study area and the identified character areas.

TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS

6.2 The townscape of the study area reflects the historic development of Reading. The medieval road layout survives in parts, dissected by 20th century road improvement works, and the IDR around the town centre, the railway station and shopping mall developments. The northern part of the study area in proximity to the Site is comprised of large-scale, tall commercial developments of the late 20th century to early 21st century. More historic street frontages survive in pockets along Broad Street and Queen Victoria Street.

6.3 The result is a mixed townscape in which tall, modern developments are highly prominent.

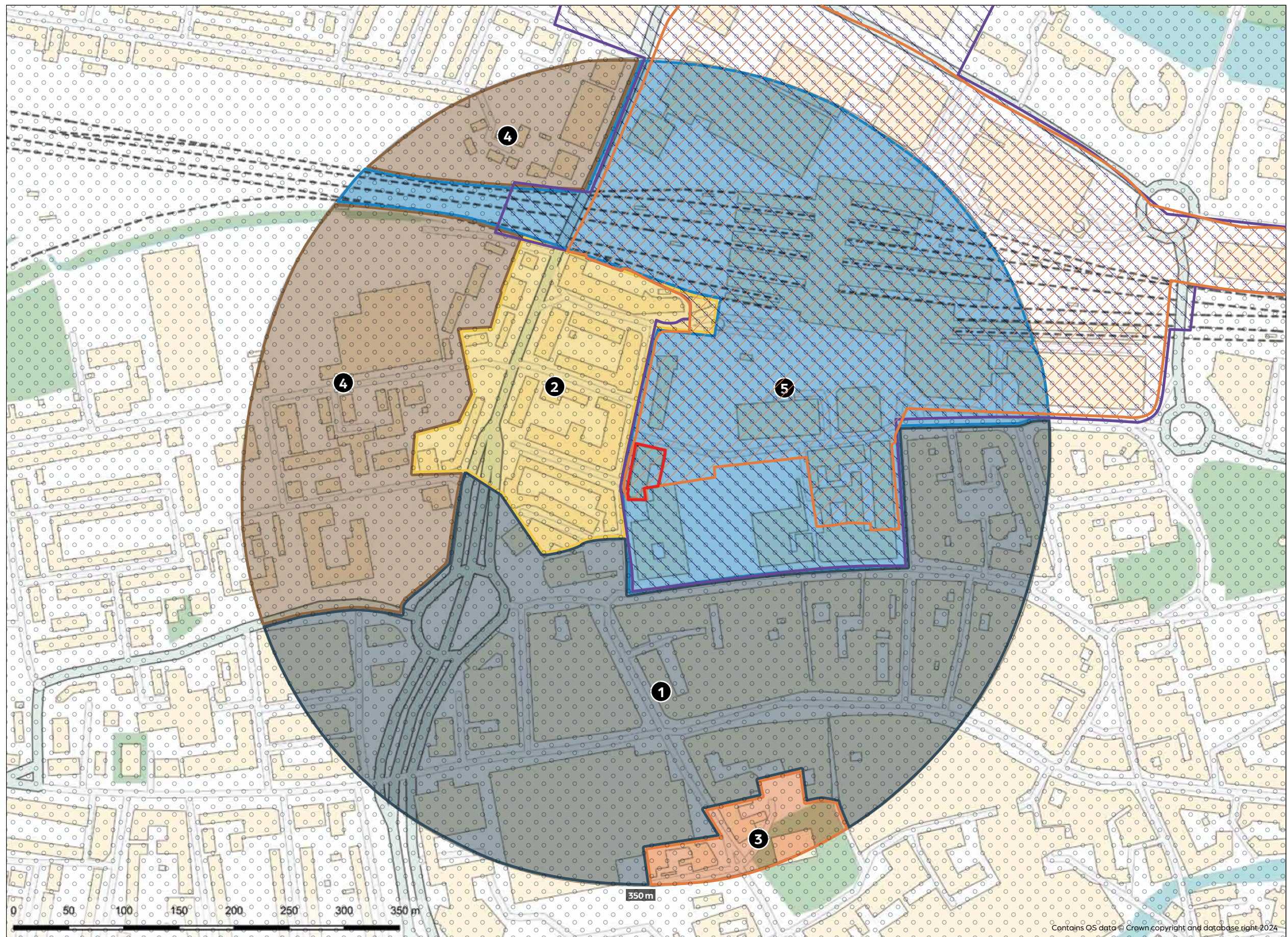
TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

6.4 The townscape surrounding the Site may be categorised into six distinct areas. For the purposes of this assessment the character areas are referred to as:

- 1. Reading Town Centre
- 2. Mixed Residential
- 3. Historic Core
- 4. Light Industrial with Residential
- 5. Station

6.5 The broad boundaries of the character areas are identified in **Figure 6.1**. The character and appearance of the character areas is discussed below.

6.6 The Townscape Character Area Plan is overlaid with the relevant planning designation for the Site, including the Reading Central Area, the Station/ River Major Opportunity Area and the Station Area Tall Buildings cluster, which is designated to have “some townscape capacity for tall buildings”. The Site also forms part of site allocation CR11b (‘Greyfriars Road Corner’).



TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA PLAN

- Application Site
- Reading Central Area
- Station/River Major Opportunity Area
- Station Area Tall Buildings Cluster
- 1 Reading Town Centre
- 2 Mixed Residential
- 3 Historic Core
- 4 Light Industrial with Residential
- 5 Station

LOCATION:
20-30 Greyfriars Road, Reading

DATE:
October 2024

SCALE:
1:3,500 @ A3

FIGURE 6.1 Townscape Character Area Plan

▲ NORTH



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TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 1: READING TOWN CENTRE

- 6.7
- Character area 1 comprises the primary shopping area within Reading town centre. The TCA includes the northern part of the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area. Buildings of a historic and architectural interest include St Laurence’s Church and the Town Hall complex. This area has medieval origins, complemented by the 19th century civic complex. The area has been a focal point in Reading’s development for much of its history, as illustrated by the presence of St Laurence’s Church and an eclectic mix of historic buildings in the environs of the Town Hall Square.
- 6.8
- Development is orientated around the linear east–west axis of Broad Street, as well as a series of horizontal intersecting streets. Some of the medieval, burgage style plots are retained along Broad Street, however, this is intersected with larger, modern infill development.
- 6.9
- The TCA also extends to the western side of the A329, which comprises Oxford Road, a secondary high street of mixed used development, predominantly comprising retail/commercial outlets at ground floor with residential above.
- 6.10
- The development within the TCA is predominantly of retail and commercial use, a reflection of the character of this part of Reading. Owing to the various phases of redevelopment of this area, the building typology, era and architectural style comprise a mixture of historic and modern infill development. Consequently, the quality of development within this area is also mixed comprising a significant number of designated heritage assets around Market Place and King Street, including the grade I listed St Laurence’s Church.
- 6.11
- The TCA also comprises the two main shopping centres within Reading. This includes Broad Street Mall, located in the centre, which opened in 1971 and also incorporates a large multi-storey car park and some office use. To the immediate southeast is The Oracle which opened in 2000 and provides a direct link to Broad Street, the main pedestrianised thoroughfare and primary high street in Reading. The two comprise large urban footprints, a reflection of their use and typical composition of associated car parking. The scale of the buildings increases to an 11 storey podium on Broad Street Mall.

- 6.12
- Public realm is a key characteristic of the TCA, with Broad Street being completely pedestrianised as the main shopping street within Reading. This is a wide, paved, street lined walkway. Situated around the Oracle shopping centre is a considerable extent of public realm and a pedestrian bridge which provides access across the River Kennett to the Oracle Riverside.
- 6.13
- The density of urban development within the area is high, and ranges from tight to coarse urban grain. Open spaces are uncommon, limited only to the wide tree line boulevard of Broad Street.
- 6.14
- Associated viewpoints: 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12
- 6.15
- Townscape Value: Medium

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 2: MIXED RESIDENTIAL

- 6.16
- TCA2 comprises residential development principally along a series of three lateral streets to the east of the A329. The residential streets comprise late 19th terraces. Within this part of the TCA, infill development dating to the mid–20th century and later is a key characteristic, which has resulted in a fragmented townscape. Along Sackville Street, the terraces are more architecturally ornate in character, comprising decorative red and white brick. Overall, however, the quality of development in this part of the TCA is much lower. The urban grain remains tight knit.
- 6.17
- The IDR encircles the town centre and forms part of the A329 that runs from Surrey to Oxfordshire. It is a readily perceptible part of the character and function of TCA2. The TCA is varied in terms of architectural style, form, streetscape, development quality, but is ultimately bound by the consistent residential use of the buildings.
- 6.18
- Associated viewpoints: 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12
- 6.19
- Townscape Value: Medium

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 3: HISTORIC CORE

- 6.20
- The study area comprises a small part of the St Mary Butts and Castle Street Conservation Area around the Church of St Mary. The Site lies to the north of the TCA separated by interposing development between Oxford Road and Friar Street.

- 6.21
- The historic character of the area is distinctive in an otherwise largely modern area of the town centre. The boundaries of the TCA are well defined by the surrounding development on three sides, dating to the 1970s or later, and only to the north by the more historic Broad Street.
- 6.22
- The medieval street pattern of this part of Reading, which is recognised as the original core and marketplace of the town, is still legible.
- 6.23
- As such, the TCA includes highly graded designated assets and Reading landmarks, as well as some of the oldest surviving buildings in Reading including the Allied Arms, The Horn and The Sun. The majority of buildings within the TCA are at least grade II listed, with examples dating from the sixteenth century to the present day. A result of this is that the architectural character of the TCA is highly varied, comprising red brick Georgian style buildings, smaller scale timber framed buildings and ornate early 20th century buildings in the Arts and Crafts Style.
- 6.24
- Building uses are now more varied comprising retail, leisure and residential uses. Retail and catering uses predominate at ground floor level. Buildings comprise their original medieval burgage style plots which align Castle Street and St Mary’s Butts which has resulted in a tight knit urban structure.
- 6.25
- Apart from St Mary’s Churchyard, there is limited green public space in the area. Many of the former back yards of gardens or properties fronting the conservation area have been developed or are used for car parking. Public realm predominantly comprises footpaths, pavements and passageways.
- 6.26
- The TCA also incorporates a number of key views to and from the tower of St Mary’s Church, to Greyfriars Church to the north along St Mary’s Butts, and West street and up Castle Hill to the west.
- 6.27
- The TCA is physically and visually separated from the Site by interposing developments. It will therefore not be assessed in **Section 9.0**.
- 6.28
- Associated viewpoints: 1
- 6.29
- Townscape Value: High

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 4: LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND RESIDENTIAL

- 6.30
- Character area 4 comprises an area of light industrial use to the northwest of the town centre, separated from the Site by the IDR and the northernmost parcel of TCA2. The predominant use of the character area is light industrial/commercial purposes, which includes Reading Farmers Market, a small trading estate, vehicle repair garages, and a builder’s yard.
- 6.31
- This overarching use is reflected in the building form of the area which is characterised by low-scale, usually single storey warehouse units. As such, the buildings are of no architectural interest, mainly comprising modern and low-quality building materials including corrugated cladding, red brick and glass. The buildings are small in scale but vary in plot size, with the Reading Framers Market taking up the largest plot within the TCA. Large car parks and outdoor yards are characteristic of this area, and again are a reflection of the industrial use of the area.
- 6.32
- The TCA lacks areas of open green space or attractive public realm. Low quality metal railing fences, low perimeter brick walls and industrial signage define plot boundaries and align pavements within the TCA. There are no designated heritage assets within the TCA.
- 6.33
- The street pattern is also characterised by this use, with a series of main, linear interconnecting roads which provide access to the Caversham Road (A329). These are supplemented by a series of parallel cul-de-sacs/dead end roads which serve to access the industrial yards and car parks of the industrial outlets within the TCA. Great Knollys Street is one of the key roads in the TCA, oriented towards Reading railway station, away from the Site.
- 6.34
- Despite the A339 being a definitive border of the TCA to the east, the evolving redevelopment of the town centre remains perceptible, with emerging tall buildings visible in views looking eastwards over the A329.
- 6.35
- The TCA is separated from the Site by Caversham Road. The uses within the area are not sensitive and this TCA will therefore not be assessed in **Section 9.o**.
- 6.36
- Associated viewpoint: None
- 6.37
- Townscape value: Very Low

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS 5: STATION

- 6.38
- TCA5 comprises land to the south of Garrard Street and the emerging development around the station.
- 6.39
- The adopted Reading Local Plan (2019) identifies the area to the east of the A329 as being within the ‘West Side Major Opportunity Area’ (Policy CR12). The development plan states that regeneration of this western edge of Reading town centre has been a long-held objective, with an emphasis on improving east-west links into the central core and promoting high quality mixed use environments. As such, it is anticipated that this TCA will be subject to continual urban change.
- 6.40
- The TCA is also partially located within the tall buildings cluster zone, as identified by Reading Local Plan (Policy CR12d). It is thus expected that the number of tall buildings within the TCA will increase, reflecting the direction of change of this TCA. This is already evidence by the Chatham Tower development, a residential block of 19 storeys, on the southern side of Chatham Street. This has reduced the TCA’s sensitivity to further tall building development.
- 6.41
- The TCA also comprises railway infrastructure associated with the Reading railway station and the adjoining retail and commercial buildings. The building form to the north of the station in particular is characterised by large footprint buildings, surrounded by car parking and planting and small pockets of surviving late 19th century and early 20th century housing stock. Multi-lane roads, such as Caversham Road and Vastern Road, connect the town centre with the River Thames and the neighbourhoods to the north. There are no designated heritage assets within the TCA.
- 6.42
- Associated viewpoints: 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12
- 6.43
- Townscape value: Medium to High

TOWNSCAPE SUMMARY

6.44 **Table 6.1** presents a summary of the townscape receptor baseline information.

REF.	TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA	TOWNSCAPE VALUE	FULL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?
1	Reading Town Centre	Medium	Yes
2	Mixed Residential	Medium	Yes
3	Historic Core	High	No
4	Light Industrial and Residential	Very Low	No
5	Station	Medium to High	Yes

Table 6.1 Summary of Townscape Receptor Baseline

7.0 BASELINE: VISUAL

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

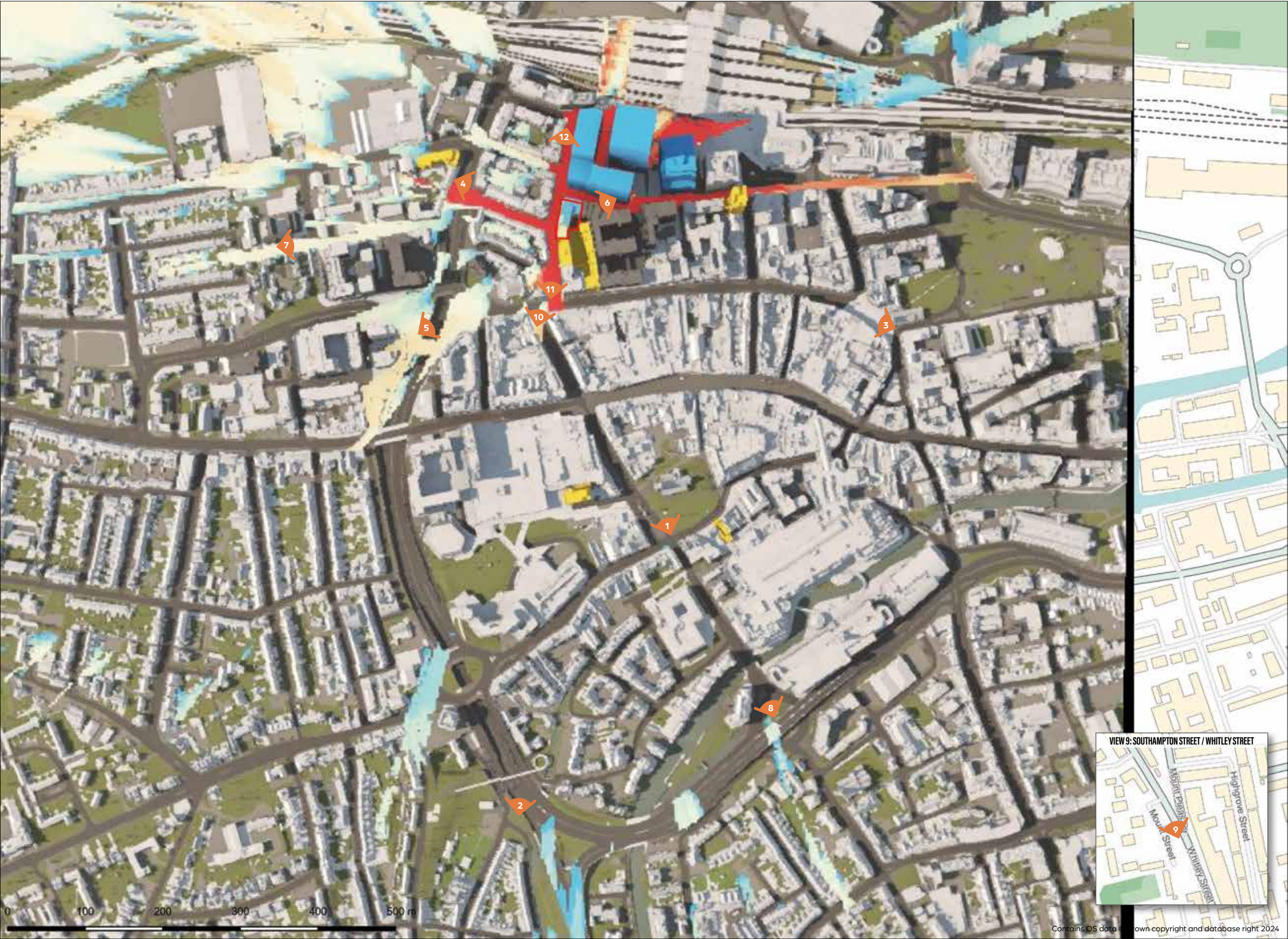
BASELINE: VISUAL

EXTENT OF VISIBILITY

- 7.1
- A ZTV has been produced to outline the potential areas where the Proposed Development may be visible, covering an area of 2 km2 with the Site at the centre (**Figure 2.1**). It is a tool for a high-level understanding of the extent of visibility, which was further interrogated through review of individual viewpoints using field surveys and digital software.
- 7.2
- The ZTV illustrates that the greatest extent of intervisibility with the Proposed Development will be in views along Greyfriars Road and Garrard Street, onto which the building would front. The Proposed Development would be visible in the views from Friar Street and from the roundabout to the west at the junction with the IDR. A small portion of the upper part of the building would be noticeable above the interposing developments in the views from the west along Great Knollys Street or Weldale Street. Moving further away from the Site there is some visibility with the proposals from the A329 ring road, in views looking north.

VISUAL RECEPTORS

- 7.3
- The text below sets out the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points.
- 7.4
- The View Location Plan (**Figure 7.1**) is overlaid with the Townscape Area Plan at **Figure 7.2**, to identify different character areas.
- 7.5
- Given the nature of the Proposed Development and the limited visibility from various view locations, this study concentrates on receptors within Reading town centre. The town centre covers a large area centred around the main shopping high street of Broad Street, extending to the eastern side of the central ring road to Oxford Road, a secondary high street. The area is enclosed to the west by the A329 ring road and residential development on the edge of Reading town centre. Some routes within the town centre are completely pedestrianised, including Broad Street, Cross Street, Union Street, Butter Market, Town Hall Square and Queen Victoria Street.



VIEW LOCATION PLAN

- Application Site
- 1. Reading Minster
- 2. A33/A329
- 3. Townhall Square
- 4. Vachel Road
- 5. Chatham Street
- 6. Garrard Street
- 7. Weldale Street
- 8. Mill Lane
- 9. Southampton Street/ Whitley Street
- 10. West Street
- 11. Greyfriars Road (Northern end)
- 12. Friars Street, junction with Greyfriars Road

LOCATION:
20-30 Greyfriars Road, Reading

DATE:
October 2024

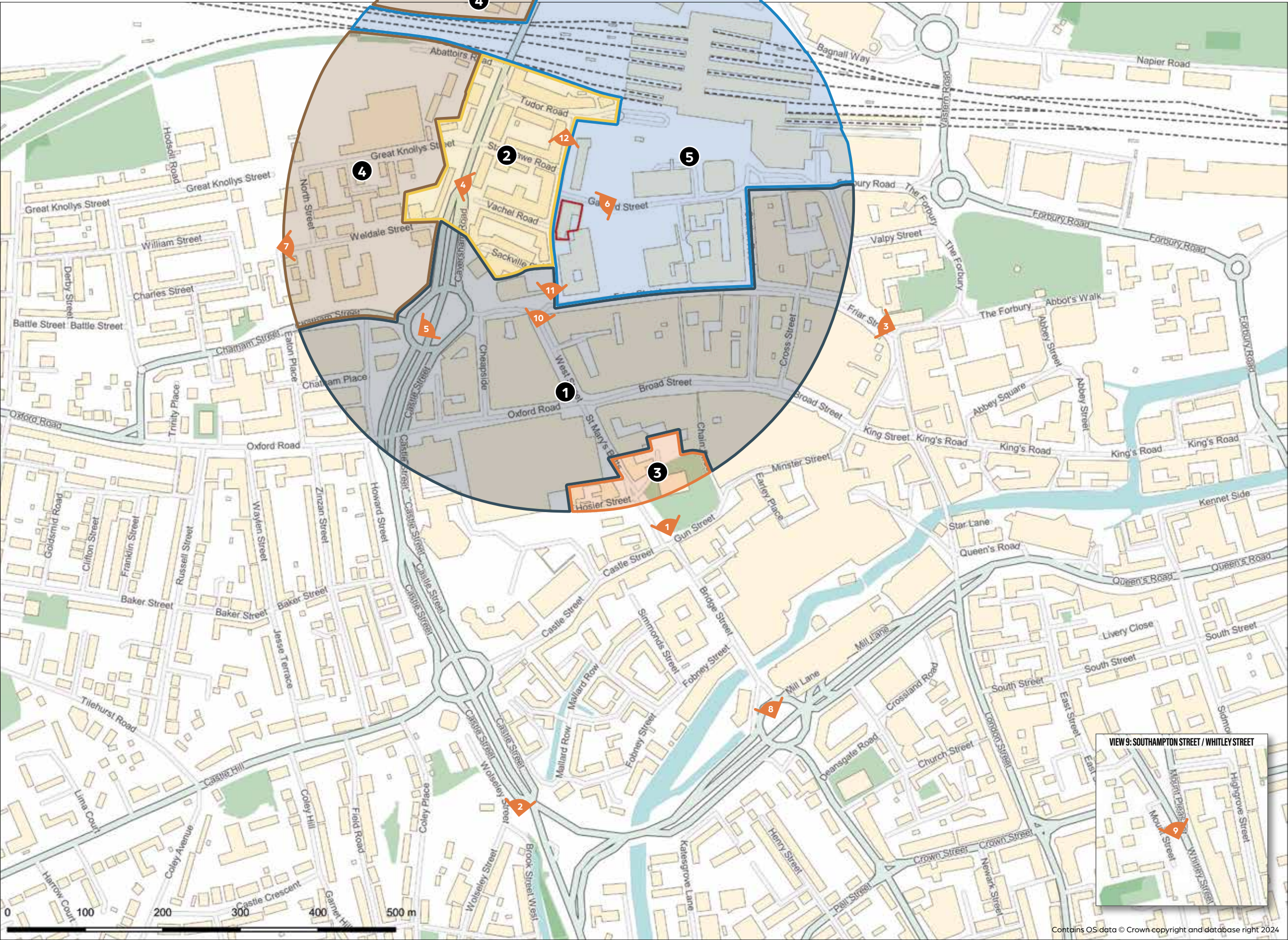
SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 7.1 View Location Plan with overlay of the ZTV. Source: VuCity/Montagu Evans

▲ NORTH



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**VIEW LOCATION PLAN
WITH TOWNSCAPE
CHARACTER AREAS**

- Application Site**
1. Reading Minster
 2. A33/A329
 3. Townhall Square
 4. Vachel Road
 5. Chatham Street
 6. Garrard Street
 7. Weldale Street
 8. Mill Lane
 9. Southampton Street/
Whitley Street
 10. West Street
 11. Greyfriars Road (Northern end)
 12. Friars Street, junction with
Greyfriars Road

Townscape Character Areas

- 1 Reading Town Centre
- 2 Mixed Residential
- 3 Historic Core
- 4 Light Industrial with
Residential
- 5 Station

LOCATION:
20-30 Greyfriars Road, Reading

DATE:
October 2024

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 7.2 View Location Plan with overlay of
Townscape Character Area Plan

▲ NORTH

REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS

- 7.6

Pre-application discussions with the LPA identified 12 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 7.1**. The baseline photography for each view is provided at Section 11, as well as **Appendix 2.o**.
- 7.7

The 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**.
- 7.8

Receptors within this group are likely to be pedestrians, shoppers and amenity users, particularly those using the western part of Friar Street.
- 7.9

Pedestrians and commuters within this area of visual amenity will be travelling through the retail/commercial core, as well as towards Reading Station. Pedestrians will be focused primarily on navigation from the outskirts of the town centre to the retail/commercial core, particularly along Friar Street. Commuters are likely to be focused on movement to and from Reading Station, located to the north of the town centre.
- 7.10

As this group of receptors travels through the area, most will be aware of the heavily urbanised character of Reading town centre and the tight knit grain of development. There is an awareness of the close proximity of the IDR and the general lack of green or open spaces.
- 7.11

Receptors in this group are likely to be those utilising retail, hospitality and leisure premises; their focus will be the enjoyment of amenity space, public realm and designated pedestrianised areas.
- 7.12

The range and mix of architectural quality, age and character continues along the principal commercial streets of Friar Street and Broad Street. The variation in building types, materials and quality will be discernible to the receptor, though the main focus will be on the busy arterial route and the commercial/retail premises at ground floor level.
- 7.13

A number of representative views have been identified to illustrate the pattern of pedestrian and vehicular movement into and around Reading town centre. These would include views: 1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12.
- 7.14

Visual amenity value: **Medium**

USERS OF GREYFRIARS CHURCH

- 7.15

Greyfriars Church is located at the western end of Friar Street at the edge of the centre town centre and within close proximity to the Site. The church and churchyard are surrounded by the urban environment of Reading, next to the IDR and only a short distance from Reading railway station and the emerging tall building quarter at Station Hill.
- 7.16

Receptors will include visitors to the grade I listed church and associated nursery and church hall. The nursery comprises an outdoor play area along the boundary wall with Greyfriars Road.
- 7.17

Receptors approaching the church are likely to be aware of the IDR immediately to the west and the church's proximity to the urban centre. They are likely to have an appreciation of the building as a heritage asset. Yet in views from the west, the church's western front with the central, ornate gothic window will be seen against the town centre and the emerging cluster of tall buildings at Station Hill is notable. The noisy, busy IDR behind the receptor and the mix of retail, commercial and leisure outlets ahead ensure the church is experienced in a highly urbanised setting.
- 7.18

Views 5, 10 and 11 have been used to illustrate the experience of users of the Greyfriars Church.
- 7.19

Visual amenity value: **Medium to High**
- 7.20

There are a number of residential streets nearby along the edge of the town centre, correlating with Townscape Character Area 2. The streets to the west of the town centre comprise a series of linear streets, such as Great Knollys Street. Most of the houses along here are terraces dating to the 19th century.
- 7.21

Residents will be aware of the proximity of the ring road and other key arterial routes to and from the town centre, with high levels of traffic and movement readily discernible. Furthermore, receptors will be aware of the high activity associated with the centre of Reading and the high levels of pedestrian traffic travelling to and from the retail centre, further contributing to the sense of movement and activity.
- 7.22

The scale of development in the views along Great Knollys Street and Weldale Street, which are oriented to the buildings at Station Hill, differs considerably from the low-rise residential buildings in the foreground.

- 7.23

A number of representative views have been identified to illustrate the experience of residents on the edge of Reading town centre. These include views: 4, 5, 7 and 12.
- 7.24

Visual amenity value: **Medium**
- 7.25

Users in this receptor group are likely to be the road users on the IDR and its feeder and access roads, travelling to and from the retail centres of the town core or travelling through Reading. They will be primarily focused on vehicular movement and activity associated with the road, including, noise, traffic levels and pedestrian crossings.
- 7.26

As this group of receptors travels through the area, most will be aware of the heavily urbanised character of Reading town centre and the tight knit grain of development. There is an awareness of the close proximity of the ring road and the historic sites such as the Greyfriars Church and the general lack of green or open spaces. The principal focus on direction of movement will mean specific urban forms and details remain unnoticed. The focus remains on a busy urban centre, characterised by varied forms of development and key arterial routes.
- 7.27

A number of representative views have been identified to illustrate the experience of residents on the edge of Reading town centre. These include views: 2, 4, 5, 8.
- 7.28

Visual amenity value: **Low**

USERS OF THE RING ROAD

REF	VISUAL RECEPTOR / STATIC VIEW	REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS AND RATIONALE FOR SELECTION	VISUAL AMENITY VALUE
1	Pedestrians and users of shops and amenities	1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12 Viewpoints selected are representative of the pattern of pedestrian around Reading town centre.	Medium
2	Users of Greyfriars Church	5, 10, 11 Views selected based on their proximity to Greyfriars Church. Users of the church will be entering and exiting the church. They illustrate the maximum impacts on users of the church and churchyard.	Medium to High
3	Residents	4, 5, 7 and 12 Views selected are based on the experience of residents living in 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
4	Users of the Ring Road	2, 4, 5, 8 Viewpoints selected to show the maximum impact of the Proposed Development on users of vehicular routes through the area.	Low

Table 7.1 Summary of Visual Receptor Baseline.

8.0

ASSESSMENT: HERITAGE ASSETS

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

ASSESSMENT: HERITAGE ASSETS

8.1 This section assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on the built heritage receptors identified in **Section 5.0**. A summary of the effects arising from impacts to heritage receptors is provided at **Table 9.1**.

LISTED BUILDINGS

GREYFRIARS CHURCH, GRADE I

- 8.2 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 245m to the south of Greyfriars Church and the associated boundary walls. Due to the alignment of Greyfriars Road and the nature of the existing building, there is currently a limited visual relationship between the church and the Site.
- 8.3 The ZTV at **Figure 2.1** illustrates the Proposed Development would be occluded in views from Friar Street, immediately outside of the church from near the principal entrance. The medieval features of the church are best understood when looking north at its fabric from these locations, or within the building itself.
- 8.4 In contrast, the Proposed Development would be visible across the roundabout (see view 5) and in axial views along Greyfriars Road (see views 10 and 12).
- 8.5 View 5 demonstrates the Proposed Development would be visible in views from the roundabout. It would form part of the emerging context in the background of the view, subservient in height and scale to the existing buildings, notably the Central Studios student accommodation and, beyond, the recently constructed Plot E of Station Hill North.
- 8.6 In views (10 and 12) along Greyfriars Road the Proposed Development would form part of the development on the east side of the road. From these locations the church is located to the west and, whilst the observer will be aware of its wider setting, it would not be seen in conjunction with the Proposed Development.

- 8.7 A boundary wall to the vicarage encloses the church along the western side of Greyfriars Road, From this location the Proposed Development would thus be a peripheral element, with no visual relationship to the church. The Proposed Development would not interrupt the spatial and historic relationship between the church and the boundary walls which contribute to an understanding of their interest.
- 8.8 As a result, the effects of the Proposed Development on Greyfriars Church would be limited to a small additional part of the building appearing within the asset’s wider setting. The architectural treatment and material palette of the Proposed Development has evolved. The design incorporates masonry with grey tones that would form a neutral backdrop within the wider context of the listed church. The depth of the elevations, including textured brick to the window surrounds would be a contextual and rich response to the context of the church.
- 8.9 Along Greyfriars Road, the existing building on the Site does not successfully negotiate the topography, and thus presents an inactive frontage at ground floor. In contrast, the Proposed Development would introduce animation along this route which has the potential to improve the appearance and function of the street.
- 8.10 Overall, the Proposed Development would increase the scale of development relative to the existing buildings on the Site; however, the proposed scale has been considered in detail relative to the existing context and the Station Hill North masterplan development. The Proposed Development would be subservient in scale to this development, and the staggered massing at the top of the building would further help form a transition towards the church building. The textured brick and detailing of the Proposed Development would be visible in the foreground of these views and would form a neutral part of the church setting. Taken as whole, the Greyfriars Church was first constructed at the turn of the 14th century and has lost much of its historic setting. It now contributes very little to the significance of the church. The Proposed Development would, at least, preserve the setting and significance of the church.

QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), GRADE II

- 8.11 The Site is located approximately 60m to the north of the listed brick wall. The walls’ significance lies primarily in the fact that it is attributed to John

Soane and the garden of the original house that it once enclosed. The house has been replaced by a modern neo-Georgian building.

- 8.12 View 10 demonstrates the view looking north along Greyfriars Road, with the wall and railings in the foreground. The contribution made by the setting of the wall and railings to their significance is firmly manifested in the previous building designed by John Soane. Whilst the Proposed Development would be visible in the backdrop of the view, it would not undermine this association, nor the ability of the observer to recognise and appreciate the architectural detailing of the structures. The Proposed Development would have no impact to the significance of the quadrant walls and railings to the former No.64.

29 AND 31, CAVERSHAM ROAD, GRADE II

- 8.13 Nos. 29 and 31 Caversham Road are a pair of early Victorian houses, that survive on the western edge of the IDR. The IDR severs. Given the width and nature of this principal thoroughfare, the heritage assets from the town centre to the east. The Proposed Development would be visible in axial views along Vachel Road, although clearly seen as part of development associated with the town centre and distinct from the Victorian properties. The textured brick and detailing of the Proposed Development would be visible in the foreground of these views and would form a neutral part of the listed buildings’ setting. The Proposed Development would form a neutral part of the wider setting of the listed buildings.

THE MITRE INN AND W I PALMER MEMORIAL HALL, BOTH GRADE II

- 8.14 The two listed buildings form part of the setting of the Greyfriars Church at the western end of Friar Street, one of Reading’s key east-west commercial thoroughfares.
- 8.15 The Proposed Development would be seen in the distance, largely occluded by the trees in the garden of the former vicarage building, now the nursery, against the emerging skyline of the much taller buildings of the Station Hill cluster. It does not alter the viewer’s ability to appreciate the historic buildings. The significance of the heritage asset would not be impacted by the Proposed Development.

CONSERVATION AREAS

MARKET PLACE AND LONDON STREET CONSERVATION AREA

- 8.16
- At the closest point, the Proposed Development would be located 310 m to the west of the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area.
- 8.17
- The conservation area comprises the historic marketplace of Reading next to the historic Reading Abbey site. There are three medieval churches, the grade II* listed townhall and fine commercial buildings from the Georgian and Victorian eras.
- 8.18
- The ZTV at **Figure 2.1** demonstrates that throughout the conservation area, the Proposed Development would be entirely obscured by interposing development. None of the highly listed buildings within the conservation area, such as St Laurence or the townhall, would be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 8.19
- There would be limited visibility from the corner of Blagrove Street and Forbury Road, located on the edge of the Conservation Area. Glimpsed views of the top of the proposed building may be obtained, seen in the foreground of the new townscape at Station Hill, currently under construction. It would not detract from the appreciation of the Conservation Area, which would be preserved.

ST MARY'S BUTTS AND CASTLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA

- 8.20
- At its closest point, the Proposed Development will be located approximately 340m to the north of the St Mary's Butts and Castle Street Conservation Area. The significance of the conservation area derives from it being the location of the Saxon settlement of Reading at the crossing point across the River Kennet from where the town developed. The grade I listed Minster (Church of St Mary), a Reading landmark, stands at its centre.
- 8.21
- The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies key views within the conservation area. These views have an eastern focus, moving from the western boundary of the conservation area east along Castle Street, looking south to the almshouses and terminating on the tower and principal entrance of the Minster. In these views, the Proposed Development would not appear.

- 8.22
- The ZTV at **Figure 2.1** demonstrates that throughout the conservation area, the Proposed Development would be entirely obscured by interposing development. View 1 is located at the junction of Gun Street and St Mary's Butts. It is representative of the general visibility of the Proposed Development from the northern extent of the Conservation Area. The Proposed Development would be obscured by existing interposing developments and vegetation from across all vantage points within the conservation area. The Proposed Development would not impact the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

RUSSELL STREET AND CASTLE HILL CONSERVATION AREA

- 8.23
- At the closest point, the Proposed Development would be located more than 400m to the northeast of the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area.
- 8.24
- The conservation area comprises well-preserved suburban housing from the late 18th and early 19th century.
- 8.25
- Given the separating distance, reinforced by the IDR which runs between the conservation area and the town centre to the east, intervisibility with the Proposed Development would be limited to the corner of Howard Street and Oxford Road at the bridge across the IDR.
- 8.26
- The architectural quality of the area has been eroded in places, notably Oxford Road, where modern development and heavy vehicular traffic detract from an appreciation of the fine historic grain that characterises the areas. In November 2018 the conservation area was placed on the Heritage At Risk Register, owing to the deterioration in character and built form.
- 8.27
- The ZTV at **Figure 2.1** demonstrates the Proposed Development would be almost entirely imperceptible from areas within the Conservation Area. Due to the extremely limited intervisibility, the separating distance between the Site and the Conservation Area, and the presence of the IDR that severs the two areas, the Proposed Development would have no impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 8.28
- The cumulative schemes set out at **Section 2.o** have been considered in terms of potential effects on the heritage assets within the study area. These schemes are listed in **Section 2.o**.
- 8.29
- Across the local and wider area, the Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with these cumulative schemes. Those cumulative schemes would be read and understood alongside the emerging tall building development within the centre of Reading. The susceptibility of the heritage assets to the Proposed Development in the study area would remain the same in the cumulative context. For the cumulative condition, the effects would remain the same as in the proposed scenario.

9.0

ASSESSMENT: TOWNSCAPE

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

ASSESSMENT: TOWNSCAPE

- 9.1 This section assesses the effect of the Proposed Development on the townscape character areas identified in **Table 6.1**.
- 9.2 The Design and Access Statement, prepared Darling Associates, provides a detailed discussion on the design rationale and architectural approach. This assessment should be read in conjunction with that report.
- 9.3 The design evolved following engagement with officers whose comments informed the current height, form and appearance of the Proposed Development.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 9.4 The Site lies next to the Station Hill redevelopment which comprises several large-scale building blocks stretching from Reading station to Friar Street.
- 9.5 The Proposed Development would remove a building that has reached the end of its lifetime and replace it with an efficient, well-performing new building, providing high-quality accommodation. The demolition of the existing building therefore has the potential to be a positive change to the townscape.

MASSING AND COMPOSITION

- 9.6 In terms of scale and height, the Proposed Development responds to the existing and emerging streetscape, halfway between the low-rise historic townscape of Friar Street and the conservation areas to the south and the tall, recent developments at Station Hill.
- 9.7 The Proposed Development would step up to thirteen storeys. The taller element would have receding corners, softening the building's appearance in the views along Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road.

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

- 9.8 The detailing of the façades, the materials and finishes produce an attractive reading at the tertiary or more immediate scale, particularly in the immediate context of the building, making a positive contribution to the local streetscape and the views across Reading town centre.
- 9.9 The ground floor would comprise a dark colour and double height piers which would create the impression of a solid base above which the main body of the building sits. A chamfered corner to the junction of Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road would increase the usable area of public realm and improve pedestrian desire lines. It would create a welcoming entrance situation, which in combination with the active uses would animate both Greyfriars Road and Garrard Street.
- 9.10 Above, the depth and texture of the brickwork within the elevations has been given due consideration and the design response is visually rich. The elevational treatment would draw design cues from historic brick architecture with simple, well composed façades and pierced windows which would achieve a traditional appearance that sits comfortably within the existing context. The elevations would be broken down using horizontal banding and recessed corners. Towards the top of the building some corners are recessed to help with the sense of proportion when viewed from street level and in longer skyline views.
- 9.11 Roof terraces and planting would further soften the visual impact of the building.

IMPACT ON TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 1: READING TOWN CENTRE

- 9.12 TCA1 is located to the south of the Site. The urban block within which the Site is located creates a visual buffer between the area to the south, which is clearly demonstrated by the ZTV at **Figure 2.1** which illustrates that the Proposed Development would be occluded from view in most locations within TCA1. Given the location of the Site within this TCA, yet also considering the policy aspirations of the town centre, the susceptibility of the TCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be **Medium**. As the townscape value is **Medium**, its sensitivity is judged to be **Medium**.
- 9.13 Some visibility of the Proposed Development may be obtained from near the Friars Road traffic roundabout on the A329. These would be glimpsed

views only, seen within the context of the height and scale of the existing buildings, notably the Central Studios student accommodation and, beyond, the recently constructed Plot E of Station Hill North.

- 9.14 Along Greyfriars Road, leading into TCA1, the Proposed Development would introduce animation along this route. This has the potential to improve the appearance and function of the street, and make a small change to the function of the wider area.
- 9.15 As the impact would be limited to the immediate environment, the Proposed Development would have a **Very Low** magnitude of impact to the TCA overall. This would equate to an effect of **Negligible Beneficial**.

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 2: MIXED RESIDENTIAL

- 9.16 TCA2 lies opposite the Site and comprises the residential streets between the town centre to the east and the IDR to the west. Building heights, ages, styles and materials vary within the character area. The Site abuts the TCA, and its impact would be fully tangible from within TCA2. However, the transformative impacts of the Station Hill redevelopment which adjoins TCA2 would override lead to greater change than the replacement of Greyfriars House. For this reason, the susceptibility of the TCA is judged to be **Medium**. As the townscape value is **Medium**, its sensitivity is judged to be **Medium**.
- 9.17 The current building on the Site is highly visible in the views along Vachel Road, seen against the much larger buildings of the buildings on Garrard Street. Its varied façades, combining large, glazed areas, arches, different cladding materials and roof railings, contribute to the disjointed character of the wider streetscape. The ground floor, expressed as a fortress-like, granite clad plinth, creates an unwelcoming pedestrian experience when approaching the building from TCA2.
- 9.18 The Proposed Development would introduce a calm, well-composed elevation that is aligned in height with the recent developments on Garrard Street. The improved ground floor treatment would be immediately noticeable. Large shop windows would allow views in and out, contributing to the transformative uplift of TCA2. TCA2 would become more integrated into the town centre, overcoming the previously disjointed nature of this part of Reading.

9.19 The positive contribution that the Proposed Development would make to the immediate environment would be readily appreciable from this TCA. For the reasons outlined above, the Proposed Development would have a **Medium** magnitude of impact to the TCA. This would equate to a **Moderate** effect. Applying professional judgement, the Proposed Development would give rise to a **Moderate Beneficial** effect.

TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 5: STATION

- 9.20 The Site falls into TCA5, in an area which is undergoing major transformation. The Site falls within the urban block created by Greyfriars Road, Garrard Street, Friar Street and Station Road. The urban block forms the transition zone into the station development, incorporating Plot E of the masterplan. It is emerging as a mixed-use destination, lined by various active uses, office lobbies and residential entrances. Greyfriars Road has a mixed character, leading towards Friar Street and the Greyfriars Church on the corner. Given the location of the Site within this TCA, yet also considering the policy aspirations of the town centre, the susceptibility of the TCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be **Low**. As the townscape value is **Medium to High**, its sensitivity is judged to be **Medium**.
- 9.21 The current building on the Site does little to optimise the potential of the prominent corner junction, located on the way from the railway station to Friar Street. The existing building is by a notable architect and uses good materials; however, it is a poor example of the architect’s overall oeuvre, with a weak composition and, in particular, a ground floor that does not successfully negotiate the change in levels. Replacing the existing building with an attractive, new piece of architecture that animates the surrounding streetscape would be a positive move and contribute to the transformative uplift of the wider area.
- 9.22 The proposed principal entrance at the junction of Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road is chamfered at ground floor to improve pedestrian desire lines and the generosity of public realm. The uses include an entrance lobby and commercial units at ground floor, with the levels across the site considered in great detail to maximise the extent of active frontage to the street. The entrance would create a new focal point at the corner of Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road, providing an attractive arrival space and active frontages which would enliven the pedestrian experience along this route. The provision of co-living units in

this location in this highly sustainable location in proximity to the station would add to its dynamism and character.

- 9.23 The Proposed Development would introduce a high-quality piece of architecture: a simple volume with a stepped roofline that fits into the established datum height at Greyfriars Road, and animates the streetscape along the road and in the views from Friars Street. The depth and texture of the brickwork within the elevations has been given due consideration and the design response is visually rich. The visual analysis further demonstrates that longer views beyond these immediate streets would be quite limited.
- 9.24 As the impact would be limited to the immediate environment, the Proposed Development would have a **Low** magnitude of impact to the TCA overall. This would equate to an effect of **Minor to Moderate**. Applying professional judgement, the Proposed Development would give rise to a **Minor Beneficial** effect.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 9.25 The cumulative schemes set out at **Section 2.0** have been considered in terms of potential effects on the TCAs within the study area. These schemes are listed in **Section 2.0**.
- 9.26 Across the local and wider area, the Development would be visible in conjunction with these cumulative schemes. Those cumulative schemes would be read and understood alongside the emerging tall building development within the centre of Reading. The susceptibility of the TCAs to the Development in the study area would remain the same in the cumulative context. For the cumulative condition, the effects would remain the same as in the proposed scenario.

REF	TOWNSCAPE RECEPTOR	TOWNSCAPE VALUE	SUSCEPTIBILITY	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE (OPERATIONAL)	LIKELY EFFECT (OPERATIONAL)	LIKELY EFFECT (CUMULATIVE)
1	Reading Town Centre	Medium	Medium	Medium	Very Low	Negligible Beneficial	Negligible Beneficial
2	Mixed Residential	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial
3	Historic Core	High	Not assessed				
4	Light Industrial and Residential	Very Low					
5	Station	Medium to High	Low	Medium	Low	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial

Table 9.1 Summary of likely effects on townscape receptors

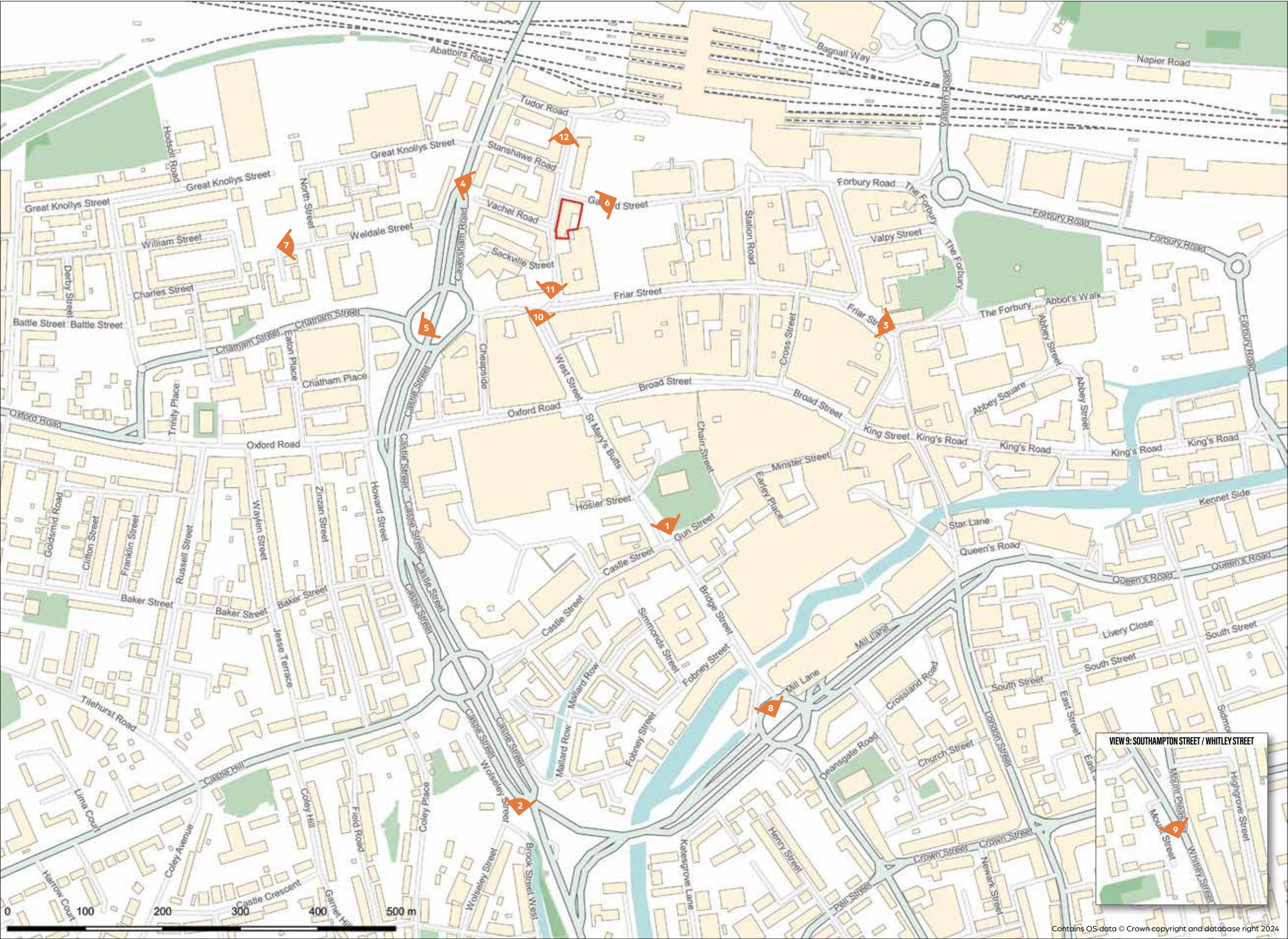
10.0

ASSESSMENT: VISUAL

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

ASSESSMENT: VISUAL

10.1 This section assesses the likely effect arising from the impact of the Proposed Development on the visual receptors identified in **Table 8.1**. For ease of reference the View Location Plan is re-provided at the start of this section (**Figure 10.1**).



VIEW LOCATION PLAN

- Application Site
- 1. Reading Minster
- 2. A33/A329
- 3. Townhall Square
- 4. Vachel Road
- 5. Chatham Street
- 6. Garrard Street
- 7. Weldale Street
- 8. Mill Lane
- 9. Southampton Street/Whitley Street
- 10. West Street
- 11. Greyfriars Road (Northern end)
- 12. Friars Street, junction with Greyfriars Road

LOCATION:
20-30 Greyfriars Road, Reading

DATE:
October 2024

SCALE:
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 10.1 View Location Plan

▲ NORTH



MONTAGU EVANS
CHARTERED SURVEYORS
70 ST MARY AXE,
LONDON, EC3A 8BE
T: +44 (0)20 7493 4002
WWW.MONTAGU-EVANS.CO.UK

REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS

10.2 The assessment is informed by the ZTV at **Figure 2.1** and the verified views provided at **Appendix 2.o**.

PEDESTRIANS AND USERS OF SHOPS AND AMENITIES

10.3 Visual receptors in this group comprise pedestrians, and amenity users of the town centre, such as shoppers, who will be using both the pedestrianised shopping destinations in the town centre, as well as the key main routes connecting the railway station, the town centre and the residential areas to the west and south.

10.4 The current building on the Site is integrated into the street frontage of Greyfriars Road and glimpsed obliquely in the views along Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road. Its largely window-less, fortress-like ground floor treatment creates a defensive character, that contrasts the emerging high-quality public realm along Garrard Street. Visual receptors would be aware of the large-scale redevelopments, such as One Station Hill, and the building sites between the railway station and Friar Street.

10.5 For pedestrians, who are primarily focused on activities associated with wayfinding, points of interest related to their shopping routes and commerce activities, their susceptibility to the Proposed Development is **Low to Medium**. When calibrated with the Medium value of this area of visual amenity, professional judgment has been used to identify a sensitivity of **Medium**.

10.6 The Proposed Development would address the shortcomings of the existing building and introduce a welcoming ground floor with large shop windows and an attractive entrance at the corner of Greyfriars Road and Garrard Street. The overall height and massing of the building would blend in with the other recent developments in the area. The building scale, combined with the masonry solidity of the façades, the high-quality brick and deep window reveals, would provide the gravitas required for this prominent corner plot.

10.7 AVR View 6 (**Figure 10.2**) demonstrates the visual experience of pedestrians approaching the Site from Reading railway station and the Station Hill quarter. The Proposed Development would be largely screened by the recent buildings on Garrard Street. Only a slim sliver of the east flank and the north elevation would be visible. The proposed elevational treatment and colour scheme would fit comfortably into the existing and emerging townscape context.



Figure 10.2 View 6 (Source: Cityscape)



Figure 10.4 View 11 (Source: Cityscape)



Figure 10.3 View 10 (Source: Cityscape)

- 10.8

AVR Views 10 and 11 (**Figures 10.3 and 10.4**) show the experience of users approaching from Friar Street and West Street. The western end of Friar Street has a historic character which is reflected by the presence of several listed buildings, including the grade I listed Greyfriars Church. Receptors walking along Friar Street would see the Proposed Development in glimpsed views behind the former vicarage. It would replace the current building with its incongruent elevations and ungainly roof treatment. Furthermore, the Proposed Development would be visually linked to the party wall of Phase 1 of the Station Hill development, reducing the visual impact of this flank wall.
- 10.9

Receptors using the amenities of the town centre further east or south, for example the Old Town Hall at Blagrove Street (AVR View 3, **Figure 10.5**) or those walking northwards along Bridge Street towards Reading Minster (AVR View 1, **Figure 10.6**) would not be able to see the Proposed Development. From these vantage points, the building would be entirely obscured by interposing existing buildings.
- 10.10

As such, the magnitude of impact on the receptors in this group is considered to be **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate** Effect. A **Beneficial** nature of effect is identified given that where visible, the proposals would improve visual amenity through the detailed aspects of design.



Figure 10.5 View 3 (Source: Cityscape)



Figure 10.6 View 1 (Source: Cityscape)

USERS OF GREYFRIARS CHURCH

- 10.11

Greyfriars Church is a key landmark and a community hub in Reading. The church attracts a wide range of people attending various activities, including religious services, educational events, celebrations and childcare. The receptors in this visual amenity group are the users of the church and its facilities, having arrived from the residential areas to the west, the town centre or by car on the IDR, which runs past the church.
- 10.12

The entry points into the Greyfriars complex, composed of the church, former vicarage, The Atrium annex and the recently completed Greyfriars Centre, are concentrated on Friar Street towards its western end. A gate on Sackville Street is primarily used for vehicular access. The presence of the IDR, which intersects with Friar Street, road noise compromise impact on the receptor’s experience of arrival at Greyfriars. They will be also aware of the existing building on the Site which sits disjointedly next to the new developments of the Station Hill quarter.
- 10.13

Receptors will be focused on the activities they are about to attend or that they have just left. However, they will be aware of the long history of the church and its significance as a medieval religious building that has stood here for many centuries. Taking into account the awareness of the ambitions for the transformation of the town centre and the vision for Station Hill, their susceptibility to the Proposed Development is **Low to Medium**. When calibrated with the Medium to High value of this area of visual amenity, professional judgment has been used to identify a sensitivity of **Medium to High**.
- 10.14

The Proposed Development would remediate the fragmented street frontage of Greyfriars Road, which appears in the backdrop of the church. The calm elevational treatment, composed of vertical piers, regular window openings and solid panels, using subtle brick hues, would successfully complete the streetscape. The choice of materials and their careful detailing would be commensurate for this location near one of Reading’s most important buildings.

- 10.15 AVR View 10 (**Figure 10.3**), taken from the southside of Friar Street opposite the former vicarage entrance, highlights the role that the Proposed Development has within the backdrop of the Greyfriars site. Receptors would notice the enhancement to the visual amenity of the area.
- 10.16 Receptors moving along Greyfriars Road towards the back entrance to the churchyard at Sackville Street (AVR View 11), would benefit from the proposed ground floor treatment with large shopwindow-like openings, which would allow views in and out of the building. The brick detailing and visual interest would change the pedestrian experience along this stretch of the road introducing joy and delight, compared to the dead frontage of the current building.
- 10.17 Receptors approaching from the southwest (AVR View 5, **Figure 10.7**) would notice the removal of the current building's roofscape, which detracts from the church's west elevation with its fine gothic window. The Proposed Development would introduce a restrained backdrop, that, aligned with the new developments at Garrard Street, would successfully frame the historic site in the foreground.
- 10.18 As such, the magnitude of impact on the receptors in this group is considered to be **Medium**, resulting in a **Moderate** Effect. A **Beneficial** nature of effect is identified given that where visible, the proposals would improve visual amenity through the detailed aspects of design



Figure 10.7 View 5 (Source: Cityscape)

RESIDENTS

- 10.19 The visual amenity of receptors in this group is largely characterised by low scale housing on the edge of Reading town centre within the western part of the study area, specifically those occupying the eastern sub area of TCA2. There are two-storey Victorian terraces, such as those on Stanshawe Road. Sackville Street, built in the late 19th century, retains an entirely homogenous Victorian appearance. Elsewhere, for example in Vachel Street, the visual amenity is mixed, comprising historic housing, modern blocks of flats and an office building. The visual amenity in this area also includes the IDR, which runs along its western edge, and the tall developments of the Station Hill quarter, visible to the east.
- 10.20 As such, the susceptibility of residents on the edge of Reading town centre, who are highly engaged with their surroundings and the way to and from their homes, is **Medium**. When calibrated with the Medium value of the area, this results in a sensitivity of **Low to Medium**.
- 10.21 The current building on the Site appears fortress-like and does little to engage with the surrounding streetscape. Receptors experience a bland, inactive ground floor frontage on their approach to Greyfriars Road, particularly moving west to east on Vachel Road (AVR View 4, **Figure 10.8**). The Proposed Development would introduce large shopwindows that help enliven the area. The proposed increase in scale would soften the visual impact of the new developments at Garrard Street. The proposed elevational treatment, particularly the choice of brick and the rhythm of window bays and brick piers, would introduce a well-composed backdrop to Vachel Road.
- 10.22 AVR View 12 (**Figure 10.9**) on Weldale Street illustrates the experience of receptors in this group leaving the residential areas to the west of the town centre on their approach to the railway station or Friar Street. In this view, the Proposed Development would successfully mark the corner with Garrard Street, indicating the route to the Station Hill quarter. In terms of height, the building would appear well aligned with the established context, particularly the building in the foreground which is expected to be replaced by Phase 3 of the Station Hill redevelopment.



Figure 10.8 View 4 (Source: Cityscape)



Figure 10.9 View 12 (Source: Cityscape)

- 10.23 Residents to the west of the IDR would be able to glimpse a small part of the Proposed Development above interposing development albeit heavily filtered by vegetation (AVR View 7, **Figure 10.10**). In these views, the visual amenity would not be affected.
- 10.24 The Proposed Development is mainly visible from Vachel Road and in oblique views along Greyfriars Road. Where visible there is clear increase in scale, but this is mitigated by the contextual, high-quality design. As such, the magnitude of impact is **Low**, resulting in an effect of **Minor Neutral**.



Figure 10.10 View 7 (Source: Cityscape)

USERS OF THE RING ROAD

- 10.25 Receptors in this group are the motorists on the IDR, driving around the town centre. While road users will be aware of some of the Reading landmarks along their route, such as Greyfriars Church and Reading Minster whose tower is readily visible, they will have less of an awareness of the proposed change, given the nature of their movement along a busy highway and the speed at which they travel.
- 10.26 Their primary focus is on activities associated with the road, traffic and wayfinding. As such, the susceptibility of road users is considered to be **Low**. When calibrated with the Low to Medium value of this area of visual amenity, professional judgment has been used to identify a sensitivity of **Low**.
- 10.27 Intervisibility of the Proposed Development is almost entirely limited to the open expanse of the IDR from where views back to the town centre are possible. Seen against the much larger blocks of the Station Hill development, the Proposed Development would appear as part of the established townscape (AVR Views 2 and 8, **Figures 10.11 and 10.12**) and not distract from the historic church spires and townscape.
- 10.28 Receptors would be able to get fleeting views of the Proposed Development behind the Greyfriars Church from the gyratory at Chatham Street (AVR View 5, **Figure 10.7**). The taller buildings of the Station Hill development would be the main focus of the view, appearing behind the Proposed Development.
- 10.29 For receptors in this groups, the experience of the Proposed Development is limited to occasional glimpses. As such, the magnitude of impact on road users is considered to be **Very Low**, resulting in a **Negligible Neutral Effect**.



Figure 10.11 View 2 (Source: Cityscape)



Figure 10.12 View 8 (Source: Cityscape)

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 10.30

The cumulative schemes set out at **Section 2.0** have been considered in terms of potential effects on the visual receptors within the study area. These schemes are listed in **Section 2.0**.
- 10.31

Across the local and wider area, the Development would be visible in conjunction with these cumulative schemes. Those cumulative schemes would be read and understood alongside the emerging tall building development within the centre of Reading. The susceptibility of the visual receptors to the Development in the study area would remain the same in the cumulative context. For the cumulative condition, the effects would remain the same as in the proposed scenario.

	REF	VISUAL RECEPTORS	VALUE	SUSCEPTIBILITY	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE	LIKELY EFFECT (OPERATIONAL)	LIKELY EFFECT (CUMULATIVE)
1	1, 3, 6, 10, 11, 12	Pedestrians and users of shops and amenities	Medium	Low to Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate Beneficial	Moderate Beneficial
2	5, 10, 11	Users of St Greyfriars Church	Medium to High	Medium	Medium to High	Low	Minor Beneficial	Minor Beneficial
3	4, 5, 7 and 12	Residents	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Minor Neutral	Minor Neutral
4	2, 4, 5, 8	Users of the ring road	Low	Low	Low	Very Low	Negligible Neutral	Negligible Neutral

Table 10.1 Summary of likely effects on visual receptors.

11.0 CONCLUSION

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

CONCLUSION

- 11.1

This report provides an assessment of the impact of proposals occupying 20–30 Greyfriars Road, Reading, RG1 1NS, on heritage, townscape and visual receptors.
- 11.2

'Heritage' and 'Townscape and Visual' are treated as individual disciplines and separate assessments are provided in accordance with legislation, planning policy and best practice guidance. In particular, the heritage assessment is carried out in accordance with the Historic England guidance document Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017). The townscape and visual assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).
- 11.3

The assessment and design development has been informed by 12 verified views prepared by visualisation consultants, Cityscape. The location of the viewpoints has been informed by architectural and historic accounts of the area, an appraisal of the existing Site and surroundings, and planning policy and in consultation with the Reading City Council planning officers.
- 11.4

Currently the Site is occupied by a building designed by Terry Farrell in the late twentieth century. Following unsympathetic refurbishment, the development comprises architecture which does not relate to its context in terms of detailing and materials. The ground floor is also notably poor, with very little engagement and activation with the surrounding streets. It is a poor example of the architect's overall oeuvre, with a weak composition and, in particular, a ground floor that does not successfully negotiate the change in levels across the street.
- 11.5

The Proposed Development would introduce a high quality piece of architecture: a simple volume with a stepped roofline that fits into the established datum height at Greyfriars Road, and animates the streetscape along the road and in the views from Friars Street. The depth and texture of the brickwork within the elevations has been given due consideration and the design response is visually rich. The visual analysis further demonstrates that longer views beyond these immediate streets would be limited.
- 11.6

The proposed principal entrance at the junction of Garrard Street and Greyfriars Road is chamfered at ground floor to improve pedestrian desire lines and the generosity of public realm. The uses include an entrance lobby and commercial units at ground floor, with the levels across the site considered in great detail to maximise the extent of active frontage to the street. Above, the proposal includes co-living units that will be complementary to this mixed-use town centre environment.
- 11.7

The Site is not located within a conservation area and does not comprise any heritage assets. There are very few heritage assets in the wider area whose setting and significance may be impacted by the Proposed Development.
- 11.8

An exception is the grade I listed Greyfriars Church located 245 m to the south-east of the Site. In our judgement the Proposed Development would, at least, preserve the setting and significance of the church.
- 11.9

The proposed development represents an opportunity for optimisation of brownfield land that would contribute towards the ongoing transformation of the wider area. There are no impacts to heritage assets and therefore the proposed development would preserve the setting of the surrounding heritage assets. The assessment demonstrates the proposals would demonstrably improve the appearance, character and function of the townscape, in accordance with the development plan.

APPENDIX 1: LISTING DESCRIPTIONS

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

29 AND 31, CAVERSHAM ROAD

Listed on the National Heritage List for England.

[Search over 400,000 listed places \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

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ROAD

Statutory

Address 1:

29 AND 31,

CAVERSHAM

ROAD

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/)

[Corrections and minor amendments \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)

Location

Statutory Address:29 AND 31, CAVERSHAM ROAD

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:Reading (Unitary Authority)

Parish:Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference:SU 71111 73703

Details

CAVERSHAM ROAD 1. 5128 (West Side) Nos 29 and 31 SU 7173 12/426 II GV 2. Circa 1847. 2 storey and basement pair. Red brick, with 1st floor cill band. Hipped slate roof with central chimney. 1 bay each, glazing bar sashes. 1 bay set back porch extensions to sides each with urn on coping.

Listing NGR: SU7111173703

Legacy

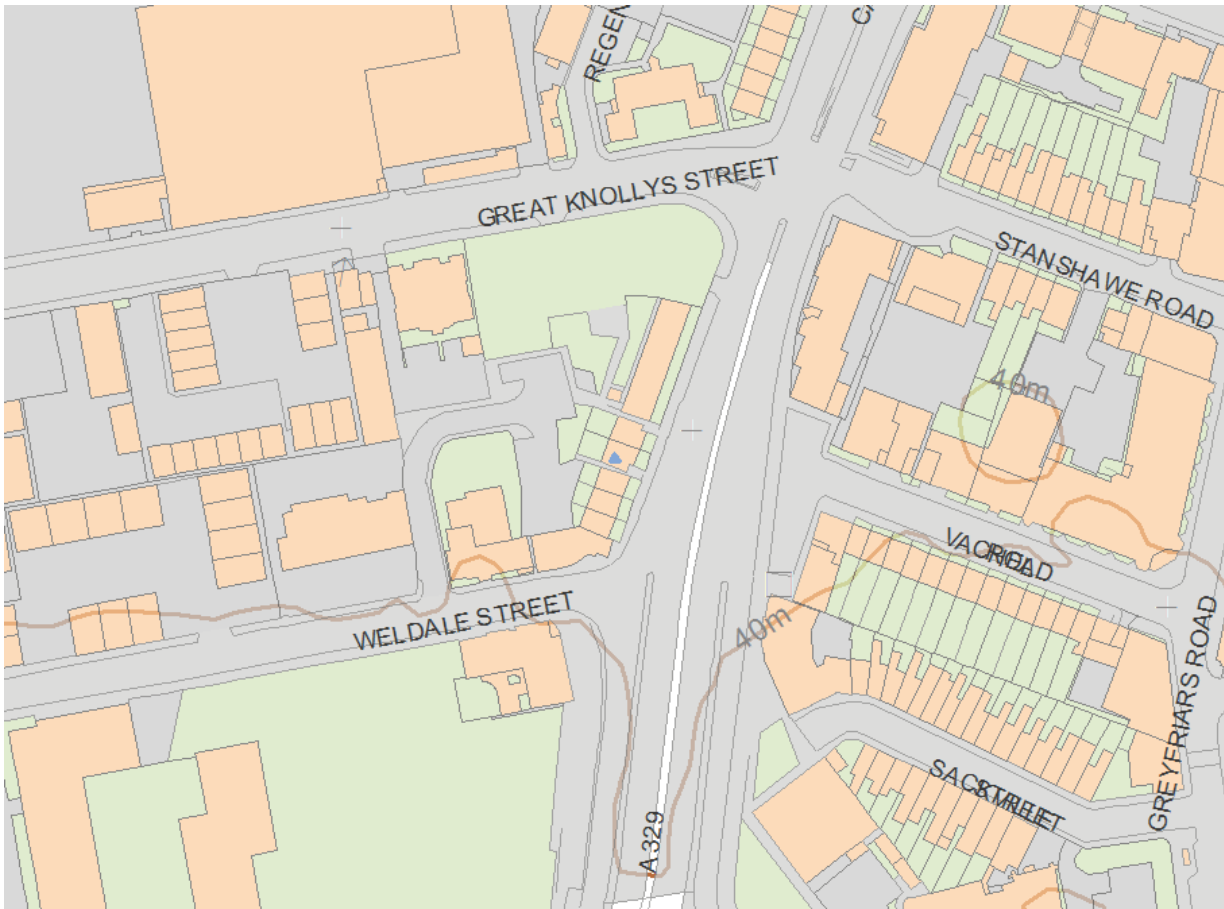
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:**38834**

Legacy System:**LBS**

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale.
This copy shows the entry on 24-Oct-2024 at 12:12:56.

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End of official list entry

← [Previous - Overview](#)

→ [Next - Comments and Photos](#)

Greyfriars Church

Listed on the National Heritage List for England.

[Search over 400,000 listed places \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/)

Official list entry

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26-May-

2023

List Entry

Name:

Greyfriars

Church

Statutory

Address 1:

Friar Street,

Reading,

RG1 1EH

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/)

[Corrections and minor amendments \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)

Location

Statutory Address:**Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1EH**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:**Reading (Unitary Authority)**

Parish:**Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference:**SU7121073588**

Summary

Formerly a monastic church for the Franciscan order who were given the site by Reading Abbey in 1285. The building served as the Guildhall for Reading and then a hospital and gaol from the C16 to the mid-C19 and was then converted back to a church from 1862 by the borough surveyor, William Woodman.

Reasons for Designation

Greyfriars Church, Reading is listed at Grade I for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

* the building retains the core of its structure as a rare Franciscan friary church, with arcades to either side of the nave, original tracery patterns and walls of knapped flint; * subject to a sympathetic programme of restoration by the local architect William Woodman in the C19, showing a scholarly and archaeological approach to the work.

Historic interest:

* as the best-preserved Franciscan church in England which is still operating as a place of public worship; * a building with a notably varied career; the subject of conversion in the period between the C16 and C19 to serve as the Reading Guildhall and then a hospital and town gaol, the building retained much of its essential fabric and was then restored to use as a church.

History

The first written record of Reading dates from the ninth century when the name seems to have referred to a tribe, called Reada’s people. Reading’s position at the junction of the Thames and Kennet was crucial and it is possible that there was a river port here during the Roman occupation. The first mention of the town as a royal vill came in 870 due to a Viking camp, and by 1086 there was a thriving urban community, recorded in the Domesday Book. Reading Abbey was founded in 1121 and this transformed Reading into a place of pilgrimage as

well as an important trading and ecclesiastical centre with one of the biggest and richest monasteries in England. By 1525 Reading was the largest town in Berkshire and the tenth largest in England when measured in taxable wealth due to its trade in wool and cloth.

The dissolution led to the monastic complex becoming a royal palace and by 1611 the town’s population had grown to over 5,000. A number of the timber-framed houses from this period survive in Castle Street and Market Place. The Civil War caused a defensive ring of earthworks to be built around the town and caused much damage.

During the C18, Reading became a prosperous market town and administrative centre, due to the development of the town’s waterways and road links. In 1723 the River Kennet was transformed into a canal, linking Reading to Newbury, further extended by the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, to create a route between Reading and the Bristol Channel. Turnpike roads were also improved, establishing major coaching routes from London to Oxford, the West Country and the southern coast. Iron works and brewing caused the expansion of the town further west along the Oxford and Bath Roads and in the older part of Reading, many older, timber-framed buildings were refaced in fashionable brick. A new town hall was built just northeast of the west end of Friary Street in 1786.

In the C19 the town expanded further; three separate railway companies ran routes through the town to London, causing a rapid increase in population (9,400 in 1801 to 21,500 in 1851 and over 70,000 by 1900) as well as the development of Reading’s famous Three B’s industries: beer (Simonds Brewery, 1785-2010), bulbs (Suttons Seeds, 1837-1974) and biscuits (Huntley and Palmers, 1822-1976). Growth during this period was characterised by the proliferation of brick terraces, made from the area’s fine clay deposits, and Hardy referred to Reading as ‘Aldbrickham’ in his novel Jude the Obscure. In 1869 the town was confirmed as the county town for Berkshire.

Today, Reading is one of the largest urban areas in the UK without city status. The town centre was considerably changed in 1969 when the Inner Distribution Road opened.

The Franciscan order arrived in Reading in 1233 and were initially given a poor site on which to build their church by Reading Abbey in boggy ground which was prone to seasonal flooding. In 1285 they acquired an adjacent piece of higher ground, including the site of the present church and bordering New Street (now Friar Street). The present church was apparently finished by 1311. It had a nave with aisles and a choir, but no transepts. It seems possible that there was a passageway running across the church at the junction of the nave and choir. A bell tower was added by the C16.

The friary was dissolved in 1538 and the site was granted to Henry VIII’s Groom of the Chamber, Robert Stanshawe. The king kept the church building and granted the nave to the town for use as a guildhall in 1542, but

in 1578 the guildhall moved to the former Abbey Hospitium and the Greyfriars Church became a poor house or hospital. From 1614 to 1642 the building fulfilled both functions as a gaol and hospital. Royalist troops were billeted in the building in 1642-1643 but afterwards, the building continued as a gaol, although its dual function as a hospital had ceased. In the C18 and early C19, it was the town bridewell and contemporary prints show the nave without a roof and the functions of the prison and the gaoler’s house being carried out in a series of wooden huts or the converted fabric of the nave aisles, which were still roofed. The prints also show that the reticulated tracery of the west window was preserved despite the dilapidation. The nave roof was removed in 1780 as it had become unsafe and the structure of the original chancel was demolished in around 1808.

The medieval church ruins prompted antiquarian interest from the Berkshire Congress of the British Archaeological Society who visited the site in 1859 and also from Revd. William Whitmarsh Phelps, a former curate of St Laurence Church Reading and Vicar of Trinity Church, Reading, who petitioned for the building to be restored as a church and succeed in April 1862 in purchasing the site. Phelps was very active in raising funds for the work and appointed the Borough surveyor, William Woodman to produce a design. Woodman excavated to establish the eastern and northern extent of the church and discovered foundations on the north side. These were probably for cloister buildings but were interpreted as indicating a former transept, and so more land was bought and Woodman’s design included a transept on each side. It was not possible to buy land to the east and so the architect’s design for a planned choir and chancel could not be built. The arch between the nave and the intended east end was blocked up with bricks and survives in that state. A belfry with three bells was added above the chancel arch.

The building was completed by 1863 with the first organ added in 1864 and the reredos in memory of Revd Dr Barkworth in 1894. More recent work has included repairs to the roof in 1997. In 2000 a major campaign of repair work included the laying of a new floor, the removal of the C19 pews and the digging of a cross-shaped immersion font at the east end. The C19 font and pulpit of Caen stone were removed to the southern aisle and the western end. A reception area with book and coffee shops was added to the lower body of the church building at its west end and opened in November 2021.

Greyfriars is believed to be the best preserved English Franciscan church which is still in use as a place of public worship.

Details

Formerly a friary church for the Franciscan order, who were given this site by Reading Abbey in 1285. The building served as the guildhall for Reading and then a hospital and gaol from the C16 to the mid-C19 and was then converted back to a church from 1862 by the borough surveyor, William Woodman.

MATERIALS: flint walling with stone dressings and a plain tile roof.

PLAN: a nave of five bays with side aisles and two C19 transepts, each of two bays, with a C21 reception area at the western end with curved western walling.

EXTERIOR: window and door surrounds across the building are all of C19 date but appear to follow the original patterns. The south wall, facing Friar Street, has walling of squared flints with stone quoins. A plinth with chamfered ashlar top skirts the building. A doorway at the left has double plank doors and a surround with a series of hollow chamfers and hood mould with foliate end stops. To right there are two windows of three lights with traceried heads with reticulated tracery and segmental heads. The roof slope above has a series of five, small triangular lights with wooden tracery panels. The southern transept to the right of this has a central window to its gabled end of four lights with intersecting tracery to the head. The flanks of the transept have three-light windows with intersecting tracery to their heads.

The eastern end has the intended chancel arch at its centre, bricked up with red bricks which have been colour-washed. Around this arch, the walling is of red bricks, laid in header bond with flint walling beyond. In the gable is a circular window with stone surround, enclosing three quatrefoils and to the apex is the gabled bellcote with three cusped openings for the bells. At either side are pairs of three-light windows to light the transepts, set in flint walling and with interlacing tracery to their heads, as before.

The northern is similar to the southern side, but the walling is of knapped and not squared flints. C20 extensions have been placed against the lower walling and block the lower lights of the windows along this side which conform to the same pattern as those on the south of the building. The whole of this eastern wall was built in 1862, partially replacing earlier fabric at the centre which had become unsafe.

The western side has a central window of five lights with reticulated tracery to its head. This contains some original elements but, as with much of the tracery across the building, is of C19 date, but following the patterns seen in C18 and C19 prints of the building. At either side are buttresses with offsets. To the front of this side is a projecting, single-storey extension of 2021, housing a reception area with coffee and bookshops. This has plate glass windows of full height and at the centre is a portal with angled surround.

INTERIOR: the nave is flanked by aisle arcades of five bays of which the easternmost bay is shorter than the others. These have attached, semi-circular columns to each side with sharply-angled fillets set between. The bases have water-holding mouldings and bell capitals support a series of hollow-chamfered arches. Two columns still show evidence of the initials inscribed by inmates when the building was used as a prison. The roof

structures of the nave and aisles are C19 and have ashlar posts, cusped wind braces and, to the nave and transepts, tie beams and king posts with arched braces.

C19 furnishings include the pulpit and font of Caen stone, the series of wall monuments and the elaborate wrought iron brackets of the late-C19 gasoliers which were converted to electroliers in 1930 and fitted with new suspended lights in the early C21. The reredos was designed by William Ravenscroft (see Sources: SM Gold). The organ in the north transept is a replacement fitted in 1888 with a case of 1894.

The area below the western window has been remodelled to accommodate a pair of double doors. The floor was raised in 2000 and is now of white ceramic tiles. At the eastern end beneath a raised platform is an immersion font of cruciform shape. Medieval floor tiles, which were found on site as the building was reinstated as a church, are displayed in a case on the northern wall and show images of hares, stags, dogs and geometrical patterns.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:38955

Legacy System:LBS

Sources

Books and journals

Gold, S M, A Biographical Dictionary of Architects at Reading, (1999)

Pevsner, N, Bradley, S, Tyack, G, The Buildings of England: Berkshire, (2010), 445-446

Spriggs, F. Gordon, History of the Church of Greyfriars, Reading, (1963)

Summers, Malcolm, History of Greyfriars Church, Reading, (2014)

Billings, J, 'Greyfriars Church, Reading' in The Archaeological Journal, (1846), 0

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

The listed building(s) is/are shown coloured blue on the attached map. Pursuant to s1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') structures attached to or within the curtilage of the listed

building but not coloured blue on the map, are not to be treated as part of the listed building for the purposes of the Act. However, any works to these structures which have the potential to affect the character of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest may still require Listed Building Consent (LBC) and this is a matter for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to determine.



Map

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QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE)

Listed on the National Heritage List for England.

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Official list entry

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QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE)	
Statutory Address 1:	
QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), FRIAR STREET	
This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest. Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building. For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948. Understanding list entries (<i>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/</i>) Corrections and minor amendments (<i>https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/</i>)	

Location

Statutory Address:**QUADRANT WALLS AND RAILINGS TO FORMER NO 64 (GREYFRIARS VICARAGE), FRIAR STREET**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:**Reading (Unitary Authority)**

Parish:**Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference:**SU 71242 73572**

Details

FRIAR STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) Quadrant walls and railings to former No 64 (Greyfriars Vicarage) SU 7173 12/121 22.3.57. II 2. Circa 1796 or circa 1808. Probably designed by Soane (as was the now demolished Vicarage). Flanking garden walls, quadrant shaped, red brick; garden doors on street front with heads set in semi-circular arches with plastered tympana. These walls linked by cast iron spearhead rails with fluted columns standards capped by urns. Central steps to doorway with footscraper to. left.

Listing NGR: SU7124273572

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:**38954**

Legacy System:**LBS**

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

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The former Mitre Inn

Listed on the National Heritage List for England.

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Official list entry

List Entry

Name:

The former
Mitre Inn

Statutory

Address 1:

47 West
Street,
Reading,
RG1 1TZ

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

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[Corrections and minor amendments \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)

Location

Statutory Address:47 West Street, Reading, RG1 1TZ

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:**Reading (Unitary Authority)**

Parish:**Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference:**SU7121973538**

Summary

Former public house. Dating from the mid-C19 on this site. Converted to a Thai restaurant around 2007.

Reasons for Designation

The former Mitre Inn, a mid-C19 public house, now a restaurant, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

* for its well-proportioned and architecturally refined façade onto West Street; * for the late-C19 shopfront on Friar Street.

Historic interest:

* as a good example of a mid-C19 public house on a prominent corner location, adding value to the townscape of this part of Reading.

Group value:

* with the Grade I listed Greyfriars Church on the opposite side of Friar Street.

History

The first written record of Reading dates from the ninth century when the name seems to have referred to a tribe, called Reada’s people. It is possible that there was a river port here during the Roman occupation, and by 1086 there was a thriving urban community, as recorded in the Domesday Book. Reading Abbey was founded in 1121 and this transformed Reading into a place of pilgrimage as well as an important trading and ecclesiastical centre with one of the biggest and richest monasteries in England. By 1525 Reading was the largest town in Berkshire

and the tenth-largest in England when measured in taxable wealth.

The Dissolution led to the monastic complex becoming a royal palace and by 1611 the town’s population had grown to over 5,000 as a result of its cloth trade. A number of the timber-framed houses from this period survive in Castle Street and Market Place.

During the C18 Reading became a prosperous market town and administrative centre, due to the development of the town’s waterways and road links. In 1723 the River Kennet was transformed into a canal, linking Reading to Newbury, further extended by the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, to create a route between Reading and the Bristol Channel. Turnpike roads were also improved, establishing major coaching routes from London to Oxford, the West Country and the southern coast. Iron works and brewing caused the expansion of the town further west along the Oxford and Bath Roads and in the older part of Reading, many older, timber-framed buildings were refaced in fashionable brick. A new town hall was built just northeast of the west end of Friary Street in 1786.

In the C19 the town expanded further; three separate railway companies ran routes through the town to London, causing a rapid increase in population (9,400 in 1801 to 21,500 in 1851 and over 70,000 by 1900) as well as the development of Reading’s famous Three B’s industries: beer (Simonds Brewery, 1785–2010), bulbs (Suttons Seeds, 1837–1974) and biscuits (Huntley and Palmers, 1822–1976). Growth during this period was characterised by the proliferation of brick terraces, and Hardy referred to Reading as ‘Albrickham’ in his novel Jude the Obscure. In 1869 the town was confirmed as the county town for Berkshire.

Today, Reading is one of the largest urban areas in the UK without city status. The town centre was considerably changed in 1969 when the Inner Distribution Road opened, shortly followed by the M4 in 1971.

Previously located in Friar Street, close to the Church of St Laurence, The Mitre moved to its present position in West Street in the mid-C19. George Partridge was the landlord from about 1841-1854 and the first documentary evidence of the present building is its inclusion on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1841. In the 1842 Post Office directory, it is described as a beer shop and chop house and in 1869 it is recorded as having an alehouse licence. From 1870-1895 the pub had its own brewery, located in the yard to the south-west of the pub, with William Newell as the resident brewer. By 1903 it had passed to the Wallingford Brewery which was in turn acquired by Ushers of Trowbridge in 1928. In 1903 the premises were owned by Mrs Emily Hicks of Peckham Rye, with a lease to the brewers. The licensee then was Tom Waldron and the bar area was divided into three compartments with a smoking room (see SOURCES, Dearing, Cliffe & Williams). The house was reported as ‘used by tradesmen, artisans and the working classes, also theatre goers and actors’. The pub stood near to the former Palace Theatre and Gracie Fields and Max Miller were reputedly patrons. By the early 1970s, it had become part of

the Watney’s Schooner Inn chain of pub restaurants. By 2001 it had become the Bistrot Vino restaurant before becoming a Thai restaurant around 2007.

Details

Former public house. Dating from the mid-C19 on this site. Converted to a Thai restaurant around 2007.

MATERIALS: white colour-washed brick laid in Flemish bond with clay tile roof and clay hanging tiles to rear top floor.

PLAN: three-storey plus cellar, rectangular principal range fronting onto West Street with tile roof (hipped at the north end) behind a parapet. The range has two chimney stacks with tall chimney pots at the south end and north-west corner. The existence of a cellar with a stone flagged floor is suggested by evidence of a barrel shute on the front elevation and documentary evidence but it was not inspected. To the rear is a lower, parallel, two-storey plus attic range (reduced to two storeys at the south end) with an entrance at the north end onto Friar Street. A single-storey, clay-tile roofed extension extends from the rear of the building adjoining the rear of 90 - 91 Friar Street with a flat-roofed modern extension* at the western end. On the south side of the yard is another parallel brick range, possibly originally a stable block. Internally, the ground floor* of the principal range consists of a dining room with a service area at the south end. The first floor* contains a secondary dining area and the second floor has a number of bedrooms.

EXTERIOR: the symmetrical eastern frontage onto West Street is of five bays with a centrally-placed entrance with modern glazed doors. The entrance has a wide, corbelled, hood with a central open-pedimented feature beneath which the strap-work decoration is partially obscured by a modern fascia panel. Fenestration on the ground floor is of eight-over-one timber sash windows set in segmental openings with volute keystones. On the first floor, the sashes are six-over-six in plain segmental openings and on the second floor, the three central windows have three-over-three sashes in square-headed openings below a narrow stringcourse. The two outer openings are blocked. Above the astragal cornice, the parapet has stone copings.

The single bay of the Friar Street (north) elevation of the principal range has an off-set entrance with a similar, but narrower, hood to that over the West Street entrance. The single, centrally placed, fenestration to the upper floors follows that on the West Street elevation. The single-bay elevation of the rear range has a late-C19 shop front with a recessed entrance flanked by a pair of single-pane windows, framed by pilasters and a cornice supported on volutes. The first floor has an off-centre two-over-two timber sash window in a square-headed opening. The sloping tiled roof has a gabled dormer with hanging tiles and a pair of four-pane casement windows with two-pane transoms.

INTERIOR: the interior of the ground floor* and first floor* of the principal range has been completely refurbished as a Thai restaurant with no historic features evident. The top floor of the principal range and interior of the two-storey range fronting onto Friar Street were not inspected.

* Pursuant to s1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (‘the Act’), it is declared that these aforementioned features, including the interior of the ground and first floors of the principal range and the modern extension at the west end of the western extension, are not of special architectural or historic interest, however any works which have the potential to affect the character of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest may still require LBC and this is a matter for the LPA to determine.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:**39241**

Legacy System:**LBS**

Sources

Books and journals

Dearing, John , Cliffe, David , Williams, Evelyn, Abbot Cook to Zero Degrees, an A-Z of Reading's Pubs and Breweries, (2021), 142-143

Websites

Pub History in the UK: Mitre, 47 West Street, Reading, Berkshire, accessed 02 March 2022 from <https://pubwiki.co.uk/Berkshire/Reading/Mitre.shtml> (<https://pubwiki.co.uk/Berkshire/Reading/Mitre.shtml>)

Legal

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Map

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W I Palmer Memorial Hall

Listed on the National Heritage List for England.

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List Entry

Name:

W I Palmer

Memorial

Hall

Statutory

Address 1:

42 and 43

West Street,

Reading,

RG1 1TZ

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/)

[Corrections and minor amendments \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)

Location

Statutory Address:42 and 43 West Street, Reading, RG1 1TZ

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:**Reading (Unitary Authority)**

Parish:**Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference:**SU 71224 73517**

Summary

A former temperance hall (part of a terrace), of 1862 by William Henry Woodman, embellished and rebuilt between 1887 and 1899 by F W Albury.

Reasons for Designation

The W I Palmer Hall, a former temperance hall (part of a terrace), of 1862 by William Henry Woodman, embellished and rebuilt between 1887 and 1899 by F W Albury, is listed at Grade II, for the following principal reasons: Architectural interest:

* an eye-catching and flamboyant design using good quality terracotta detailing and ironwork, which evokes the design of contemporary pubs and banks; * for the signage announcing the commemoration of W I Palmer, a Reading philanthropist and promoter of temperance.

Historic interest:

* as the purpose-built meeting place for the Reading branch of the British and Foreign Temperance Society, which promoted sober refreshment and recreation as an alternative to the public house.

Group value:

* as part of the streetscape including the adjacent, early-C19 Mitre Inn, (NHLE entry 1157216, listed at Grade II) and the Grade I, Greyfriars Church (NHLE entry 1321952).

History

The first written record of Reading dates from the C9 when the name seems to have referred to a tribe, called Reada’s people. The town lies at the junction of the rivers Thames and Kennet and it is possible that there was a river port here during the Roman occupation. The town was recorded as a royal village by 870 and by 1086 there

was a thriving urban community, as recorded in the Domesday Book. Reading Abbey was founded in 1121 and this transformed Reading into a place of pilgrimage as well as an important trading and ecclesiastical centre with one of the biggest and richest monasteries in England. By 1525 Reading was the largest town in Berkshire and the tenth-largest in England when measured in taxable wealth, largely due to the wool and cloth trades.

The dissolution led to the monastic complex becoming a royal palace and by 1611 the town’s population had grown to over 5,000. A number of the timber-framed houses from this period survive in Castle Street and Market Place. The civil war caused the building of earthwork defences surrounding the town and it was besieged.

During the C18 Reading became a prosperous market town and administrative centre, due to the development of the town’s waterways and road links. In 1723 the River Kennet was transformed into a canal, linking Reading to Newbury, further extended by the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, to create a route between Reading and the Bristol Channel. Turnpike roads were also improved, establishing major coaching routes from London to Oxford, the West Country and the southern coast. Iron works, brewing and malting caused the expansion of the town further west and in the historic centre of Reading, many older, timber-framed buildings were refaced in fashionable brick. A new town hall was built just northeast of the west end of Friar Street in 1786.

In the C19, the town expanded further; three separate railway companies ran routes through the town to London, causing a rapid increase in population (9,400 in 1801 to 21,500 in 1851 and over 70,000 by 1900) as well as the development of Reading’s famous Three B’s industries: beer (H&G Simonds Brewery, later Courage, 1785-2010), bulbs (Suttons Seeds, 1806-1976) and biscuits (Huntley and Palmers, 1822-1976), although all three have now moved from Reading centre. Growth during this period was characterised by the proliferation of brick terraces, and Hardy referred to Reading as ‘Aldbrickham’ in his novel Jude the Obscure. The excellent local clay had been used for tile making from medieval times and then bricks after the C18. In 1869 the town was confirmed as the county town for Berkshire and the extent of the borough was increased to the south in 1887 and again in 1911 to the north and west.

The University was founded as an extension college of the University of Oxford and received its charter in 1926. The town centre was considerably changed between 1969 and the 1980s with the development of the Inner Distribution Road and also the opening of the M4 in 1971. In 2022, Reading is one of the largest urban areas in the UK without city status. Information technology and the service economy now dominate commercial activity and the newly built development of the town.

The temperance movement campaigned against the recreational use and sale of alcohol and promoted total abstinence. In the C19, high levels of alcohol consumption and drunkenness were seen by social reformers as a danger to society's wellbeing, leading to social issues such as poverty, child neglect, immorality and economic

decline. The Reading Temperance Society was founded in 1832 as a local branch of the British and Foreign Temperance Society. In 1862 the West Street Rooms were built in the garden of a Working Men’s Clubhouse. The architect was William Henry Woodman who gave his services for free. He was the Reading Borough surveyor and other examples of his work include the Vachel Almshouses on Castle Street of 1863/1865, Listed Grade II (NHLE entry 1154678). He was also in partnership with William Ford Poulton as Poulton & Woodman.

The hall was renamed 'W I Palmer Memorial Buildings' and embellished between 1887 and 1899, with this work attributed to F W Albury. The terracotta work of the 1887 entrance was by Messrs Doulton & Co and the wrought iron gates from J H Barford of the art metal works Maidenhead. The Goad Insurance map of 1901 shows the society lodge to the west road front and a hall behind (now largely demolished and replaced with a modern building).

F W Albury (1845-1912) was born in Reading and attended Reading School of Art before working at the architectural firm of William and John Thomas Brown in the town. He was an assistant to the prolific architect James Fowler of Louth in 1875-1876 before returning to Reading to join his old firm, Albury and Brown. He was elected Fellow of the RIBA in 1875 (proposed by Alfred Waterhouse and others) and designed many buildings in the Reading area, a number of which are listed; Caversham Free Public Library (NHLE entry 1113456) and West Branch Library, Oxford Road (NHLE entry 1302878) both Grade II and completed in 1907.

William Isaac Palmer was treasurer and president of the Reading Temperance Society from the 1850s until his death in 1893. The Palmer family were Quakers, philanthropists and benefactors to Reading, including the funding of the town hall, library and Palmer Park. W I Palmer lived at Hillside on Allcroft Road (NHLE entry 1392866, listed at Grade II) which he commissioned from architects Morris & Stallwood in 1879. There is a memorial to W I Palmer on the Valpy Street/Blagrove Street corner of the Reading Town Hall and Museum building; ‘He was a very munificent contributor for the erection of the adjacent Town Hall and Free Library and Museum Buildings and to whom the Borough is also largely indebted for this addition to those buildings.’

During the First World War, the hall was used as a temperance club for soldiers. By the 1950s the work of the society became more focused on education about the dangers of alcohol, with much youth work undertaken between 1956 and the 1970s. The Society sold non-alcoholic drinks nationwide (as Amethyst Drinks) and operated the Amethyst Tea Bar in West Street, Reading. It also supplied tea at Borough Council meetings as an alternative to alcohol. The coat of arms above the secondary entrance is associated with the Temperance Building Society, which opened a branch in the building in 1964.

In 1974 Palmer Hall was sold and new premises, called Amethyst House, were bought in London Road, Reading.

The name of the Society was gradually changed to that of the Amethyst Centre for Alcohol Concern. The first and second floors of the hall were converted to flats around 2015.

Details

A former temperance hall (part of a terrace), of 1862 by William Henry Woodman, embellished and rebuilt between 1887 and 1899 by F W Albury.

MATERIALS: brown brick in English bond with decorative terracotta detailing.

PLAN: shop to the ground floor with entrance to the left. Subsidiary entrance to the right.

EXTERIOR: the asymmetric principal elevation is richly decorated with buff and red terracotta. It is three-storey and of three bays, with the central bay recessed above the ground floor. To the ground floor, the left-hand bay comprises a portico with a Romanesque-type doorway of two orders and alternating buff and red terracotta tile dressings, supported by pairs of engaged columns with composite capitals, decorated with faces. Above, there is an entablature comprising a frieze and moulded cornice topped by a pediment, the tympanum of which is richly decorated with an arcade of small arches in relief, above a triangle of foliage. The frieze is inscribed ‘AD WEST STREET HALL 1887’. The entablature is supported by two composite columns on pedestals of engineering bricks. The shafts have faces in relief to the lower part, fluting to the middle and a hexagonal pattern to the upper part, under a composite capital. The doorway has a pair of decorative wrought-iron gates, behind which there is a modern, metal and glass entrance door and vestibule. The central bay is fronted by a plate glass shop front with a fluted stall riser and plain fascia. The right-hand bay has a C20 entrance. The architrave is faced in grey marble, which carries a coat of arms surmounted by a later sign 'LONDON COLLEGE OF RESEARCH'. The recessed entrance door is uPVC.

From the left, the two upper floors have canted bay windows with multiple, single-light windows set into fluted mullions and moulded transoms. The frieze above the first-floor windows and the parapet above the second, have three decorative panels with a cartouche and scrolls under round-headed arches of alternating buff and red terracotta tile dressings. The roof above has a short spire, topped with a metal weathervane. The central bay has eight-light, transom windows with fluted mullions and moulded transoms to both floors. The frieze above the first-floor window has stylised letters on slanting scrolls, spelling out 'W I Palmer Memorial Building'. The parapet above the second floor has a pair of bracket-shaped mouldings, set between fluted pilasters. The right-hand bay projects at the first and second floors, where there are four-light transom windows with fluted mullions and moulded transoms. The frieze and parapet have a decorative panel with a cartouche and scrolls under a round-headed arch of alternating buff and red terracotta tile dressings. The clay-tiled roof is partially hidden behind the

parapet. The top of the north side elevation steps up to a large, brick chimney stack with a buff terracotta frieze.

INTERIOR: the ground floor shop spaces appear to have modern fixtures and fittings, as does the hallway beyond the main entrance vestibule. The upper floors have been converted to apartments.

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:39240

Legacy System:LBS

Sources

Books and journals

'W I Palmer Hall' in Berkshire Chronicle, (1 July 1899), 5

Websites

National Archives, accessed 19/10/2021 from <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/1eb55bcc-8a97-4a74-8d19-d267fb2ffc1e>

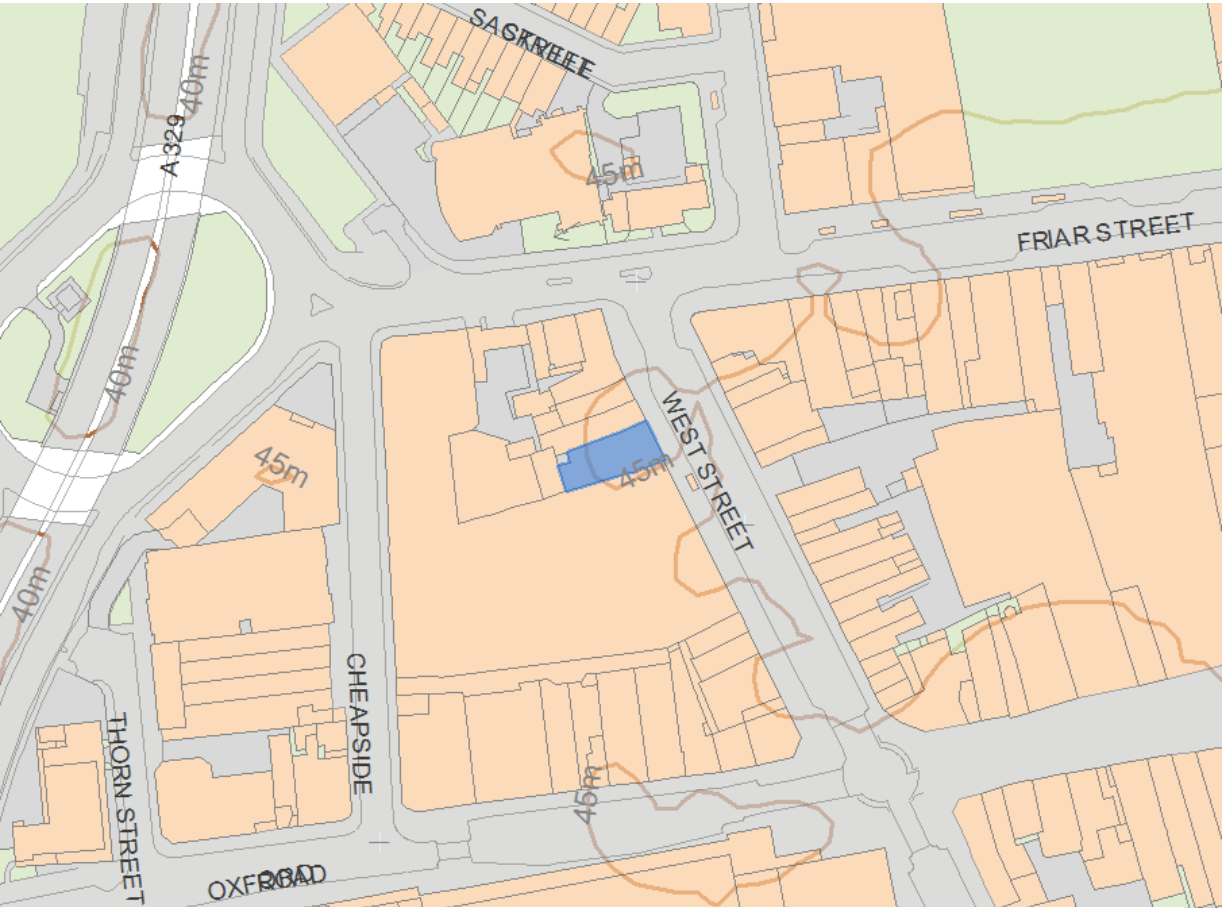
(<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/1eb55bcc-8a97-4a74-8d19-d267fb2ffc1e>)

Sussex Architects, accessed 19/10/2021 from <https://sussexparishchurches.org/architectsandartistss/>

(<https://sussexparishchurches.org/architectsandartistss/>)

Legal

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Map

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APPENDIX 2: ACCURATE VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS (AVRS)

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

VIEW 1: READING MINSTER

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 2: A33/A329

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 3: TOWNHALL SQUARE

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 4: VACHEL ROAD

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 5: CHATHAM STREET

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 6: GARRARD STREET

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 7: WELDALE STREET

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 8: MILL LANE

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 9: SOUTHAMPTON STREET/WHITLEY STREET

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 10: WEST STREET

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 11: GREYFRIARS ROAD (NORTHERN END)

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



VIEW 12: FRIARS STREET, JUNCTION WITH GREYFRIARS ROAD

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



APPENDIX 3: AVR METHODOLOGY

CO-LIVING SCHEME AT 20-30 GREYFRIARS ROAD, READING

20-30 Greyfriars Road

London

Accurate Visual Representation Methodology

November 2024

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0.0	Introduction	4			
0.1	Methodology overview				
0.2	View selection				
1.0	Photography	4			
1.1	Digital photography				
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Table of views

View	Visualisation type	Level of accuracy of location	Render / wireline	Ref	OS-E	OS-N	Height (AOD)	Height (AGL)	Heading	Lens	Lens choice	Field of view	Date	Time
01	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30786	471380.617	173262.438	42.549	1.60 M	34°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	12:40
02	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30787	471177.164	172948.032	47.373	1.60 M	11°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	14:11
03	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30788	471695.196	173531.705	45.032	1.60 M	289°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	12:00
04	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Render	D30789	471126.489	173716.009	39.263	1.60 M	112°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	15:25
05	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Render	D30790	471091.280	173501.649	43.957	1.60 M	44°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	14:38
06	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Render	D30792	471360.921	173687.226	39.159	1.60 M	271°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	11:03
07	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30794	470865.630	173631.834	41.420	1.60 M	83°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	15:05
08	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30795	471528.558	173059.412	39.860	1.60 M	338°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	12:58
09	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30796	471948.798	172404.294	62.900	1.60 M	334°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	13:22
10	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Render	D30798	471235.080	173537.073	45.132	1.60 M	10°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	15:46
11	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30799	471275.490	173797.258	38.836	1.60 M	181°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	16:17
12	Type 4	Better than 0.05m	Wireline	D30800	471253.706	173574.684	44.943	1.60 M	12°	24mm	Inclusion of relevant context	73.74°	13/10/24	16:02

0.0 Introduction

0.1 Methodology overview

The methodology applied by Cityscape Digital Limited to produce the ‘*Type 4 Photomontages survey / scale verifiable*’¹ or views contained in this document are described below. In the drafting of this methodology and the production and presentation of the images, guidance has been taken from the ‘TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals’ (TGN06/19) from the Landscape Institute published on 17 September 2019 in support of GLVIA3.

The disciplines employed are of the highest possible levels of accuracy and photo-realism which are achievable with today’s standards of architectural photography and computer-generated models.

0.2 View selection

The viewpoints are being selected through a process of consultation with relevant statutory consultees by townscape/heritage consultants and having regard to relevant planning policy and guidance.

1.0 Photography

1.1 Digital photography

High quality digital full frame sensor cameras are being utilised.

1.2 Lenses

In accordance with TGN 06/19, Cityscape balances the need to include the extent of the site and sufficient context with the stated preference for 50mm lenses. For local urban views a wide angle lens of 24mm or 35mm is generally used. For more open spaces the default is 50mm, intermediate distance views are photographed with a lens between 35mm to 70mm and occasionally long range views may be required with lens options ranging from 70mm to 1200mm.

As a guide, the following approach is used:

View	Lens options
Relevant foreground, urban context or large site	24mm – 35mm
Open spaces, where proposed development can be included	50mm
800 to 5000 metres – intermediate	35mm – 70mm
5000+ metres – long	70mm – 1200mm

Examples of these views are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

1.3 TGN 06/19

States that:

“2.2 Baseline photography should: [...] include the extent of the site and sufficient context;”²

“1.1.7 If a 50mm FL lens cannot capture the view in landscape or portrait orientation (for example, if the highest point of the development is approaching 18° above horizontal) the use of wider-angled prime lenses should be considered, working through the following sequence of fixed lenses in this order: 35mm FL > 28mm FL > 24mm FL > 24mm FL Tilt-Shift. Tilt-Shift Lenses are considered at Appendix 13. In these unusual situations, the reasoning for the choice and the approach used should be documented, and the agreement of the competent authority should be sought (see Appendix 10 Technical Methodology).”³ and

“Views should include the full context of the site / development and show the effect it has upon the receptor location.[...]”⁴

1.4 Digital camera

Cityscape uses high quality professional DSLR (digital single lens reflex) and DSLM (digital single lens mirrorless) cameras. The cameras utilise FFS (full frame sensors) so declared focal lengths require no conversion to be understood in line with TGN 06/19 guidelines.

Cityscape use high quality lenses that are matched to the resolution of the cameras to ensure high contrast and sharp rendition of the images.

1.5 Position, time and date recording

The photographer is provided with (i) an Ordnance Survey map or equivalent indicating the position of each viewpoint from which the required photographs are to be taken, and (ii) a digital mockup rendered with a context model of the desired view. For each viewpoint the camera is positioned at a height of 1.60 metres above the ground level which closely approximates the human eye altitude, and falls into the 1.5-1.65m range provided by TGN 06/19⁵.

If local conditions required a deviation to capture the view, the exact height can be found in the Table of Views. A point vertically beneath the entrance pupil of the lens is marked on the ground as a survey reference point and two digital reference photographs are taken of (i) the camera/ tripod location and (ii) the survey reference point (as shown in Figures 3 and 4). The date and time of the photograph are recorded by the camera.

1 ‘TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp. 21-2

2 TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp. 5, Paragraph 2.2

3 TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp. 28, Paragraph 1.1.7

4 ‘TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp. 35, Paragraph 4.1.5

5 ‘TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp. 50



1: Local view



2: Intermediate view



3: Camera location



4: Survey reference point

2.0 Digital image correction

2.1 Raw file conversion

Professional digital cameras produce a raw file format, which is then processed for both high detail and colour accuracy. The final image is saved as an 8 bit tiff⁶ file.

2.2 Digital image correction

The digital photographs were prepared for the next stage of camera matching (see Sections 6 and 7).

All lenses exhibit a degree of geometric distortion. The most common types are radially symmetrical along the principal axis of the lens, and tend to grow in size towards the perimeter of the image. The outer edges of the images are therefore not taken into consideration to reduce inaccuracies. Figure 5 illustrates the ‘safe’ or non-distortive area of an image which is marked by a red overlay.

The adjusted or corrected digital image, known as the ‘background plate’, is then saved ready for the camera matching process (see Sections 6 and 7). In preparation for the survey (see Section 3.2) Cityscape indicates on each background plate the safe area and priority survey points, such as corners of buildings, retained elements and party walls for survey (see Figure 6).



5: Area of interest to be surveyed



6: Background plate highlighting critical survey points in green and secondary survey strings in red

⁶ TIFF is the name given to a specific format of image file stored digitally on a computer.

3.0 Type 4 visualisations

3.1 Type 4 visualisation

Unless otherwise specified visualisations are completed to TGN 06/19⁷ Type 4 Photomontage / Photowire (survey / scale verifiable) standards.

3.2 Survey

An independent surveyor is contracted to undertake the survey of (i) each viewpoint as marked on the ground beneath the entrance pupil of the lens at the time the photograph is taken (and recorded by way of digital photograph (see Section 1 above) and (ii) all the required points on buildings, hard landscape features or immobile permanent objects within the safe zone. The survey is coordinated onto the Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB36) by using GNSS (global navigation satellite system such as GPS⁸) equipment (see, for example, Figure 7) and processing software. The Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB36) is chosen as it is the most widely used and because it also allows the captured data to be incorporated into other available digital products (such as Ordnance Survey maps). The height datum used is Ordnance Survey Newlyn Datum and is also derived using the GNSS.

Improvements to the real-time position of GNSS data is achieved by RTK (real time kinematic) compensation, which utilises a comparison between known base stations positions and their current position fix to produce correction data to the measurements. The required points on each building are surveyed using conventional survey techniques utilising an electronic theodolite and reflectorless laser technology (shown in Figure 8). In certain circumstances, a viewpoint may need to be surveyed using conventional survey techniques as opposed to RTK, if, for example, the viewpoint is in a position where GNSS information cannot be received.

3.3 False origin

3D modelling programs, unlike CAD/BIM programs, have inherent inaccuracies the further an object is away from the origin. Cityscape decide on and record a local, 'false origin' that is used to move the model closer to the origin. This alleviates the inaccuracies. The 3D model of the proposed development, consented scheme models, and survey data are all moved uniformly to this new false origin. When performing positioning checks (see Section 5.2) the offset between false origin and OS are added back to the coordinates.



7: Field survey being carried out, GNSS receiver



8: Field survey being carried out, total station

⁷ 'TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.' Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp.11, Table2, pp 21-24.

⁸ <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/upholding-professional-standards/sector-standards/land/guidelines-for-the-use-of-gnss-in-surveying-and-mapping-2nd-edition-rics.pdf>

4.0 Type 3 visualisations

4.1 Type 3 visualisation

These visualisations are as described in TGN 06/19⁹ Type 3 Photomontage / Photowire (not survey / scale verifiable) standards. In contrast to Type 4, Type 3 visualisations rely on good quality data for camera matching, but are not relying on surveys as described in Section 3.2. Data sources such as GPS, OS Maps, 3D City models, geo-referenced aerial photography, LiDAR or 3D models can be used.

The individual data source used is declared in an accompanying table. The possible angular shift of a 1m lateral displacement of the camera against its actual coordinate depends on the distance of the object from the camera¹⁰:

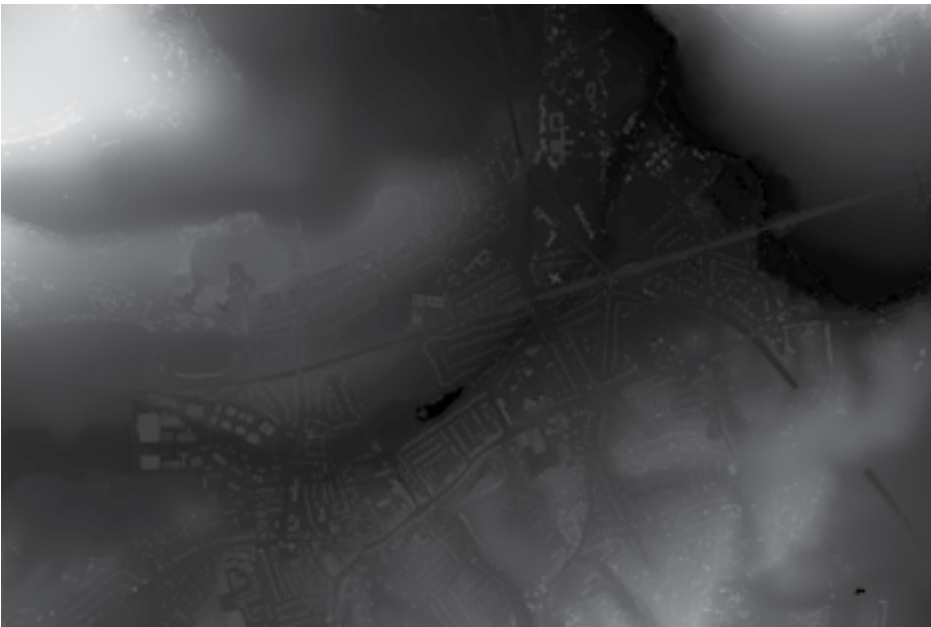
Distance from camera	Apparent shift
10m	5.7°
100m	0.57°
1,000m	0.057°
10,000m	0.006°

Cityscape also create 3D DSM (Digital Surface Model) models from publicly available data sources, such as Defra LiDAR scans from the Defra Data Services Platform. We always choose the newest data available at the highest possible resolution, typically at 1m resolution. The data is processed to coordinate onto Ordnance Survey National Grid (OSGB36), and converted to a Square Grid DSM. The square grid is then optimised into a TIN (Triangulated Irregular Network). The optimisation has been validated to produce no loss in usable information of the geometric mesh. This process follows the guidelines set out in ‘Guidance - Visual representation of wind farms - Feb 2017’¹¹.

DSM source is typically the Defra LiDAR Composite DSM, 2020, resolution 1m.

4.2 False origin

3D modelling programs, unlike CAD/BIM programs, have inherent inaccuracies the further an object is away from the origin. Cityscape decide on and record a local, ‘false origin’ that is used to move the model closer to the origin. This alleviates the inaccuracies. The 3D model of the proposed development, consented scheme models, and survey data are all moved uniformly to this new false origin. When performing positioning checks (see Section 5.2) the offset between false origin and OS are added back to the coordinates.



11: 1m resolution LiDAR GeoTIFF



12: Resulting 3D TIN mesh

5.0 Model positioning

Applies to Type 3 and Type 4 visualisation.

5.1 Model source

A wireframe 3D model of the proposed scheme if not provided is created by Cityscape from plans and elevations provided by the architects and from survey information of the ground levels on site and various other points on and around the site, such as the edge of adjacent roads and pavements etc. provided by the surveyor.

5.2 Proposed model position check

The architect supplies a 3D model in OS coordinates that can be used ‘as is’ for position checks as described below (utilising the false origin as described in Section 3.3). Alternatively, a non OS located model can be provided together with a floor plan that is positioned in an OS map. The model can then be positioned by way of setting it on the floor plan. Heights are either preserved from the original model if supplied in AOD, or taken from supplied elevations.

Once the model is positioned, confirmation of height and Easting/ Northing Coordinates is requested from the architect.

At least two clear reference points are agreed and used to confirm the placement of the model.



13: Proposed model position check

⁹ ‘TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp.11, Table2, pp 19-20.

¹⁰ ‘TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of development proposals.’ Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Accessed: March 2022).pp 56-57

¹¹ ‘Guidance - Visual representation of wind farms - Feb 2017’ Available at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2019-09/Guidance%20-%20Visual%20representation%20of%20wind%20farms%20-%20Feb%202017.pdf> (Accessed at March 2022). pp 8-9

6.0 Camera matching – Type 4 visualisations

6.1 Cityscape's database

Cityscape has built up a comprehensive database of survey information on buildings and locations in central London; the database contains both GNSS survey information and information regarding the dimensions and elevations of buildings gathered from architects and other sources.

The outlines of buildings are created by connecting the surveyed points or from the information obtained from architects' drawings of particular buildings. By way of example of the high level of detail and accuracy, approximately 300 points have been GNSS surveyed on the dome of St. Paul's.

The database 'view' (as shown in Figure 14) is 'verified' as each building is positioned using coordinates acquired from GNSS surveys. In many instances, the various coordinates of a particular building featured in one of the background plates are already held by Cityscape as part of their database of London. In such cases the survey information of buildings and locations provided by the surveyor (see Section 3.2 above) is used to cross-check and confirm the accuracy of these buildings. Where such information is not held by Cityscape, it is, where appropriate, used to add detail to Cityscape's database.

The survey information provided by the surveyor is in all cases used in the verification process of camera matching.

6.2 Camera matching process

The following information is required for the camera matching process:

- Specific details of the camera and lens used to take the photograph and therefore the field of view (see Section 1);
- The adjusted or corrected digital image i.e. the 'background plate' (see Section 2);
- The GNSS surveyed viewpoint coordinates (see Section 3.2);
- The GNSS surveyed coordinates of points within the background plate (see Section 3.2);
- Selected models from Cityscape's database (see Section 6.1);
- The GNSS surveyed coordinates of the site of the proposed scheme (see Section 3.2);

The data is combined in a 3D software package and is then used to situate Cityscape's virtual camera such that the 3D model aligns exactly over the background plate (as shown in Figures 15, 16 and 17) (i.e. a 'virtual viewer' within the 3D model would therefore be standing exactly on the same viewpoint from which the original photograph was taken (Figure 3). This is the camera matching process.



14: Selected GPS located models (yellow) from Cityscape's database, situated on Cityscape's London digital terrain model



15: The background plate matched in the 3D GPS located models



16: Background plate matched to the 3D GPS located models



17: The camera matched background plate with an example of a proposed scheme included in red

7.0 Camera matching – Type 3 visualisations

7.1 Cityscape's context models

Cityscape have purchased available 3D city models of large parts of London and other parts of the UK that are modelled to within 25cm accuracy. Where available this data is used to create camera matches for Type 3 visualisations, or additional data is purchased.

In addition, or where 3D city models are not available, DSM data is used for camera matching (see Section 4).

7.2 Camera matching process

The following information is required for the camera matching process:

- Specific details of the camera and lens used to take the photograph and therefore the field of view (see Section 1);
- The adjusted or corrected digital image i.e. the 'background plate' (see Section 2);
- 3D city model and/or DSM context model (see Section 4);
- Selected models from Cityscape's database (see Section 6.1);
- A 3D model of the proposed scheme (see Section 5)

The data is combined in a 3D software package and is then used to situate Cityscape's virtual camera such that the 3D model/DSM aligns exactly over the background plate (as shown in Figure 20) (i.e. a 'virtual viewer' within the 3D model would therefore be standing very close to the same viewpoint from which the original photograph was taken (Figure 3). This is the camera matching process.



18: Background plate: digital photograph, size and bank corrected as described in Section 2



20: Camera matching: the background plate matched in DSM TIN mesh



19: Render: DSM model render, camera matched

8.0 Rendering

8.1 Wireline image (AVR 0/1)

The proposed developments are shown using a constant thickness wireline. The line is generated from a computer rendering of the 3D model and follows an ‘inside stroke’ principle.

Rendering is a technical term referring to the process of creating a two dimensional output image from the 3D model. The ‘inside stroke’ principle is followed so that the outer edge of the line touches the outline of the render from the inside, fairly representing the maximum visibility.

The camera matching process is repeated for each view and a wireline image of the proposal from each viewpoint is then produced. The wireline image enables a quantitative analysis of the impact of the proposed scheme on views.

8.2 Rendered image (AVR 3)

In order to assist a more qualitative assessment of the proposals, the output image needs to be a photo-realistic reflection of what the proposed scheme would look like once constructed. This is called an AVR3.

8.3 Texturing

The process of transforming the wireframe 3D scheme model into one that can be used to create a photorealistic image is called texturing¹².

Prior to rendering, Cityscape requires details from the architect regarding the proposed materials (e.g. type of glass, steel, aluminium etc.) to be utilised.

Cityscape also use high resolution photographic imagery of real world material samples, supplied by the client or the manufacturer, to create accurate photorealistic textures for use in all our images. This information is used to produce the appearance and qualities in the image that most closely relates to the real materials to be used (as shown in Figure 21).

8.4 Lighting and sun direction

The next stage is to light the 3D model to match the photographic environment. The date, time of the photograph and the latitude and longitude of the city are input (see Figure 22) into the unbiased physically accurate render engine. Cityscape selects a ‘sky’ (e.g. clear blue, grey, overcast, varying cloud density, varying weather conditions) from the hundreds of ‘skies’ held within its database to resemble as closely as possible the sky in the background plate.

The 3D model of the proposed scheme is placed within the selected sky (see Figure 23) and using the material properties also entered, the computer calculates the effects of the sky conditions (including the sun) on the appearance of the proposed scheme.



21: Screenshot of some materials in the 3D rendering package.



22: Screenshot of environment information (time, date and year) entered to locate the sun correctly (see Section 7).



23: Example of a proposed scheme highlighted in red within the selected sky and rendered onto the background plate

¹² Texturing is often referred to as part of the rendering process, however, in the industry, it is a process that occurs prior to the rendering process.

9.0 Post production

9.1 Post production

Finally, the rendered image of the scheme model is inserted and positioned against the camera matched background plate.

Once in position, the rendered images are edited using Adobe Photoshop®. Masks are created in Photoshop where the line of sight to the rendered image of the proposed scheme is interrupted by foreground buildings (as shown in Figure 24).

The result is a verified image or view of the proposed scheme (as shown in Figure 25).

A similar process is followed for wireline (AVR1) images. The outline of the rendered model is traced with a constant thickness stroke which stays inside the massing of the rendered model. Additional lines are added using a narrower stroke to delineate significant stepping in the model’s topography, and to aid with the understanding of the wirelines in respect to the overall arrangement of massing of the proposed development.



24: Process red area highlights the Photoshop mask that hides the unseen portion of the render



25: A photo-realistic verified image



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