



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

HERITAGE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

JULY 2025



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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

# INTRODUCTION

1.1 Montagu Evans have been instructed by John Lewis Partnership BTR Ltd (hereby 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 at Former John Lewis Depot, Letcombe Street, Reading (also known as JLP Mill Lane) (the 'Site').

1.2 This BHTVIA will assess the Proposed Development and supersede the BHTVIA submitted to Reading Borough Council ('RBC,' 'the 'Council') in August 2024.

## THE SITE

1.3 The Site is located within the administrative boundary of Reading Borough Council (the 'Council'). It is located on the southern side of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR), a dual carriageway ring road that encircles the centre of Reading. It is also located to the south of the River Kennet, which runs parallel to the east-west orientated section of the IDR. To the immediate north, on the opposing side of the IDR, is the Oracle Shopping Centre and to the south is the mixed residential and commercial area comprising Townscape Character Area 20 'London Street' ("TCA20") as defined in Reading's Tall Building Study (2008) and subsequent update note (2018), in which the Site is located.

1.4 The Site is allocated under Adopted Local Plan Policy CR14g, together with land across the A329 occupied by the Oracle Shopping Centre. Specifically, the area at The Oracle between the River Kennet and Mill Lane is identified to accommodate the retail use, with the John Lewis Warehouse site identified for a public car park. The Site is subject to a draft allocation in the Local Plan Partial Update for residential development (Policy CR14r John Lewis Depot).

1.5 The Site does not comprise any listed buildings, nor is it located within a conservation area. It is bound to the east by the Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area, and within the wider setting of several listed buildings.

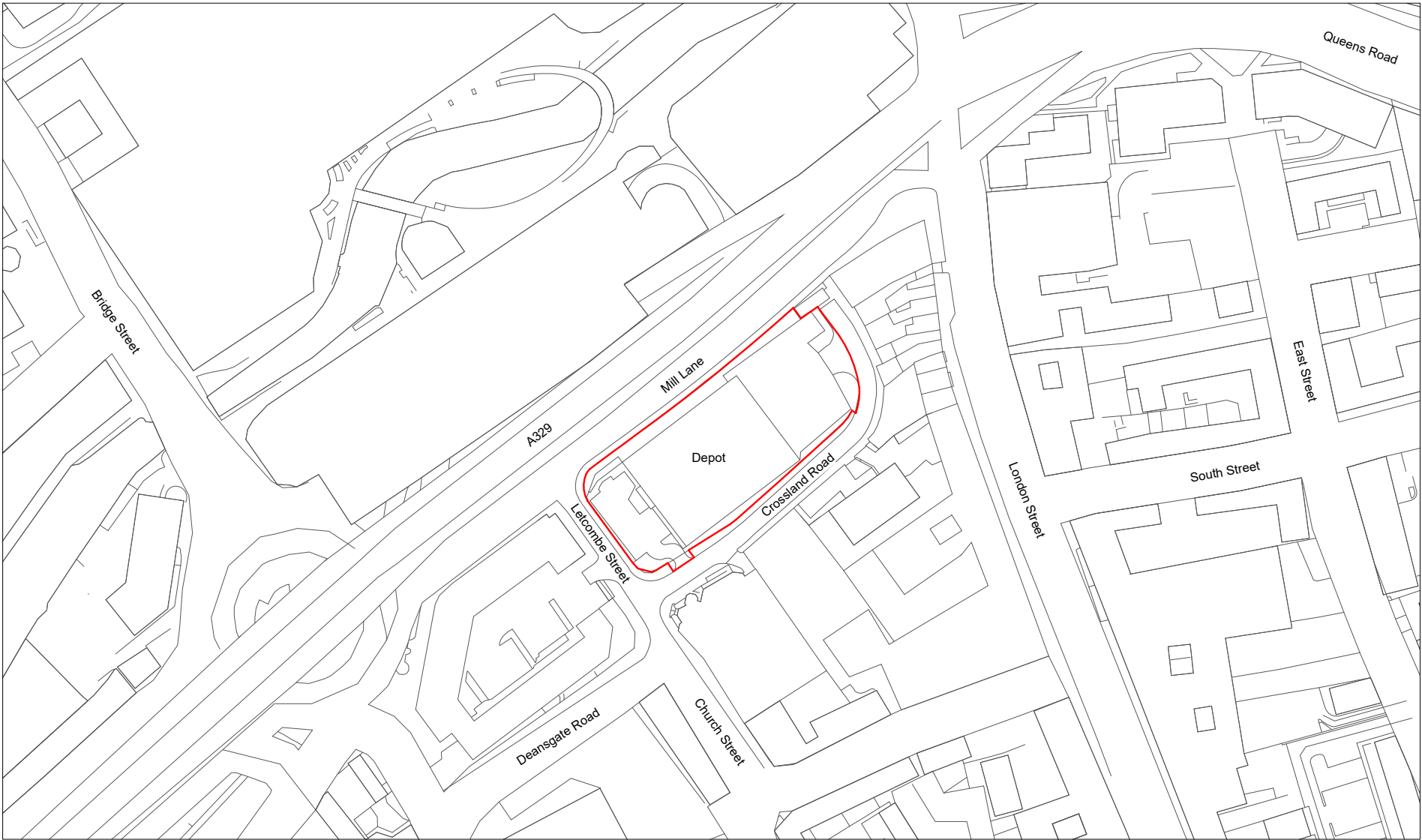


Figure 1.1 Site Plan

1.6 The Site is described in further detail in the Design and Access Statement (the 'DAS'), prepared by CJCT Studios. **Figure 1.1** outlines the boundary of the Site, whilst an aerial view of the Site from Google Earth is provided at **Figure 1.2**.



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



Figure 1.3 Current building on Site. Source: Google Street View October 2020.

PRE-APPLICATION AND POST-SUBMISSION ENGAGEMENT

- 1.7 The design of the Proposed Development evolved and was informed by pre-application discussions held with RBC via a Planning Performance Agreement dated August 2023.
- 1.8 Additional consultation was undertaken with Design South East, The Mid Thames Quakers and St Giles Church group, as well as members of the public via a public exhibition. The details of these discussions are outlined in **Table 8.1** of this report. This pre-application engagement between August 2023 and August 2024 informed the design of the submitted scheme.
- 1.9 Following the submission of the application in August 2024, there has been extensive post-submission engagement with RBC and other consultees, including the Reading Design Review Panel.
- 1.10 As a result of this engagement and further design development, the scheme design has been amended in the following ways:
  - 1.10.1 Reduction from 215 to 170 units;
  - 1.10.2 Changes to proposed height and massing, including – reduction along Mill Lane frontage from max. GF+10 storeys to max. GF+7 storeys, stepping down to GF+5 storeys along Crossland Road to the south and east towards the Conservation Area. Small ‘hib’ introduced at eastern end adjacent to Central Club;
  - 1.10.3 Updates to detailed elevation design, including – revisions relating to brickwork detailing, metal cladding, a stronger and well defined parapet line, introduction of Juliet balconies to part of Mill Lane frontage, and further articulation along frontage;
  - 1.10.4 Setting back building along Letcombe Street to introduce greening and setting back of ‘middle finger’ on Crossland Road to unify garden spaces;
  - 1.10.5 Introduction of 4 no. ground floor apartments with defensible space to Crossland Road;
  - 1.10.6 Updates to proposed unit mix;
  - 1.10.7 Internal changes to ground floor layout including relocation of flexible community space;
  - 1.10.8 Removal of bin chutes throughout;
  - 1.10.9 Removal of disabled car parking provision and on-street ‘essential use’ car parking spaces; and
  - 1.10.10 Increased greening and improved pedestrian footway arrangements to eastern side of Crossland Road.

- 1.11 Not all of the proposed design changes will be relevant to the consideration of the effects on heritage, townscape and visual receptors identified in this report. The elements of the design, primarily concerning the height, massing treatment, elevational design and landscaping will be commented on and assessed in detail at **Sections 9.0, 10.0 and 11.0** of this report.

THE PROPOSALS

- 1.12 A full description of the proposals and the supporting rationale/ design intent is provided within the design documentation prepared by Carey Jones Chapman Tolcher (CJCT).
- 1.13 The Proposed Development seeks to provide up to 170 build to rent residential dwellings (including affordable housing), in combination with flexible community space, residents facilities, landscaping, public realm, amenity space and associated cycle.
- 1.14 The proposed building is a maximum of eight storeys and has been designed with consideration to the surrounding heritage, townscape and visual sensitivities.
- 1.15 A full description of the Proposed Development, along with its potential impact on identified heritage, townscape, and visual sensitivities, is included at **Sections 9.0–11.0** of this report. The Description of Development is as follows:

*“Demolition of the existing building and redevelopment of the site comprising erection of a new building for up to 170 build to rent residential dwellings (Use Class C3) together with flexible community space (Use Class F1/F2), residents’ facilities, landscaping, public realm, amenity space and cycle parking..”*

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.16 This BHTVIA considered the Proposed Development in relation to its heritage, townscape and visual context.
- 1.17 The (built) heritage assessment will consider the significance of heritage assets and the impact of the Proposed Development upon that significance. The Site does not contain any heritage assets, although there are heritage assets in the wider area and the BHTVIA assesses the potential of the Proposed Development to impact their setting.
- 1.18 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.
- 1.19 The visual assessment will consider the impact of the Proposed Development upon visual receptors. The assessment relates to how people will be affected by changes in views and visual amenity at different places, including publicly accessible locations. 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.
- 1.20 The assessment as a whole is informed by visual tools, including a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) 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.
- 1.21 The assessment is informed by 15 AVRs. The location of the viewpoints has been informed by architectural and historic accounts of the area, an appraisal of the existing Site and surroundings, relevant policy designations and through engagement with RBC Officers. Viewpoint locations are identified at **Figure 7.1** within **Section 7.0**.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- 1.22
- This report has found that the Proposed Development would improve the appearance, character and function of the Site, introducing a new residential use which seeks to revitalise the streetscape and surrounding area, in line with the policy aspirations for this part of Reading.
- 1.23
- We find that the Proposed Development is in full compliance with the policies set out in the adopted Development plan concerning the historic building environment and townscape/visual considerations.
- 1.24
- In this report, we have set out the likely effects arising on the identified heritage assets, townscape receptors and visual receptors.

STRUCTURE OF THE BHTVIA

- 1.25
- 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**;
  - A summary of pre-application engagement and subsequent design changes is included at **Section 8.0**;
  - **Section 9.0** 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 10.0**;
  - An assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on visual receptors is provided at **Section 11.0**; and
  - The BHTVIA is concluded at **Section 12.0**.



# 2.0 METHODOLOGY

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

# METHODOLOGY

2.1 This section describes the assessment framework for the heritage, townscape and visual assessment. The method for each discipline is the product of legislation, policy and best practice guidance, set out in detail in **Section 3.0**.

## STUDY AREA

- 2.2 Owing to the nature of the proposals, we have identified a study area which comprises:
- Designated Heritage Assets within a 500m radius of the Site, including:
    - Listed Buildings;
    - Conservation Areas;
    - Registered Parks and Gardens; and
    - Scheduled Monuments.
  - Non-designated Heritage Assets within a 250m radius of the Site, including:
    - Locally Listed Buildings (as identified on the Councils Local List); and
    - Buildings of Townscape Merit (as identified within CA appraisals).
- 2.3 Site observations, a manual desk-based review of OS maps, characterisation studies and relevant heritage receptors were used to determine the study area. The study area has been informed by building locations and heights, topography and townscape features, and an understanding of the scale and nature of the development proposals.
- 2.4 Viewpoint locations are identified in **Section 7.0** of this report. The location of viewpoints has been based on the following:
- An initial study undertaken by the architects, CJCT Studios;
  - View locations identified in local planning guidance documents published by Reading Borough Council;
  - The location of significant listed buildings (including the grade II Church of St Giles and the grade II Quaker Meeting House);
  - General townscape considerations;
  - Three separate site visits.
- 2.5 The locations of the identified viewpoints were subsequently agreed with the Council during pre-application and post-submission discussions.



**Figure 2.1** ZTV of the Proposed Development prepared by Montagu Evans.

## SITE VISIT

- 2.6 Site surveys of the baseline situation were undertaken by Montagu Evans during October 2023, to understand the immediate context of the Site and to identify the heritage baseline, townscape character and viewpoint location. In the preparation of this addendum, the 2023 surveys were reviewed in order to confirm that there have been no material changes to the baseline condition.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS FRAMEWORK

HERITAGE

- 2.7
- 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 BHTVIA, built heritage receptors do not include archaeological remains.
- 2.8
- Paragraph 207 of the NPPF (2024) 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.*
- 2.9
- ‘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.*
- 2.10
- This is reaffirmed by Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision–Taking in the Historic Environment (2015).
- 2.11
- It is commonly agreed that Grade I and II\* buildings are of “exceptional” and “particularly important” interest; therefore these are generally afforded a higher heritage value. This differentiation is best summarised by the drafting of paragraph 207 of the NPPF, which states that the “level of detail (to describe the significance of heritage assets) should be proportionate to the assets’ importance”; thus, a grading is appropriate. We have given due and proportionate regard to all heritage assets assessed.

- 2.12
- 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 Annex 2: Glossary 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.*
- 2.13
- 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”).
- 2.14
- 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
- 2.15
- Part e is incumbent on the decision maker, through the provision of conditions.

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL

- 2.16
- 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

- 2.17
- 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**.
- 2.18
- 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.

2.19      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;<br>Widespread use of quality materials;<br>Very strong urban structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of built form and open space;<br>Appropriate management for land use;<br>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;<br>Evident use of quality materials;<br>Strong urban structure, characteristic patterns and balanced combination of built form and open space;<br>Appropriate management for land use with limited scope to improve;<br>Limited detracting features.                    | National or regional designation, and/or designated heritage receptors                                                                        |
| Medium                   | Regional / Local            | Attractive townscape with occasional distinctive features;<br>Recognisable urban structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of built form and open space;<br>Scope to improve management for land use;<br>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;<br>Distinguishable urban structure, characteristic patterns and combinations of built form and open space, although often fragmented;<br>Scope to improve management or land use;<br>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;<br>Weak or degraded urban structure, characteristic patterns and combination of built form and open space;<br>Lack of management has resulted in degradation;<br>Frequent dominant detracting features;<br>Disturbed or derelict land requires treatment.                                           | Heavily degraded townscape and/or identified for change.                                                                                      |

Table 2.1      Townscape Receptor Value Criteria

VISUAL AMENITY VALUE

- 2.20
- 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.
- 2.21
- 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.
- 2.22
- Representative viewpoints are identified based on a comprehensive review of the surrounding area, including the following criteria:

- Heritage assets (designated and non-designated);
  - 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.
- 2.23
- The identification of viewpoints also considers any strategic or local viewpoints identified by the local planning authorities or other relevant bodies.
- 2.24
- Each viewpoint is reproduced at **Appendix 2** in the following formats:

- Existing** – baseline photography;
  - Proposed** – ‘existing’ plus wire line (AVR1) or render (AVR3) of the Proposed Development;
  - Cumulative** – ‘proposed’ plus relevant consents surrounding the Site.

- 2.25
- The methodology for the compilation of AVRs prepared by Cityscape is provided at **Appendix 3**. The objective of a photomontage is to simulate the likely visual changes that would result from a proposed development, and to produce printed images of a size and resolution sufficient to match the perspective in the same view in the field.
- 2.26
- Accurate visual representation is two-dimensional and cannot capture the complexity of the visual experience. It is an approximation of the three-dimensional visual experience the observer would receive on site. Neither do they capture transient significant effects arising from noise or traffic on perception, or that wider range of expectations and associations that anyone in an urban scene may have. A visit to the location from which the photographs were taken is strongly encouraged to appreciate and understand the visual impact.
- 2.27
- 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.” Changes in amenity are typically assessed through changes to what people see and perceive, and the shorthand for this are ‘views’ and ‘visual impact’.
- 2.28
- 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

TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL SUSCEPTIBILITY

- 2.29      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**.
- TOWNSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY**
- 2.30      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.
- 2.31      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."*
- 2.32      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.
- 2.33      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 / 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

- 2.34      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.
- 2.35      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.
- 2.36      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

- 2.37      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

2.38 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

2.39 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**). It is generally considered that moderate to major effects are considered ‘significant’. 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

2.40 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

2.41 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

2.42 The map at **Figure 2.2** shows the Cumulative Scheme assessed as part of this BHTVIA, which is also listed below. Consented schemes (those schemes with an extant consent as well as those applications yet to be determined) have been considered within the cumulative assessment.

- Central Club, 36–42 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SQ (planning application ref. 221364). Planning permission was granted for this application in October 2024.

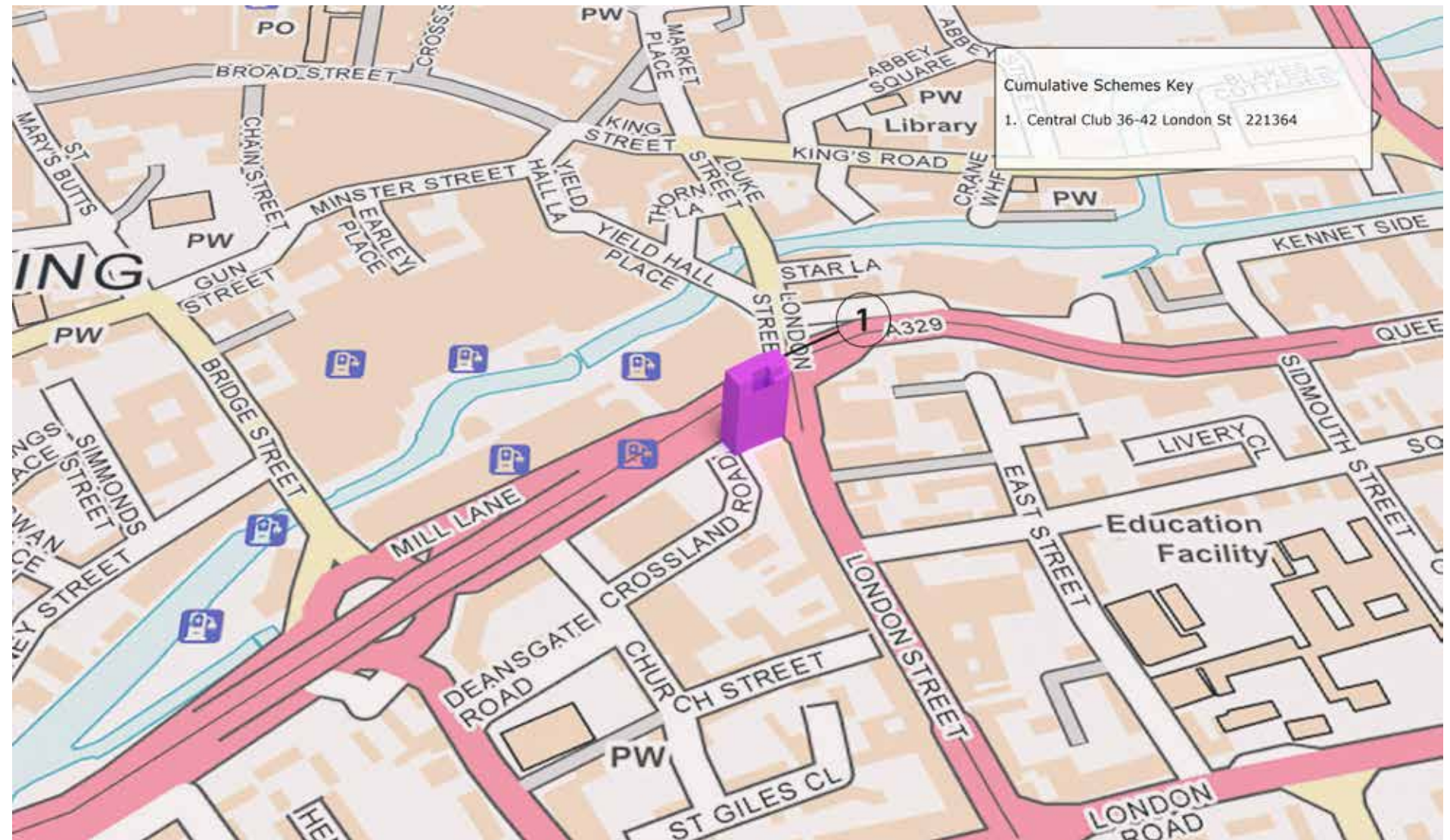


**Figure 2.2** Map of Cumulative Schemes. Source: Cityscape

## HERITAGE

- 2.43Paragraph 36 of GPA3 states:  
*Cumulative assessment is required under the EU Directive on EIA. 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.*
- 2.44The 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.
- 2.45GPA3 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.*
- 2.46Paragraph 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.*

- 2.47GPA3 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

- 2.48GLVIA3 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*
- 2.49The second approach is to focus:  
*on the combined effects of all the past, present and future proposals together with the new project*
- 2.50This 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 POLICY CONTEXT**

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

# LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 This section sets out the planning policy context for the redevelopment of the Site, including national and local guidance.

LEGISLATION

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS ACT) 1990

3.2 The Site does not comprise any statutorily listed buildings and nor is it located in a conservation area.

3.3 The Site is, however, located adjacent to the Market Place and London Street Conservation Area.

3.4 There are statutorily listed buildings which have been identified in the study area which may experience a change to their heritage value as a result of the Proposed Development changing their setting. The relevant statutory provisions are set out below.

3.5 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 the building or its setting or any features of special architectural and historical interest which it possesses.*

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.6 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 stipulates that where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with that plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

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

| DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY   | KEY PROVISIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reading Local Plan (2019) | <p><b>Policy CC7:</b> Design and the Public Realm</p> <p><b>Policy EN1:</b> Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment</p> <p><b>Policy EN3:</b> Enhancement of Conservation Areas</p> <p><b>Policy EN4:</b> Locally Important Heritage Assets</p> <p><b>Policy EN5:</b> Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest</p> <p><b>Policy EN6:</b> New Development in a Historic Context</p> <p><b>Policy CR10:</b> Tall Buildings</p> <p><b>Policy CR14g: Other sites for development in Central Reading:</b> The Oracle Extension, Bridge Street and Letcombe Street</p> |

Table 3.1 Development Plan Policy Relevant to BHTVIA

NATIONAL POLICY

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

| DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY                        | KEY PROVISIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 | <p>Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed and beautiful places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Paragraph 131</li><li>Paragraph 135</li><li>Paragraph 139</li></ul> <p>Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Paragraph 207</li><li>Paragraph 210</li><li>Paragraph 212</li><li>Paragraphs 213–216</li><li>Paragraph 217</li><li>Paragraph 218</li><li>Paragraph 219</li></ul> |

Table 3.2 National Planning Policy Relevant to BHTVIA

- 3.9 As it relates to decision making in the historic environment, the NPPF can be expressed as a series of principles:
- The significance of any designated heritage asset affected by a proposal should be identified and assessed (NPPF paragraph 207). Heritage interest – or significance – may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic (Glossary to the NPPF). The setting of a heritage asset may contribute to that significance or an appreciation thereof. Hence a change to setting can harm significance;
  - The impact of the proposed development on the significance of the identified asset is then to be considered;
  - If the proposed development is held to cause harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, such harm should be categorised as either less than substantial or substantial (NPPF paragraphs 215 and 214 respectively), and within each category the extent of harm should be clearly articulated (Planning Practice Guidance or ‘PPG’ paragraph 18). The nature and extent of harm is important to ascertain because that analysis informs the balancing out of any harm under the terms of paragraph 215.
  - Underpinning this approach is the principle of proportionality. Whilst any harm to a designated asset is ‘weighted harm’, it is important for the decision maker to assess the extent, nature or degree of harm in order to undertake a balancing exercise;
  - In either case, if a proposal would result in harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (NPPF paragraph 212), meaning the avoidance of harm and the delivery of enhancement where appropriate. Notwithstanding the ‘great weight’ provision, it would be unreasonable for an impact that is minor in nature or limited to lead to a refusal of permission. What matters, then, is the nature and extent of any harmful impact. Benefits to heritage assets likewise attract great weight in the planning balance;
  - Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require ‘clear and convincing justification’, as per NPPF paragraph 213. A clear and convincing justification does not create a freestanding test requiring the demonstration of less damaging alternatives. To the extent that there is a test it is to be found in NPPF paragraphs 214 (in the case of substantial harm) and 215 (in the case of less than substantial harm); and

- In either case, and particularly looking at less than substantial harm, the clear and convincing justification the Framework requires is thus made out through no more than the countervailing public benefits delivered by a proposal. Public benefits can include heritage benefits and can also include benefits to the way an area appears or functions or land use planning benefits.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.10
- 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
  - Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
  - Reading Borough Council Proposals Map (Adopted 2019)
  - City Centre Framework SPD (2008)
  - Significant Views with Heritage Interest assessment (2018)
  - Tall Buildings Strategy (2008)
  - Reading Tall Buildings Strategy Update Note (2018)
  - Reading's Historic Area Assessment (2023)
  - Reading Local Plan Partial Update Submission Draft (May 2025)

BUILT HERITAGE

- 3.11
- The Proposed Development comprises the redevelopment of the Site which lies adjacently to the west of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. The Proposed Development also has the potential to affect the contribution that setting makes to the significance of heritage assets located within close proximity to the Site, including St Giles Church, the Quaker Meeting House and a number of listing buildings along London Street. Consequently, a number of local plan policies pertinent to heritage are relevant to the Proposed Development.
- 3.12
- RBC Local Plan Policy EN1 states that:

*“All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.”*
- 3.13
- The Site is located outside of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, to its west. Policy EN3 does not specifically address development in the setting of conservation areas but states that ‘the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be preserved and enhanced’. The policy states that ‘positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.’ This can include improvements to public realm and green spaces, sympathetic landscaping and planting, improving signage and street furniture, and appropriate paving, railings or walls.
- 3.14
- Policy EN4 of Reading’s Local Plan, in reference to non-designated heritage asset, states that:

*“Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.”*

- 3.15
- In regards to local views, Policy EN5 states that:

*“New development should not harm and where possible should make a positive contribution to views of acknowledged historical significance.”*

1. *The Site is not visible in any of the protected significant views with heritage interest identified in Policy EN5. We note that there is an identified view looking north along Southampton Street, from Whitley Street towards St Giles Church, St Mary’s Church and Greyfriars Church.*
- 3.16
- Policy EN6 of Reading’s Local Plan, in reference to new development within a historic context:

*“In areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:*

*b. The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);*

*c. Sensitivity to historic context;*

*d. Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);*

*e. Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance.”*

**OTHER SITE DESIGNATIONS**

- 3.17      The Site is located outside of the three identified areas suitable for tall building clusters in the borough.
- 3.18      Local Plan Policy CR10 Tall Buildings defines tall buildings as those equivalent to 12 residential storeys or 36m AOD. The Proposed Development comprises the introduction of a three-fingered residential block of up to eight storeys, and therefore, is not considered to be a tall building as per Local Plan Policy CR10.
- 3.19      The Site is currently allocated under Local Plan Policy CR14g, together with land across the A329 occupied by the Oracle Shopping Centre. Specifically, the area at The Oracle between the River Kennet and Mill Lane is identified to accommodate the retail use, with the John Lewis Warehouse site identified for a public car park.

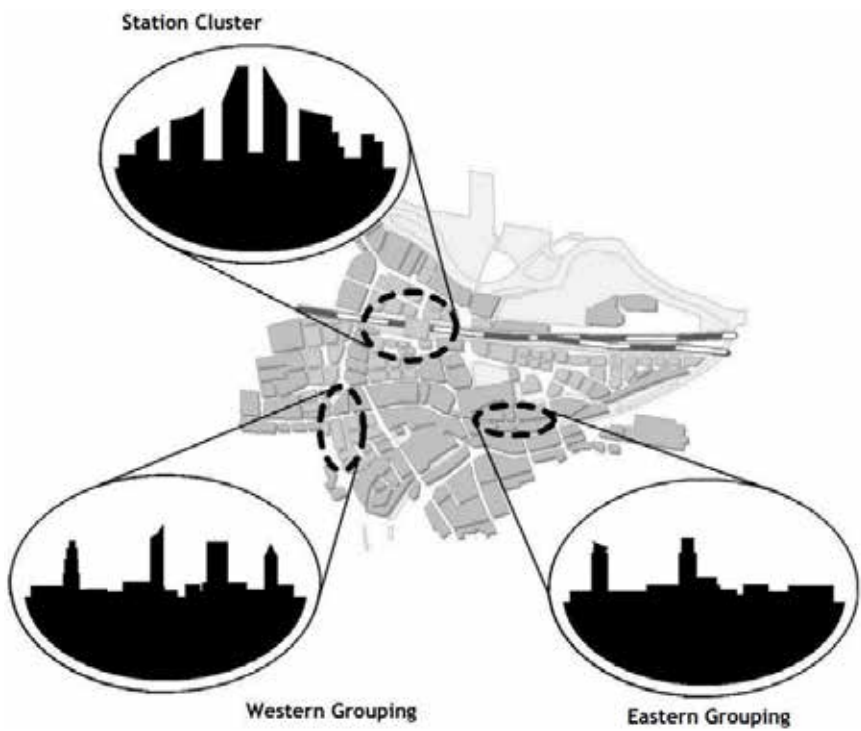


**Figure 3.1**      Preferred locations for tall buildings. Source: Reading Local Plan (2019).

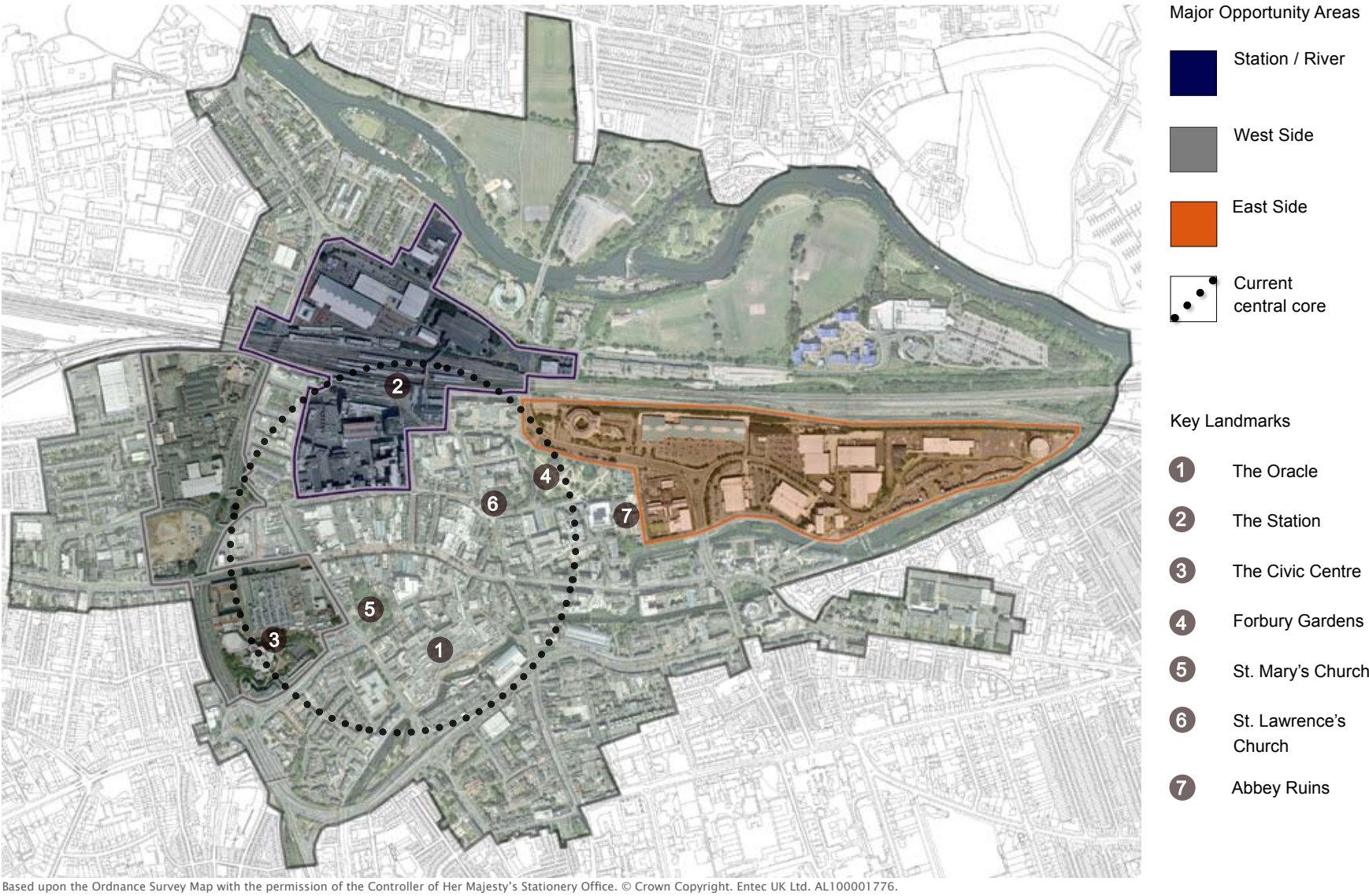


**Figure 3.2**      Map showing the Central Core, Wider Central Area (including the Site) and Major Opportunity Areas. Source: City Centre Framework SPD (2008).

- 3.20      The Site is not located within any of the major opportunity areas but is located within the wider central area of Reading (as per the plan at **Figure 3.2**). Reading Borough Council continue to promote residential housing development on suitable brownfield sites within the wider central area, which includes a balanced and integrated mix of size and tenure.

### EMERGING LOCAL PLAN

- 3.21

The Council agreed in March 2023 to undertake a partial review of its adopted Local Plan (2019), following the publication of the NPPF 2021 (now 2024).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.
- 3.22

The Council’s review of the adopted Local Plan identified that the site allocation (Policy CR14g) relating to the Site is ‘unlikely to be deliverable’ and ‘requires review’. The ‘Review of the Reading Borough Local Plan’ (dated March 2023) stated: *“it is likely that landowner intentions have changed regarding CR14g, the Oracle extension, as evidenced by recent applications for the centre, and is no longer expected to entail a retail extension in this location. This allocation is therefore unlikely to be deliverable and requires review.”*
- 3.23

The Local Plan Partial Update Submission Draft was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in May 2025.
- 3.24

The Submission Draft includes the Site in a new site allocation under Policy CR14r John Lewis Depot, Mill Lane.
- 3.25

The site allocation identifies the Site for residential development and provides the following guidelines for development:

▪ *‘Avoid harm to the setting of listed buildings and the Conservation Area;*

▪ *Take account of potential archaeological significance;*

▪ *Address noise impacts on residential use;*

▪ *Address air quality impacts on residential use; and*

▪ *Address any contamination on site.’*

3.26

At this stage, the draft carries some weight though it is noted that the draft allocation is supportive of the Proposed Development in identifying the suitability of the Site for residential development of increased density.

3.27

The draft includes amendments to some of the policies outlined earlier in this section, including Policy EN1, EN4 and CR10. The amendments made to these policies are not material to this application.
- (BUILT) HERITAGE, TOWNSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT REPORT | JULY 2025



**4.0**

# **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

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

# HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1
- This section of the report provides a description of the historic development of the Site and that of the surrounding area.
- 4.2
- The following paragraphs, have been informed by secondary sources, including:
  - London Street/Market Place Conservation Area Appraisal (2007), Reading Borough Council
  - A History of the County of Berkshire (1923), British History Online
  - Berkshire History Online
  - The Buildings of England: Berkshire (2010), Bradley, Pevsner and Tyack

## HISTORY OF MILL LANE, READING

- 4.3
- The map at **Figure 4.1** was produced in 1611 and illustrates how in the 17th century the settlement of Reading comprised a historic core, which developed between the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin and the Abbey, and ribbon development to the south. By this time, development to the south was well established along ‘Schomakers Row’, ‘Ort Lane’, ‘Sivier Street’ and ‘St Giles Street’. The long existence of this development is exemplified by the presence of the 13th century Church of St Giles. These streets, known in modern times as London Street, Crown Street, Silver Street and Southampton Street, formed an extension to the historic core, separated by the River Kennet.
- 4.4
- The River Kennet has several natural and man-made tributaries running through the centre of the town. The first river crossing in Reading was at Bridge Street, which was known historically as Seven Bridges, owing to the series of seven bridges crossing different tributaries of the River Kennet on the road from the south.
- 4.5
- Before the founding of the Abbey to the north-east of the town, the settlement developed around the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin. The market was held in front of the church on St Mary Butts and the road from London lead over the Seven Bridges. This road is now known as Southampton Street and Bridge Street. After the foundation of the Abbey in 1121, the town market was held in the north-east of the town and the development of the town gradually realigned with the new market.

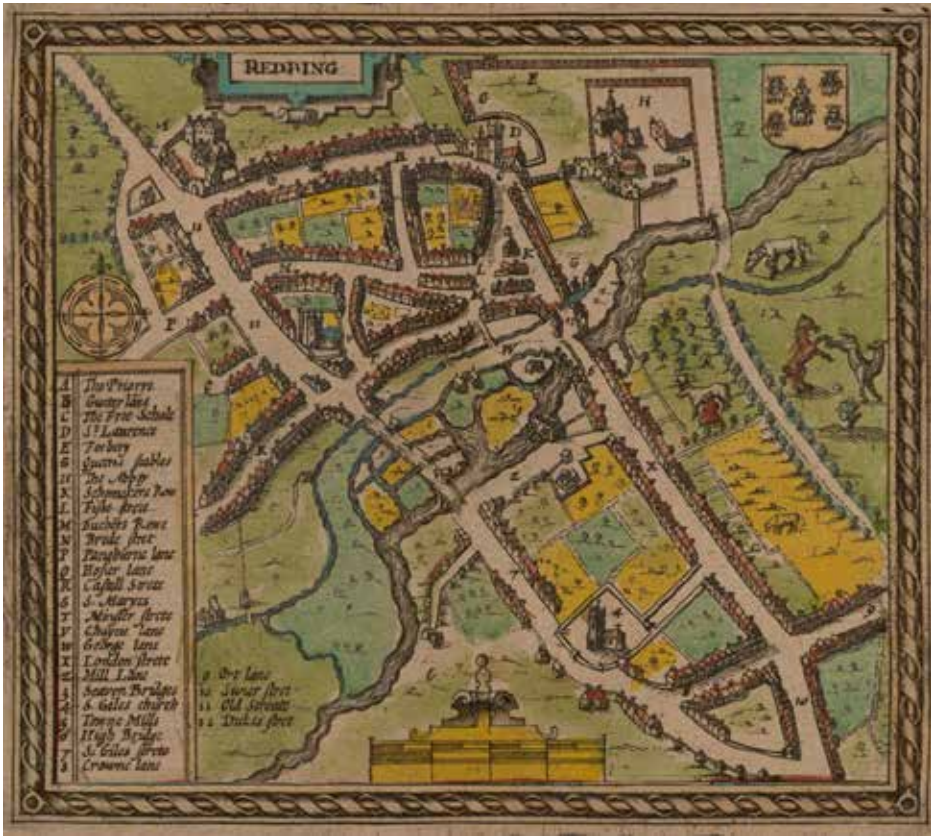


Figure 4.1 Map of Reading, 1611 (Berkshire History)

- 4.6
- Trade entering from the south thereafter used a river crossing at High Bridge to the north of Schomakers Row. This shift in development is illustrated by the 1611 map, which shows that after 1121, Schomaker Row (London Street) in the east became more densely developed than the older St Giles Street (Southampton Street) in the west. **Figure 4.1** illustrates that London Street has been densely developed since at least the 17th century. The nature of this ribbon development was continuous terraced townhouses with narrow street frontages and a fine urban grain. During the 18th and 19th centuries earlier, timber framed buildings were either rebuilt or refaced in line with new building fashions in a neo-classical Georgian style.
- 4.7
- The development of Mill Lane was shaped by the industrialisation of Reading. Water powered mills existed in Reading on the banks of the River Kennet from at least the 11th century. In the east of the town, the Abbey operated mills utilising hydropower from a channel of the Kennet known as the Holy Brook. Another collection of mills existed at the centre of town, these were identified in the Domesday Book and are illustrated in **Figure 4.1**. The “town mill”, known as St Giles Mill, was located on south bank of the Kennet, on Mill Lane. Both the town mill and Mill Lane are identified on the 1611 map.

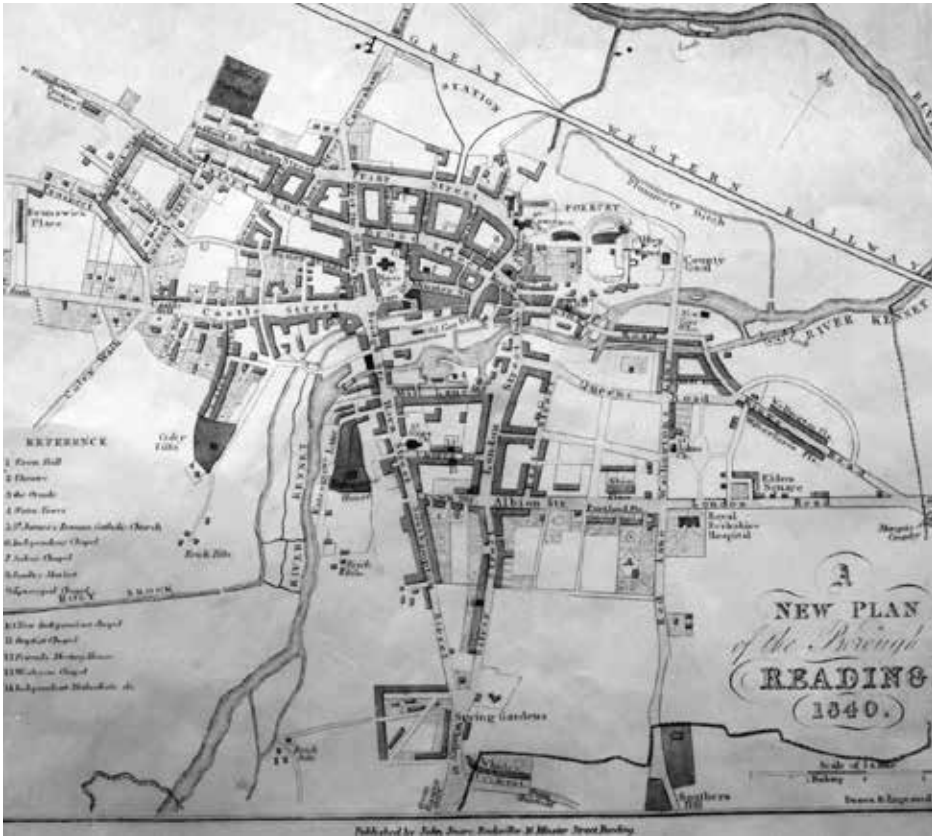


Figure 4.2 Map of Reading, 1840 (source: Berkshire Record Office)

- 4.8
- The industrial character of the waterways and the land to the north and south developed further in the 18th and 19th centuries, with industries such as brewing, gas manufacture, and foundries setting up on the banks of the Kennet. Though the development of these and other industries, the land to the south of Gun Street and Minster Street, and north of Mill Lane developed a distinct industrial character.
- 4.9
- The development of industry in this location was encouraged by the canalisation of the river between 1715 and 1723, which created the Kennet Navigation, and the opening of the 87-mile Kennet & Avon Canal in 1801. Industry and trade in Reading were encouraged more widely by the laying of turnpike roads in the 18th century and the opening of the Great Western Railway in 1841, followed by the South Eastern Railway and South Western Railway, in 1849 and 1856 respectively.
- 4.10
- The 1879 OS Map illustrates the industrial character of the waterways and surrounding area. As Reading developed in the 17th to 19th century, tributaries of the River Kennet, including the Holy Brook, were culverted throughout the centre and built on, reducing the open water and marshland character of the medieval settlement.



Figure 4.3 OS Map of Reading, 1879 (source: National Library of Scotland)

- 4.11 South Reading remained a rural agricultural settlement until the end of the 18th century, illustrated by the 1840 map at **Figure 4.2**. In the mid to late-19th century the population of town grew rapidly, and large suburbs of residential streets were laid particularly in the west and east of Reading. To the south of the River Kennet, development focused first on open land to the east of London Street and later to the west of Southampton Street.
- 4.12 In the 19th century, Mill Lane had a character of terraced dwellings, presumably workers cottages, and industrial buildings. The Goad Insurance Plan indicates that in 1895, the approximate location of the Site was predominantly occupied by the factory and warehouse of cloth manufacturers T. Cook Junior & Sons. To the east and west of the factory were brick terraced dwellings, and a corn store associated with the town mill to the north. During the 19th century, land to the south of Mill Lane appears to have been occupied by the local militia.
- 4.13 In the early 20th century, St Giles Mill and the water works were demolished on the north side of Mill Lane, and the mill stream covered to construct a large tram depot. **Figure 4.6** shows London Street in the foreground, the River Kennet to the right, the tram depot in the centre and the Site on the south side of Mill Lane to the left.

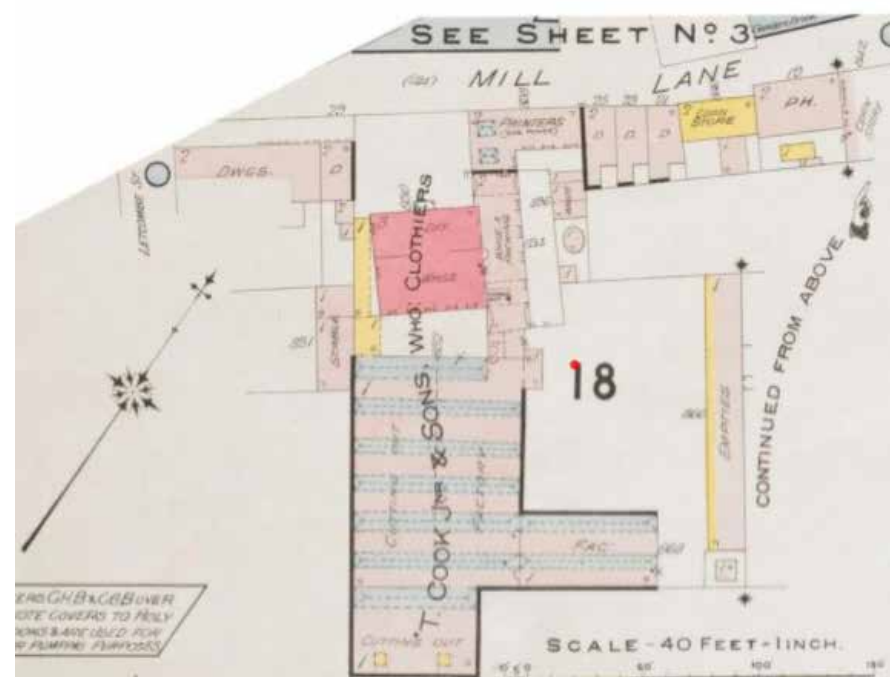


Figure 4.4 Goad Insurance Plan of Site, 1895 (source: British Library)



Figure 4.5 Mill Lane from the west, 1895 (source: Mills Archive)



Figure 4.6 Mill Lane from the east, 1932 (source: Historic England)

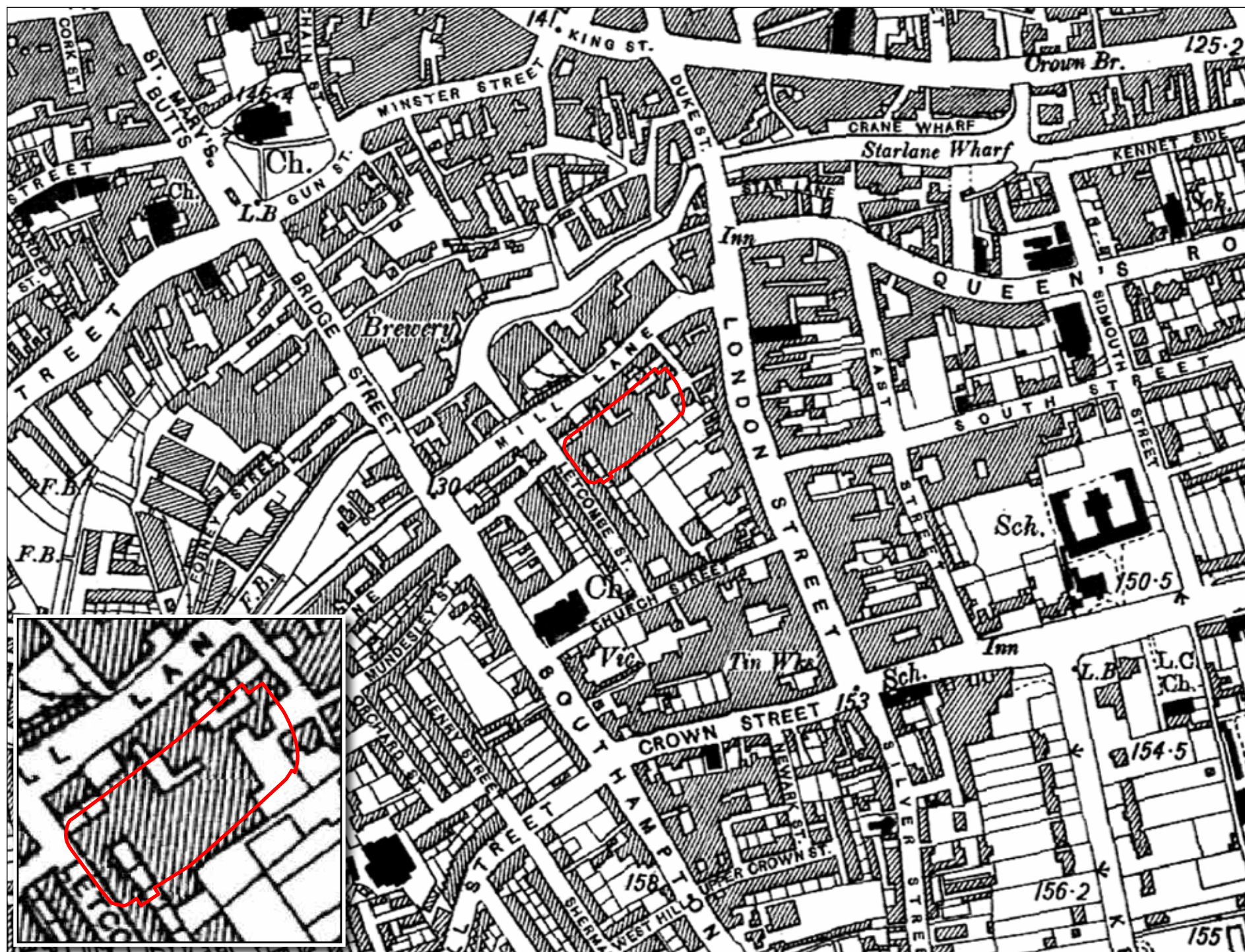


Figure 4.7 OS Map, 1933 (source: Pro Map)

4.14 The industrial character of the River Kennet and its north and south banks remained until the second half of the 20th century. **Figures 4.8 and 4.9** show the large scale industrial complexes on the banks of the river and how the boundaries of this industrial seam at the centre of the town were bound by the fine grain of historic thoroughfares.



**Figure 4.8** Aerial photograph of the River Kennet and industrial complexes to the north and south, 1944 (source: Historic England)



**Figure 4.9** Industrial landscape of the River Kennet at the centre of Reading, 1947 (source: Historic England)

- 4.15 A factory remained on the Site, until Mill Lane was widened during the construction of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR). At this time, Mill Lane and the buildings to the south were demolished, including the factory and neighbouring terraces. The dual carriage IDR was built between 1969 and 1989 as a radical solution to vehicular congestion in the town centre. Several central Reading neighbourhoods and industrial sites were cleared during the construction of the ring road system in west and south Reading. The construction of the IDR on Mill Lane is shown in the OS Maps from 1973 and 1990 at **Figures 4.10 and 4.11**.



**Figure 4.10** OS Map, 1973 (source: ProMap)



HISTORY OF JOHN LEWIS IN READING

- 4.17

In 1854, John Heelas and his sons opened a drapery shop at No. 33 Minster Street, Reading. Within 12 years, Heelas had expanded to occupy the neighbouring property at No. 31 Minster Street and the former Methodist chapel to the rear of Minster Street. With the acquisition of more space, Heelas expanded from fabrics into carpets and cabinet making. In 1870, Heelas purchased the inn at No. 111 Broad Street and joined the premises at the rear, creating an arcade through the urban block, from Minster Street in the south to Broad Street in the north.
- 4.18

Between 1870 and 1909, the business continued to expand, amalgamating with neighbouring properties on both Minster Street and Broad Street to form a large and complex site of showrooms and workshops associated with the in-house manufacture and selling of drapery, soft furnishings and furniture. Through continuous alteration and expansion, the commercial focus of the site moved to Broad Street and the original drapers shop on Minster Street was eventually redeveloped.
- 4.19

The Goad Insurance Plan of 1895 at **Figure 4.12** shows the configuration of the various warehouses, workshops, dispatch rooms and showrooms.
- 4.20

In 1909, the Broad Street frontage was rebuilt to designs by Frederick William Albury and their prominence on Broad Street was emphasised by three storey and 15 bay terracotta façade and bronze shop front. By this time Heelas employed up to 400 people in Reading in the manufacture and sale of a multitude of interior furnishings.
- 4.21

After the death of the Heelas sons in 1910, the family continued to run the business until it was sold in 1947. John Lewis had made a bid for Heelas in 1937; however, it wasn't until 1953 that they acquired it. Between 1975 and 1985, the Minster Street premises were demolished and rebuilt in a radical new style to designs by RD Cook Partnership and Sir Hugh Casson, known for his work as director of architecture for the Festival of Britain in 1951. Heelas maintained its original name until 2001 when it rebranded as John Lewis.



Figure 4.12 Goad Insurance Plan of Heelas, 1895 (source: British Library)



Figure 4.13 Heelas, circa. 1930 (source: John Lewis Memory Store)

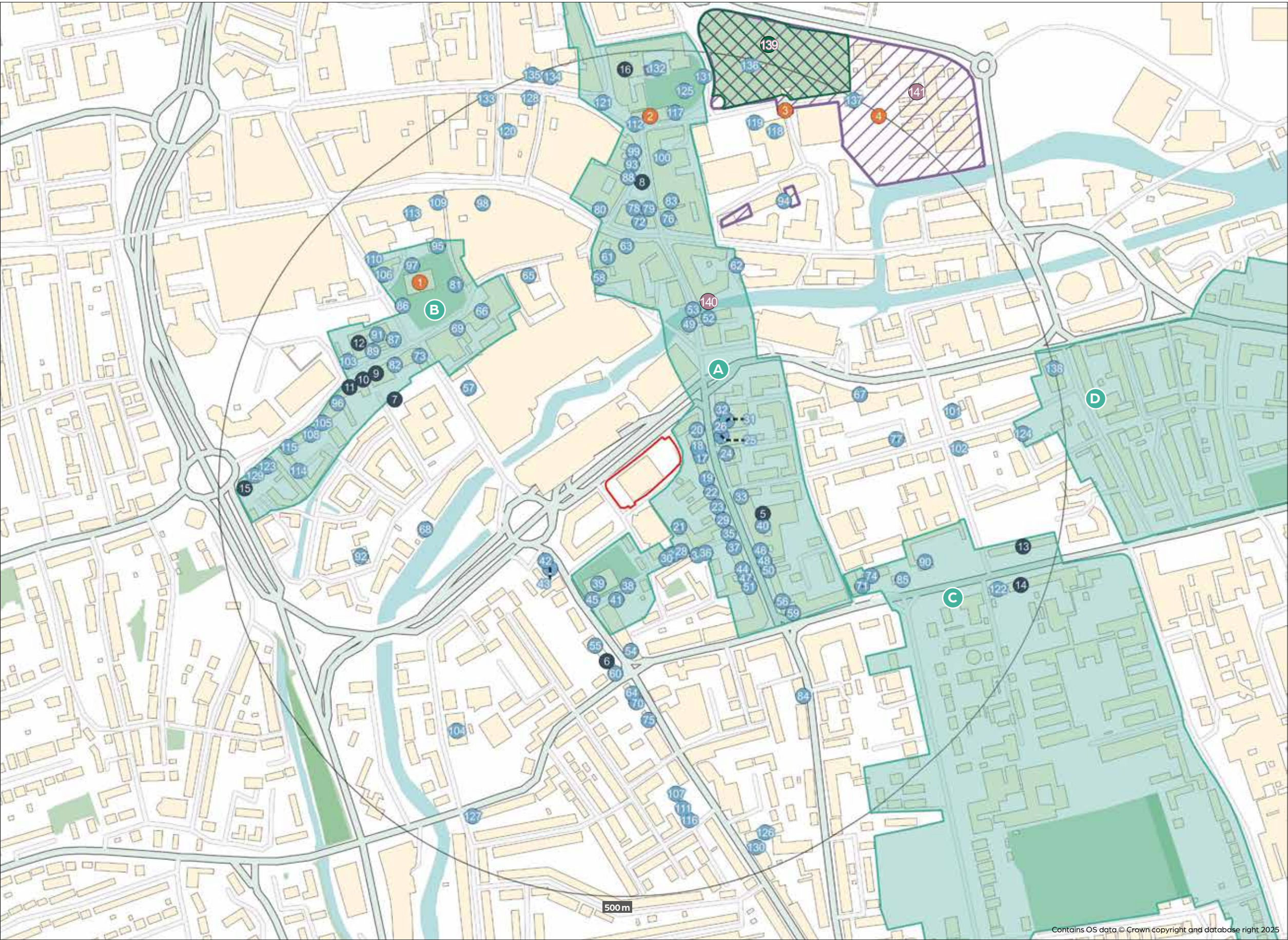
**5.0**

# **BASELINE: HERITAGE**

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

# BASELINE: HERITAGE

- 5.1     This section identifies the value of heritage receptors in the baseline that may be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 5.2     The Heritage Asset Plan at **Figure 5.1** identifies 141 designated heritage assets (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens) within the identified 500m study area. There are no World Heritage Sites within the study area.
- 5.3     In the context of the definition of setting offered in the NPPF Annex 2: Glossary, (which advises this is ‘surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced’), this defines the setting of heritage assets in very broad terms. Indeed, such a broad scope means than many development proposals may be held to come within the setting of a heritage asset. However, aside from some generic inter-visibility, a great number of such proposals could not reasonably be held to engage with or alter the setting of heritage assets in a material way.
- 5.4     The ZTV was used to identify if there were any heritage receptors which could be scoped out from assessment within the HTVIA, owing to a lack of intervisibility with the Proposed Development, or where there would be no change to their setting or special interest by any other means, including historical associations. **Figure 5.2** shows the Heritage Asset Plan overlaid with the ZTV. **Table 5.1** identifies the heritage assets which have been scoped in for assessment, based on potential intervisibility and change to their setting resulting from the Proposed Development.
- 5.5     A qualitative assessment of the heritage significance of the remaining receptors is provided below, including the contribution made by setting.



HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

- Application Site
- Conservation Areas
- A. Market Place and London Street
  - B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
  - C. Kendrick Road
  - D. Eldon Square
- Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- 1. Church of St Mary
  - 2. Church of St Laurence
  - 3. Abbey Gate
  - 4. Reading Abbey Ruins
- Grade II\*
- 5. 3 and 75, London Street
  - 6. 78-84, Southampton Street
  - 7. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From Su71441/73234 to 71527/73133
  - 8. The Simeon Monument
  - 9. 15, Castle Street
  - 10. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block
  - 11. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings
  - 12. Church of St Mary
  - 13. Albion Place
  - 14. St David's Hall
  - 15. Holybrook House
  - 16. Reading Town Hall
- Grade II
- Numbers 17-138 - see overleaf.
- Registered Park and Gardens
- 139. The Forbury Garden(Grade II)
- Scheduled Monuments
- 140. High Bridge
  - 141. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.

LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

SCALE:  
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 5.1 Heritage Asset Plan

▲ NORTH



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HERITAGE ASSET PLAN - KEY

Conservation Areas

- A. Market Place and London Street
- B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
- C. Kendrick Road
- D. Eldon Square

Listed Buildings

Grade I

- 1. Church of St Mary
- 2. Church of St Laurence
- 3. Abbey Gate
- 4. Reading Abbey Ruins

Grade II\*

- |                                                                                    |                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 5. 3 and 75, London Street                                                         | 8. The Simeon Monument                                  |
| 6. 78-84, Southampton Street                                                       | 9. 15, Castle Street                                    |
| 7. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From Su71441/73234 to 71327/73133 | 10. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block |
|                                                                                    | 11. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings      |

Grade II

- 17. 54-58, London Street
- 18. 48-52, London Street
- 19. 62-66, London Street
- 20. 44 and 46, London Street
- 21. Reading Quaker Meeting House
- 22. 68, 70, and 72, London Street
- 23. 74 and 76, London Street
- 24. Nos 49-53 London Street
- 25. 41, London Street
- 26. 37 and 39, London Street
- 27. 6b, Church Street
- 28. 6a, Church Street
- 29. 80, London Street
- 30. 6c, Church Street
- 31. 35, London Street
- 32. No 33 (Former Everyman Theatre)
- 33. 69, London Street
- 34. 11, Church Street
- 35. 86, and 88, London Street
- 36. 7 and 9, Church Street
- 37. 90, 92, and 94, London Street
- 38. Wall Enclosing St Giles's Vicarage Garden
- 39. Church of St Giles and Churchyard Tombs
- 40. 77 and 79, and 81, London Street
- 41. St Giles Vicarage
- 42. 26, Southampton Street
- 43. 28, Southampton Street
- 44. 104, London Street
- 45. St Giles' War Shrine
- 46. 89-93, London Street
- 47. 108, London Street
- 48. 95 and 97, and 99, London Street

- 49. 2 and 4, London Street
- 50. 101, and 103, London Street
- 51. 110 and 114, London Street
- 52. Coroner's Court
- 53. High Bridge
- 54. 63, Southampton Street
- 55. 72-76, Southampton Street
- 56. Sargents Embrook
- 57. Seven Bridges House
- 58. Building on South East Corner
- 59. 3 and 5, London Road
- 60. 86, Southampton Street
- 61. The George Hotel
- 62. House at Rear of Nos 18 and 20 Kings Road
- 63. 17 and 18, King Street
- 64. 92-96, Southampton Street
- 65. Telephone Exchange
- 66. 11 and 12 , 13 and 14, and 15 Gun Street
- 67. Queen's Crescent
- 68. Building Now Part of Courage's Brewery
- 69. 7, 8, 9, and 10, Gun Street
- 70. Rose Cottage
- 71. 33 and 35, London Road
- 72. 3-5 King Street
- 73. 2 and 4, and 6-10 Bridge Street
- 74. The Cedars, and The Kendrick School
- 75. 106, Southampton Street
- 76. 7, and 8, High Street
- 77. 43-49, South Street
- 78. 48 and 49, and 50 and 51, Market Place
- 79. 52 Market Place, 10 High Street
- 80. 2 and 3 and 3a, Broad Street

- 12. Church of St Mary
- 13. Albion Place
- 14. St David's Hall
- 15. Holybrook House

- 81. Group of 4 Churchyard Tombs, East of St Mary's Church
- 82. 3 and 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13, Castle Street
- 83. 1 and 2, Market Place
- 84. Former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern
- 85. Kendrick View
- 86. Harrinson Testimonial Cross, and Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain
- 87. The Horn Inn, and 35, 36 and 37 St Mary's Butts
- 88. Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance
- 89. 8, and 10 and 12 Castle Street
- 90. Kendrick Girls' School, and No 41 (Kendrick Girls' School) including Street Wall Extending to East and Turning into Sidmouth Street
- 91. Former Cottage at Rear of No 8
- 92. Simmonds Malthouse
- 93. Trustee Savings Bank, and 32, Market Place
- 94. Abbey Mill Ruins
- 95. Church House, Reading, and Building to West of Church House
- 96. 21, 23 and 25, 27, and 33-37, Castle Street
- 97. Group of Four Churchyard Tombs North of The Church of St Mary
- 98. Saxone
- 99. The Coopers Public House, and 23-26, 27 and 28, 32 and 33-34, Market Place
- 100. National Westminster Bank
- 101. 3 and 5, Sidmouth Street
- 102. 9, Sidmouth Street
- 103. Sun Inn
- 104. The Henry Building at Katesgrove Primary School including Boundary Wall and Former Caretaker's Cottage
- 105. 39 Castle Street
- 106. 55 and 55a St Mary's Butts
- 107. 142-146, Southampton Street
- 108. 43, and 45, Castle Street
- 109. 95, Broad Street
- 110. The Allied Arms Inn, 57 St Mary's Butts

- 16. Reading Town Hall
- 111. 148 and 150, Southampton Street
- 112. Drinking Fountain on South Side of St Laurence's Tower
- 113. Congretional Church and Numbers 89 and 89a
- 114. Vachel Almhouses
- 115. 47 and 49, and 51, Castle Street
- 116. 152, Southampton Street
- 117. St Laurence's Church and Churchyard, and Twelve Tombs in St Laurence's Churchyard
- 118. Assize Courts
- 119. Shire Hall
- 120. 1-31, Queen Victoria Street
- 121. Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue
- 122. 16-22, London Road
- 123. Talbot House
- 124. Walls Enclosing Garden to West of No 44 (Watlington House)
- 125. Tracery Fragments in The Churchyard of The Church of St Laurence
- 126. The British School
- 127. Former Kennet Arms
- 128. 154, and 155, Friar Street
- 129. 59 and 61, Castle Street
- 130. 157 to 161 Southampton Street and 163, The Hop Leaf Inn
- 131. Wall and Gatepiers of St Laurence's Graveyard
- 132. Municipal Buildings
- 133. 147, Friar Street
- 134. 11, 12, 13, and 14, Friar Street
- 135. 15 Friar Street and Numbers 1 and 26 Harris Arcade, Reading
- 136. Maiwand Memorial
- 137. 10, and 11 and 12, Abbot's Walk
- 138. Wesley Methodist Church

Registered Park and Gardens

- 139. The Forbury Garden(Grade II)

Scheduled Monuments

- 140. High Bridge
- 141. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.

LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
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HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

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    - 15. Holybrook House
    - 16. Reading Town Hall
  - Grade II
    - Numbers 17-138 - see overleaf.
- Registered Park and Gardens
  - 139. The Forbury Garden(Grade II)
- Scheduled Monuments
  - 140. High Bridge
  - 141. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.

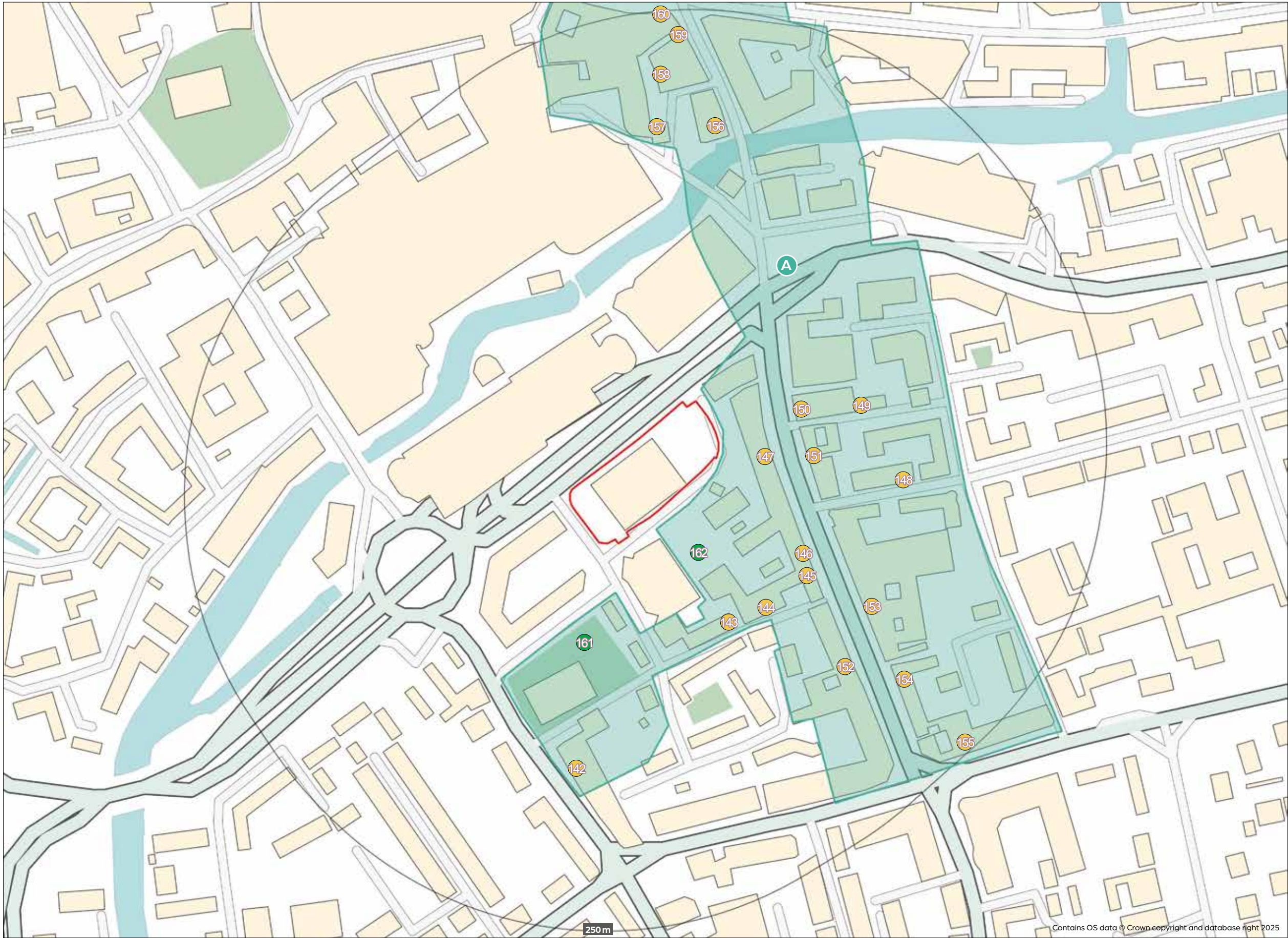
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FIGURE 5.2 Heritage Asset Plan overlaid with ZTV





## NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

Application Site

Conservation Areas

A. Market Place and London Street

### Buildings of Townscape Merit

- 142. St Giles Church Hall
- 143. 4-6 Church Street
- 144. Folk House
- 145. 82-84 London Street
- 146. 78 Church Street
- 147. 60 London Street
- 148. 1-13 (odd) South Street
- 149. 1-4 London Court
- 150. 43-47 (odd) London Street
- 151. 55 & 57 London Street
- 152. 106 London Street
- 153. 85 & 87 London Street
- 154. 107 London Street
- 155. 7-11 (odd) London Road
- 156. 22 Duke Street
- 157. Building on Yield Hall Place
- 158. Building on Thorn Lane
- 159. 2-8 (even) Duke Street
- 160. 24-26 King Street

### Significant Open Spaces

- 161. Churchyard of St Giles Church
- 162. Burial ground of Friends' Meeting House

250 m

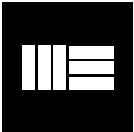
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## LISTED BUILDINGS

### LISTED BUILDINGS ON LONDON STREET

- 5.6 The heritage assets in this group are located 15m to the east and southeast of the Site at the closest point. It includes:
- 54–58, London Street – Map Ref 17
  - 48–52, London Street – Map Ref 18
  - 62–66, London Street – Map Ref 19
  - 44 and 46, London Street – Map Ref 20
  - 68, 70, and 72, London Street – Map Ref 22
  - Nos 49–53 London Street – Map Ref 24
  - 41, London Street – Map Ref 25
  - 37 and 39, London Street – Map Ref 26
  - 35, London Street – Map Ref 31
  - No 33 (Former Everyman Theatre) – Map Ref 32
- 5.7 London Street is lined with several designated buildings, the age and architectural interest of which signify its importance historically as a principal route in to Reading. The prevailing character of the designated buildings on London Street is of two to three storey townhouses, many with later commercial ground floors. The architectural character of the listed buildings on London Street is varied, with fine limestone or red brick Georgian façades, and more modest 18th century vernacular style dwellings. In places, the older 16th or 17th timber framing of buildings is visible. The scale and architectural style of these houses is more uniform to the south of London Street and more varied to the north.
- 5.8 In closest proximity to the Site are Nos. 44 and 46, 48–52, 54–58, which comprise mid-18th century dwellings and shops. These listed buildings form a continuous street frontage of narrow building plots and varied frontages, typical of historic ribbon development in a market town.
- 5.9 No. 33 London Street is identified in the conservation area appraisal as a landmark building. The listed building is a former church designed in a neo-Classical style with Green ionic columns, entablature and pediment to the principal façade. The building was originally constructed in 1843 as a Literary, Scientific and Mechanics' Institute, and was converted into a church in 1866.



Figure 5.3 54–58 London Street

- 5.10 The designated buildings on London Street derive historic and architectural interest as a comprehensive set of townhouses illustrating changing building practices and styles in this market town from the 16th to 19th centuries. The buildings derive historical significance as evidence of the mercantile wealth of Reading and the pattern of development along principal routes. Many buildings feature accomplished Georgian façades, employing expensive brick or stonework, and others are fine examples of timber framing. The buildings have strong group value, forming continuous historic street frontages on either side of the thoroughfare. Where there has been modern infill, this has generally been of sympathetic scale and materiality.

### CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.11 The designated buildings on London Street are situated on a historic thoroughfare, which was after the 12th century the principal route from London to Reading. The individual buildings along London Street together form a group of 16th to 19th century townhouses and derive strong setting value from one another as a near continuous historic street frontage.



Figure 5.4 London Street from the south, 1878 (source: Historic England)

- 5.12 At the north and south ends of London Street, the historic setting of the buildings has been entirely eroded by modern development, particularly through the construction of the IDR and Oracle shopping centre in the late 20th century. The topography of London Street means that there are raised views towards the town centre and the Oracle, and tall development beyond, is visible above the historic building line. The north end of London Street was demolished during the construction of the IDR, and the dual carriage way and large-scale commercial development that lines it forms a physical barrier between the historic thoroughfare of London Street and the medieval core of the town.
- 5.13 The Site is visible only from the rear of the listed buildings on the west of London Street, principally 44–46, 48–58, 62–72 (even) London Street. The buildings, hard standing and palisade fencing which presently occupy the site are detracting features in the wider setting of the designated buildings on London Street.



Figure 5.5 London Street from the south today



Figure 5.6 Relationship between the Site and the designated buildings on London Street

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

- 5.14 The Quakers Meeting House is located approximately 50m to the south of the Site.
- 5.15 The Quakers Meeting House was first designated at Grade II in 1978 and the list entry updated in 2020. The meeting house is a modest brick building, purpose built for the Reading Quakers. The Quakers were established in Reading as early as 1655, with a meeting house in Sun Lane. The Quakers met in a number of locations and had other burial grounds in the town before building a purpose-built meeting house at this location on Church Street in 1716. This early Georgian meeting house was demolished and replaced with the present building in 1835.
- 5.16 The present building has a rectangular plan and is of a single, tall storey. The hall is set back from the road and is orientated so it is parallel to the road, with the main entrance to the west. The roof is grey slate and there are sash windows with flat brick arches throughout. To the south, there is a low L-plan extension constructed in 1964 which obscures the street-facing elevation of the buildings. The interior of the building retains architectural detailing including arches, cornices and wall panelling. There is evidence of there having been a dividing screen in the middle of the meeting house, for the separation of men and women's meetings; however, this was removed.
- 5.17 The historic interest of the Quakers Meeting House derives from its association with the Quakers Movement in Reading, and nationally, from the 17th century. Although interior and exterior alterations have obscured the original layout and function of the meeting house, the building has architectural interest as a purpose-built meeting house in an elegant but modest style that is typical of Quaker architecture. The historic and architectural interest of the building is enhanced through its grouping with the 18th century housing on Church Street, which are a fragment of its original setting, and the burial ground which illustrates the function of the meeting house and Quaker practice.



Figure 5.7 Rear elevation of the Quakers Meeting House



Figure 5.8 Main entrance to Quakers Meeting House and relationship with the burial ground to the north

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.18
- The Quakers Meeting House is set back from Church Street behind a modern extension and courtyard. The position of the building at the centre of the urban block creates an enclosed atmosphere, further emphasised by the burial ground to the north of the meeting house. The burial ground is a rectangular piece of land enclosed by a high brick wall and mature trees along the eastern boundary. The burial ground is bound by Crossland Road to the north and modern residential developments to the east and west.
- 5.19
- The meeting house and burial ground have a highly important historic and spatial relationship (as shown in **Figures 5.7 and 5.8**), one that has existed since 1715 when the land north of Church Street was first acquired by the Quakers. It is a place of quiet contemplation and has an enclosed green character which contributes to this character.
- 5.20
- There is, however, an awareness of a wider setting of modern urban development, comprising Townsend House to the immediate west and the Site, Oracle and modern infrastructure to the north. Within the setting of the listed building, there are views of the light industrial buildings on Site and the carpark to the shopping centre, which are metallic in materiality and incongruous to the character of the burial ground. The enclosed character of the burial ground is reinforced by the presence of modern development beyond the walls of the burial ground, which is of a character distinct to the listed building and historic open space. The Site does not contribute to the special interest of the Quaker Meeting House.



Figure 5.9 Burial ground to rear of Quakers Meeting House

LISTED BUILDINGS ON CHURCH STREET

- 5.21
- The heritage assets in this group are located approximately 75m to the south of the Site. This group includes:
  - 6b, Church Street – Map Ref 27
  - 6a, Church Street – Map Ref 28
  - 6c, Church Street – Map Ref 30
  - 11, Church Street – Map Ref 34
  - 7 and 9, Church Street – Map Ref 36
- 5.22
- The listed buildings in this group are two storey townhouses constructed in the 18th and early 19th centuries. The buildings are constructed in red brick, with typical Georgian proportions and parapet rooflines, sash windows (some exposed) and cornices. The buildings display expensive 18th and 19th century building techniques including gauged brick arches and vitrified header bond. The modest but high-quality architectural detailing of these buildings denotes the status of the residents and this area of Reading during that period of construction.
- 5.23
- Historically, Church Street provided access to the Church of St Giles when the focus of development moved from Southampton Street to London Street, as the principal river crossing. The buildings derive historic and architectural interest as an example of 18th and 19th century residential development in the historic settlement of Reading. The buildings have group interest with the Church of St Giles, the Meeting House and the ribbon development of London Street, together illustrating the pattern of development in Reading as a market town during the Georgian and Victorian periods.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.24
- The terraced buildings represent a seam of historic development within an area of modern infill. The buildings have a visual and spatial relationship with the listed buildings on London Street to the east, St Giles Church to the west and the Quaker Meeting House to the north. Together these assets illustrate the historic development and arrangement of this area of Reading. The listed buildings’ setting further comprises modern infill development. These buildings contribute neutrally to the significance of the listed buildings being of a similar scale but lesser architectural quality to the fine grain historic development.
- 5.25
- There is no spatial or visual relationship between the Site and the listed buildings on Church Street.

LISTED BUILDINGS IN CHURCH OF ST GILES GROUP

- 5.26
- The Church of St Giles and the associated group of heritage assets is located approximately 70m to the southwest of the Site, on Southampton Street. This group includes:
  - Wall Enclosing St Giles’ Vicarage (Grade II) – Map Ref 38
  - Church of St Giles and Churchyard Tombs (Grade II) – Map Ref 39
  - St Giles Vicarage (Grade II) – Map Ref 41
  - St Giles War Shrine (Grade II) – Map Ref 45
- 5.27
- The Church of St Giles was designated at Grade II in 1957. The aisle walls and Perpendicular west tower of the church are of 13th century construction; however, it was largely rebuilt in 1872 in the Early English style. The church is constructed in flint with bath stone dressings. A perpendicular window survives in the west. The church sits within a church yard, planted with mature trees. The church derives historic and architectural interest owing its composition of 13th century architectural features, which remain as fragments of the former medieval church, and as an example of the late 19th century church in the early English style. The church has a spire which is prominent in local views, particularly on Southampton Street.
- 5.28
- The vicarage and enclosing wall to the south of the church were designated at Grade II in 1957. These associated buildings date from the mid-18th century and are constructed in red brick. The vicarage is a two and a half storey dwelling in multiple phases. The vicarage derives architectural and historic interest in its association with the parish church and fine Georgian detailing.
- 5.29
- The St Giles War Shrine was designated at Grade II in 2017. The memorial was designed by Spencer Slingsby Stallwood in 1917 to commemorate the losses of World War One. The structure is a well-designed and executed example of a Calvary cross memorial, sculpted by notable stone masons, HH Martyn and Co Ltd.

**CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE**

- 5.30 The immediate church yard setting of the church contributes to its historic interest in illustrating the historic function and spatial relationship of the parish church with the surrounding settlement and the vicarage to the south. The Church Hall, which is identified as a Building of Townscape Merit within the Market Place and London Street CAA, further contributes to an understanding of this relationship and the function of the church.
- 5.31 Within the church yard there are a number of tombs, which contribute to the historic and architectural special interest the church. The church yard is planted with mature trees which shields the church from modern development to the north and east and creates an enclosed atmosphere.
- 5.32 Outside of the churchyard, and with the exception of the vicarage and Village Hall, the wider historic setting of the church has largely been eroded. The vicarage itself has a private setting, positioned within walled gardens. Little of the architectural detailing is visible from Church Street and the dwelling is best appreciated from within the walled gardens. There is no visual relationship between the vicarage and the Site.
- 5.33 The church spire is a prominent feature in the locality and in longer distance views from the south and north. Local Plan View 2 looks north from Whitley Street and encompasses St Giles Church, Reading Minster and Greyfriars Church as a trio of important ecclesiastical sites. The CAA identifies an important framed view of the church and spire, looking west on Church Street with historic residences in the foreground. The CAA does not identify other significant views of the spire from elsewhere within the CA, nevertheless the Spire is prominent in views from the north, on the boundary between Sub Areas 1 and 3.
- 5.34 To the west of the church, the A327 negatively impacts the understanding of the historic and architectural interest of the church. Views of the church from the south are obscured by overhead road signage that spans the A327. The west side of the church yard is not planted with trees which preserves views of the church on a principal route to the town centre; however, the vehicular traffic and busy streetscape of this road detracts from the seclusion of the churchyard. The presence of this busy, noisy road in the church's immediate setting reinforces the church's proximity to the urban centre of Reading.



**Figure 5.10** Church of St Giles and St Giles Hall



**Figure 5.11** Church of St Giles churchyard



**Figure 5.12** Road signage in front of the Church of St Giles

- 5.35 To the west of the church, on the opposing side of the A327 there is modern development which contrasts poorly with the historic character of the church. In views looking north along the A327, the taller scale development of the town centre is discernible and the proximity of the church to the intensely urbanised centre of Reading.
- 5.36 The Site is located to the northeast of the churchyard. The Site is visible in glimpsed views from within the church yard; however, it is largely screened by mature vegetation and has no visual relationship with the church itself. The materiality of the current buildings on Site contrast to the historic fabric of the church.

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

- 5.37Nos. 26 and 28 Southampton Street are located approximately 115m to the west of the Site.
- 5.38No. 26 was constructed in the early 19th century and is two and a half storeys. The northern portion of the building is original, constructed with grey brick laid in header bond and a mansard roof with dormer. No. 28 was constructed in the 20th century and designed to appear of 17th century construction. It is a two–storey building with a timber framing, jetty and brick noggin to the first floor.
- 5.39Nos. 26 and 28 form an attractive pair of buildings, deriving architectural interest from their vernacular style and illustrating early 19th century architecture in Reading.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.40The immediate setting of the buildings detracts from their architectural and historical interest. The original setting of the building on what was historically the principal route into the medieval settlement from the south, has been entirely eroded through 20th and 21st century infrastructure and large–scale developments. The buildings have a setting relationship with St Giles Church and other listed buildings to the south, however, the heritage assets are separated by the busy A327 and infill development.
- 5.41There is no spatial or visual relationship between the Site and the listed buildings.
- 63 SOUTHAMPTON STREET AND 50 CROWN STREET – MAP REF 40
- 5.42The listed building is located approximately 185m to the south of the Site.
- 5.4363 Southampton Street is a two–storey building dating from the early 18th century. Formerly a terrace of modest town houses, the buildings have been amalgamated to form one building, perhaps during its conversion to a pub. The buildings are red brick, one with grey brick headers which are distinctive of Reading. 50 Crown Street is joined to the south and occupies a corner plot where Southampton Street and Crown Street meet. This building has a curved façade and dates from the 19th century.
- 5.44The architectural and historic interest of these buildings derives from their vernacular style and as an illustration of local building materials and practices in the 18th and 19th centuries.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.45The listed buildings are situated on a busy vehicular junction, which forms their immediate setting. To the north, east and west there are other historic townhouses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. To the north, the spire of the Church of St Giles is prominent. Together, these buildings signify the development of the market town during this time. The setting of the building therefore contributes positively to an understanding of the buildings interest.
- 5.46There is no intervisibility between the listed buildings and the Site.
- 92-96 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, AND ROSE COTTAGE, AND 106 SOUTHAMPTON STREET – MAP REF 64, 70 AND 75
- 5.47This group of buildings on the west side of Southampton Street are located approximately 230m to the south of the Site.
- 5.4892–96 Southampton Street are a set of three early 19th century townhouses, constructed in red brick with gauged brick work to the windows and doorway. The townhouses are three storeys over basement and the uniform in appearance.
- 5.49Rose Cottage, 98 and 100 Southampton Street, are a pair of terraced, two storey brick houses with tile roof, constructed in the 18th century. 106 Southampton Street is a three storey former townhouse constructed in the 19th century. The building is four bays of sash windows and has a double gable roof. At ground floor there is an infilled shop front, now residential.
- 5.50The buildings in this grouping have historic and architectural interest as an illustration of residential development in Reading in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE
- 5.51The buildings have an important spatial and visual relationship, and together inform an understanding of the development of this area of Reading during this period. The buildings are set within a wider context of historic urban development, however there is modern infill in places. The immediate setting of the building is busy to vehicular traffic. There is an important visual relationship between the listed buildings and the spire of the Church of St Giles to the north, which helps to illustrate the special arrangement of the historic settlement.
- 5.52There is no intervisibility between the listed buildings and the Site.

QUEEN’S CRESCENT – MAP REF 67

- 5.53Queen’s Crescent, 24–52 Queen’s Crescent, is located approximately 205m to the east of the Site.
- 5.54The listed terrace comprises a series of uniform townhouses, constructed in the 1830s. The townhouses follow the curve of the road and are three storeys over basement. Formerly 15 individual houses, the terrace is constructed in Bath stone, with a channelled ground floor and parapet roofline. At ground floor, the windows are round headed and at first floor the central sash window of each house has a pediment.
- 5.55The terrace derives historic and architectural interest as a fine example of Georgian townhouses and planned residential layouts. The houses use imported Bath stone, which signifies the status of the house and changing building practices in Reading during the 19th century.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

- 5.56The setting of the individual listed houses comprises the terrace and together the houses form a distinct grouping with important visual and spatial relationships. The wider setting of the terrace has been entirely eroded by modern infrastructure and development. The modern development which surrounds the terrace is of a greater scale and footprint than the fine grain historic terrace. The setting of the listed terrace makes no contribution to the special interest of the buildings.
- 5.57There is no intervisibility between the listed crescent and the Site.
- BUILDING NOW PART OF COURAGE’S BREWERY – MAP REF 68
- 5.58The building now part of Courage’s Brewery is located approximately 250m to the west of the Site. It dates to the early 19th century and is likely a former malthouse, it is constructed of red brick with timber boarding at its upper storeys.
- 5.59The building forms a group with the former Simmonds Malthouse (Grade II) as surviving elements of 19th century brewery buildings. Together these buildings are illustrative of the prominence of brewing as an industry within Reading. The industrial function of the two buildings is evident from their architectural form.

| CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.60                                                 | The proximity of the building to the River Kennet contributes to an understanding of the buildings historic function and strategic location on this principal river route. Beyond this initial enclosed setting, the wider setting comprises a modern residential estate which bears no spatial or functional relationship to the former brewery building. The historic setting of former malthouse has been completely eroded.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5.61                                                 | Owing to the topography of this area of Reading and intervening development, notably the IDR, the Site is not visible in the wider setting of the listed building. The Site therefore makes no contribution to the setting and special interest of the former brewery building.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| LISTED BUILDINGS ON SOUTH STREET AND SIDMOUTH STREET |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5.62                                                 | The heritage assets in this group are located approximately 265m to the east of the Site at the closest point. This group includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 43-49 South Street – Map Ref 77</li><li>• 3 and 5 Sidmouth Street – Map Ref 101</li><li>• 9 Sidmouth Street – Map Ref 102</li><li>• Wesley Methodist Church – Map Ref 138</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5.63                                                 | The buildings in this grouping comprise historic residential buildings, dating from the mid to late 19th century, and the Wesley Methodist Church, completed in 1812. The residential buildings vary in style, with two storey terraced buildings faced in brick or stone, and an asymmetrical pair of three storey Vicarage-style houses with turrets. The Wesley Methodist Church is constructed in red brick with tiled roof, lancet windows and decorated tracery in the northern window. The listed church has a prominent spire, which together with the spire of St John’s, are distinct landmarks in this residential suburb of Reading. |
| 5.64                                                 | The listed buildings in this group have architectural and historic interest as examples of residential and religious architecture throughout the 19th century. Together, the buildings help to illustrate domestic life in Reading during this period and display a variety of architectural styles.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5.65                                                 | The listed buildings within this group share a spatial and visual relationship with one another, which illustrates the historic development of Reading.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                           | The setting of the listed buildings comprises other fine grain houses and churches, which contribute positively to an understanding of the listed buildings’ significance. Throughout the area there are examples of modern infill development and in places, views of large scale commercial and retail development.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.66                                                      | There is no intervisibility between the listed crescent and the Site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| CONSERVATION AREAS                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| LONDON STREET/ MARKET PLACE CONSERVATION AREA – MAP REF A |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5.67                                                      | The London Street/ Market Place CA was first designated in 1972 and extended in 1982. The CA is the subject of an Appraisal adopted by the Council in 2007. The CA extends from Crown Street to the south, to Garrard Street at its northernmost extent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 5.68                                                      | Prior to the 12th century, the principal route from London and elsewhere passed up what is now known as Southampton Street, towards the historic centre of the settlement at the Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin. After the founding of the Abbey in the 12th century, trade and travel was realigned with a new market outside the Abbey gates in the northeast of the settlement. By the 14th century, what is now known as London Street was the principal route in to Reading.                                                                                              |
| 5.69                                                      | The CA signifies the historic mercantile and civic core of Reading. The CA boundary encapsulates the principal historic thoroughfare and the site of the market, outside the church of St Laurance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 5.70                                                      | The 2007 Appraisal further divides the CA into four sub-areas:<br><br><i>South of the IDR</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Area 1: London Street, south of the IDR;</li><li>• Area 2: Church Street and environs of St Giles’ Church;</li></ul><br><i>North of the IDR</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Area 3: Jackson’s Corner including King Street, London Street (north), Duke Street and the River Kennet;</li><li>• Area 4: Market Place and environs of St Laurence’s Church and Town Hall including part of Blagrove Street and The Forbury</li></ul> |

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.71 | The north and south of the CA are divided by the IDR, which forms a physical barrier between the two parts. The special interest of the northern portion derives primarily from the Church of St Laurence, the Town Hall complex and the Market Place to the south. This area has medieval origins, and the morphological framework is still evident, complemented by the 19th century civic complex.                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5.72 | The southern portion of the CA illustrates the medieval development of Reading as a market town, and there are several designated buildings of special architectural interest including the Church of St Giles to the west. The 16th to 18th century townhouses that line London Street are typical of ribbon development in market towns, with narrow and architecturally varied street frontages.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 5.73 | There is a history separation between the north and south parts of the CA, established by the natural course of the River Kennet and, from the late 18th to late 20th century, the industrial seam that was established along the banks of the river. This separation has been negatively reinforced by the construction of the IDR, which forms a divisive and detracting feature at the core and in the setting of the CA.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 5.74 | The CA appraisal map identifies designated and non-designated heritage assets (Buildings Townscape Merit) within the boundary, in addition to landmark buildings, significant green open spaces and important views. The non-designated heritage asset plan within <b>Appendix 1</b> identifies the buildings of townscape merit within the CA and within 250m of the Site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 5.75 | Sub Area 1 comprises two religious buildings and historic residential development on Church Street. This area has an enclosed character that is distinct from the thoroughfare of London Street and is reminiscent of the smaller development of south Reading in the 18th and 19th centuries. The area contains two significant open green spaces associated with the religious buildings, which each contain significant trees. The area therefore has a green character. The boundary for Sub Area 1 is tight to surviving historic fabric and is set against modern redevelopment which is contrasting in character. |



Figure 5.13 Sub Area 1 and 2 of the CA. Source: Market Place/London Street CA Appraisal (2007).

5.76 Sub Area 2 comprises the busy historic thoroughfare of London Street and is characterised by a wide road and fine grain residential premises with converted commercial ground floors. The plot sizes are narrow, which is typical of ribbon development in a market town, and there is a generally consistent building line. In places, covered carriageways leading to back land areas remain.

5.77 Three important views are identified within Sub Areas 1 and 2. These include two axial views looking north and south on London Street. The focus of these views is the continuous street frontages of the historic buildings on the west side of London Street. The third view looks west on Church Street, past a terrace of historic houses towards the Church of St Giles. The spire is prominent in this view.

CONTRIBUTION OF SETTING TO SIGNIFICANCE

5.78 There is an established character of large scale commercial and residential developments and modern infrastructure within and in the immediate setting of the CA. These developments, on Mill Lane and Queens Road have eroded the historic setting of the CA and detract from its character and appearance. The CAA identifies ‘modern development at north and south extremities of London Street, adjacent to road junctions’ as a detracting feature in the setting of the CA.

5.79 The Site is located outside of the CA boundary on Crossland Road; however, it borders Sub Area 1 and 2. From within these subareas, the Site is visible from the rear of the designated and non-designated buildings on the west side of London Street, within the Quakers Meeting House burial ground and Church of St Giles churchyard. Both the Quakers’ Meeting House burial ground and Church of St Giles are identified as ‘significant open space’ in the London Street/ Market Place CA appraisal. The Site in its present form is poor in terms of landscaping and architectural quality and is a detracting feature in the wider setting of these sub areas.



Figure 5.14 Significant trees within churchyard of Church of St Giles

SECTION SUMMARY

5.80 Table 5.1 below presents a summary of the heritage assets included in this assessment.

**Table 5.1**      Summary of Built Heritage Baseline

| MAP REF.                      | NAME                                      | GRADE (IF APPLICABLE) | FULL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED? |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Designated Heritage Receptors |                                           |                       |                           |
| Listed Buildings              |                                           |                       |                           |
| 17                            | 54–58, London Street                      | II                    | Yes                       |
| 18                            | 48–52, London Street                      | II                    | Yes                       |
| 19                            | 62–66, London Street                      | II                    | Yes                       |
| 20                            | 44 and 46, London Street                  | II                    | Yes                       |
| 21                            | Reading Quaker Meeting House              | II                    | Yes                       |
| 22                            | 68, 70, and 72, London Street             | II                    | Yes                       |
| 23                            | 74 and 76, London Street                  | II                    | No                        |
| 24                            | Nos 49–53 London Street                   | II                    | Yes                       |
| 25                            | 41, London Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 26                            | 37 and 39, London Street                  | II                    | Yes                       |
| 27                            | 6b, Church Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 28                            | 6a, Church Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 29                            | 80, London Street                         | II                    | No                        |
| 30                            | 6c, Church Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 31                            | 35, London Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 32                            | No 33 (Former Everyman Theatre)           | II                    | Yes                       |
| 34                            | 11, Church Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 36                            | 7 and 9, Church Street                    | II                    | Yes                       |
| 38                            | Wall enclosing St Giles's Vicarage Garden | II                    | Yes                       |
| 39                            | Church of St Giles and Churchyard Tombs   | II                    | Yes                       |
| 40                            | 63 Southampton Street and 50 Crown Street | II                    | Yes                       |

| MAP REF.           | NAME                                      | GRADE (IF APPLICABLE) | FULL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED? |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 41                 | St Giles Vicarage / St Giles's Vicarage   | II                    | Yes                       |
| 42                 | 26, Southampton Street                    | II                    | Yes                       |
| 43                 | 28, Southampton Street                    | II                    | Yes                       |
| 45                 | St Giles' War Shrine                      | II                    | Yes                       |
| 54                 | 63 Southampton Street and 50 Crown Street | II                    | Yes                       |
| 64                 | 92–96, Southampton Street                 | II                    | Yes                       |
| 67                 | Queen's Crescent                          | II                    | Yes                       |
| 68                 | Building now part of Courage's Brewery    | II                    | Yes                       |
| 70                 | Rose Cottage                              | II                    | Yes                       |
| 75                 | 106 Southampton Street                    | II                    | Yes                       |
| 77                 | 43–49 South Street                        | II                    | Yes                       |
| 101                | 3 and 5 Sidmouth Street                   | II                    | Yes                       |
| 102                | 9 Sidmouth Street                         | II                    | Yes                       |
| 138                | Wesley Methodist Church                   | II                    | Yes                       |
| Conservation Areas |                                           |                       |                           |
| A                  | Market Place and London Street            | N/A                   | Yes                       |

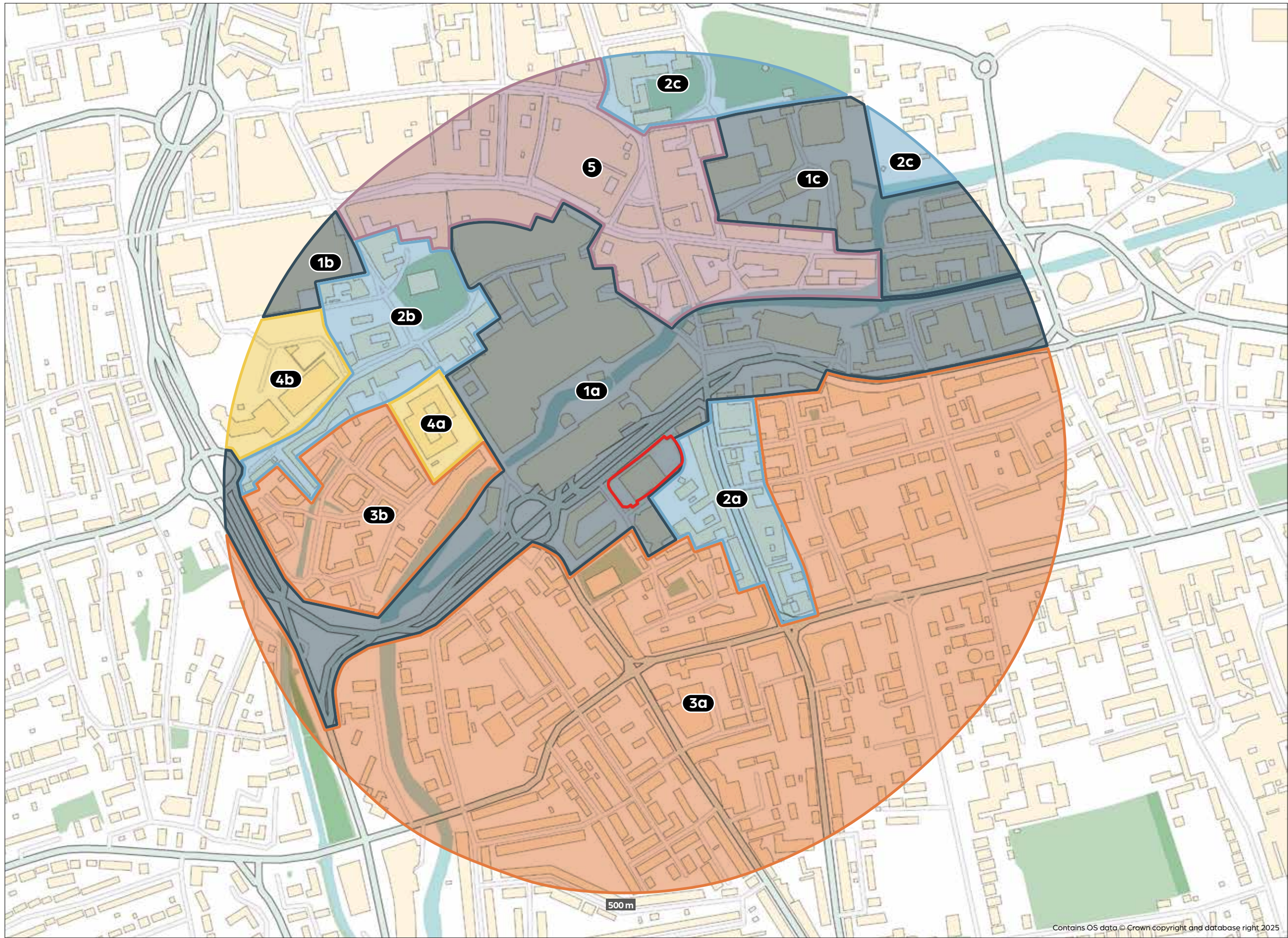
**6.0**

# **BASELINE: TOWNSCAPE**

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

# BASELINE: TOWNSCAPE

- 6.1     This section of the report describes the townscape character of the Site and its surrounding context. Following site surveys, detailed desk-based assessment and an assessment of the surrounding urban grain, the townscape surrounding the Site may be categorised into five distinct areas (referred to as 'TCAs' throughout this Section). For the purposes of this assessment the character areas are referred to as:
- TCA1: Large Scale Commercial/Retail
  - TCA2: Historic Core
  - TCA3: Residential
  - TCA4: Civic Centre
  - TCA5: Town Centre
- 6.2     The broad boundaries of the character areas are identified in **Figure 6.1**. The character and appearance of the character areas is discussed below.



## TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Application Site

- 1
  - a. Large scale commercial/retail
  - b. Large scale commercial
  - c. Large scale commercial
- 2
  - a. Historic core
  - b. Historic core
  - c. Historic core
- 3
  - a. Residential
  - b. Residential
- 4
  - a. Civic centre
  - b. Civic centre
5. Town centre

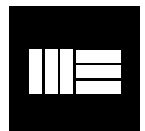
**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
July 2025

**SCALE:**  
1:5,000 @ A3

**FIGURE 6.1** Townscape Character Area Plan

▲ NORTH



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## TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- Application Site
- 1
  - a. Large scale commercial/retail
  - b. Large scale commercial
  - c. Large scale commercial
- 2
  - a. Historic core
  - b. Historic core
  - c. Historic core
- 3
  - a. Residential
  - b. Residential
- 4
  - a. Civic centre
  - b. Civic centre
- 5. Town centre

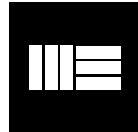
**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
July 2025

**SCALE:**  
1:5,000 @ A3

**FIGURE 6.2** Townscape Character Area Plan overlaid with ZTV

**▲ NORTH**



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## TCA1: LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL/RETAIL

- 6.3 TCA1 is formed of three separate areas, the largest being TCA1A, which comprises the Oracle Shopping Centre and other commercial/retail development located along the northern and southern frontages of the Inner Distribution Road ("IDR"). TCA1b comprises the Broad Street Mall Shopping Centre, located to the northwest of the town centre, with TCA1c comprising an area of predominantly commercial/office use to the northeast of the town centre. Given the location of the Site within TCA1a, the focus of this assessment will be on this element of the character area.
- 6.4 The area is defined by its consistent commercial/retail use, which has been a slow process of evolution from the area's industrial history. The industrial history of the area to the south of the River Kennet is no longer evident.
- 6.5 Immediately opposite the Site is the Oracle Shopping Centre and associated car park, Vue Cinema, with buildings transitioning to a more commercial, office use to the western part of the TCA. The current building on Site has most recently been used as a warehouse for John Lewis which further reinforce the prevailing use of the area. In the adopted Local Plan, the Site is allocated for commercial development under Local Plan Policy CR14, together with land across the A329 occupied by the Oracle Shopping Centre, specifically for "1.67 ha 1,600–2,000 sqm of retail or town centre uses".
- 6.6 The form and architectural quality of buildings within the TCA is a reflection of the area's retail/commercial character. Buildings generally adopt a large urban footprint and are constructed of mass-produced, lower quality materials including cladding, glazing and concrete. Buildings have very low to no architectural quality or interest, reinforced by the lack of architectural features and detailing.
- 6.7 The scale of buildings within the TCA is a further reflection of the area's use. Buildings of up to nine storeys are a key feature including that of the Oracle Shopping Centre. The rooflines of these taller buildings have been designed in such a way that their height stands out from the surrounding roofscape. The angular, glass structure on the roof above the Oracle, as well as the circular roof form on the seven storey Premier Inn building. The taller scaled buildings within the TCA tend to be located on the frontage of the IDR, the extent of which minimises the TCA's overall sensitivity to tall buildings.

- 6.8 The large urban footprints of buildings, usually with associated service yards or car parks has established a coarse urban grain, which contrasts with the surrounding more historic residential development.
- 6.9 The IDR is a key feature of the TCA, serving as a 'spine' for the commercial and retail development either side of it, simultaneously providing an accessible means of travel to the commercial and retail buildings. The IDR follows the line of a historic route in parallel to the River Kennet. The urban design of the IDR and associated landscape around it has contributed to a poor-quality townscape character, especially around the Site, which reinforces its position as a detracting townscape feature. The presence of the IDR reinforces the busy, urban nature of the TCA.
- 6.10 At one to two storeys, the Central Club is an anomaly in the TCA for its low scale. An application for the partial demolition and upward extension of the building has been approved under application ref. 221364. The consented scheme incorporates a community space and 17 residential flats within a four storey building. The Central Club building will form a transitional building between the low scale historic development of TCA 2A and the larger scale buildings of TCA 1. The Black History Mural on the northern wall of the building will be retained. The Mural is well known locally and contributes positively to the otherwise fragmented and hostile townscape of the IDR.
- 6.11 An increasing number of planning applications within the TCA, including the submission of the planning application at Broad Street Mall (located within TCA1b) (planning ref: 240173) for residential development of up to 30 storeys as well as the Yield Hall Place Development, comprising a mixed-use scheme of residential and commercial space of up to 20 storeys (planning refs: 221916 and 221917). This has been further reinforced by policy aspirations for the area including the allocation of the Site for residential development in the Local Plan Partial Review Submission Draft (2025). It is thus evident that the direction of travel for this part of Reading, is towards an increasing residential use, through the provision of buildings of a taller scale.
- 6.12 Associated viewpoint: 1, 9, 10
- 6.13 Townscape value: **Low**



**Figure 6.3** The Oracle Shopping Centre and associated multi-storey car park on the northern side of the IDR.



**Figure 6.4** Commercial development on the southern side of the IDR.

**TCA2: HISTORIC CORE**

- 6.14      TCA2 is formed of three separate areas which comprise the historic core of Reading. This includes TCA2a on the eastern boundary of the Site, TCA2b to the north west of the Site and TCA2c to the north. The separate areas of the TCA are bound in the historic character, comprising some of the oldest buildings within Reading and survive as historic pockets within the wider townscape of Reading.
- 6.15      The boundaries of TCA2a run broadly concurrent with the St Mary Butts and Castle Street CA. The area includes a number of highly graded heritage assets including the Church of St Mary (Grade I) from which the CA has evolved. 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.
- 6.16      The street form comprises two sets of crossroads to the north and south of the TCA. This characteristic is reflective of the medieval street pattern of this part of Reading, which is recognised as the original core and marketplace of the town. As such, the TCA includes a number of 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. 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.

- 6.17      TCA2b comprises the key thoroughfare of London Street, which forms part of the wider London Street CA which signifies the historic mercantile core of Reading. The streetscape is defined by 16th to 18th century townhouses which are typical of ribbon development in market towns, with narrow and architecturally varied street frontages, many of which are listed.
- 6.18      TCA2C to the north, comprises a group of historic buildings and structures, including Reading Gaol, the former Reading Abbey Ruins and the Church of St Laurence. Given the unique nature of some of the heritage assets within this part of the TCA, i.e. Reading Gaol and Forbury Gardens, the streetscape and layout diverges from the other, more medieval layouts seen in other parts of the TCA.
- 6.19      The principal green space within the TCA is the Grade II RPG of Forbury Gardens, which forms an area of amenity space, within the centre of Reading. Other green spaces in the TCA are limited to those amenity spaces associated with historic buildings and landmarks, including the churchyard of St Mary’s and the burial ground of Reading Quaker Meeting House.
- 6.20      The TCA comprises a number of very highly graded heritage assets, and other designations including CAs and an RPG. Sensitive views within this TCA include those 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. As such, it is considered to have a **High** townscape value.
- 6.21      Associated viewpoint: 2, 3, 4a, 4b, 11, 13, 14
- 6.22      Townscape value: **High**



**Figure 6.5**      Historic buildings along London Street

### TCA3: RESIDENTIAL

- 6.23 This TCA comprises two parts, TCA3a to the immediate south of the Site, and TCA3b to the northwest of the Site.
- 6.24 TCA3a incorporates some of the London Street CA and thus naturally includes a large number of historic buildings, predominantly Victorian terraces and detached houses. The street pattern of the area is reflective of its use, a series of linear, intersecting horizontal and vertical streets. Modern development has impinged in some locations, most notably on the northern edge of the TCA, facing the Inner Distribution Road (IDR). The IDR is the ring road that encircles the town centre and forms part of the A329 that runs from Surrey to Oxfordshire. The predominant materiality is red brick, which is a historically characteristic of Reading. Architectural features include the use of decorative brickwork and tiling, gable ends and round arched doorways. The residential character of this part of the TCA is further reinforced by the presence of front and rear gardens, as well as on street parking. Some of the Victorian terraces throughout the TCA are listed, however, there are also areas in which buildings are in poorer condition, or have had unsympathetic alteration.
- 6.25 TCA3b comprises a residential estate of houses and flats dating to the late 20th century. It has an enclosed character, defined by dense vegetative borders. Vegetation, street furniture and paved areas of public realm are a key characteristic of this area. The houses within the TCA are architecturally homogenous which aids in differentiating the area from its surroundings. Buildings are defined by red brick, dark timber framed windows and a mock Tudor architectural style. Designated areas of car parking are also prominent throughout the TCA. To the south, the border of this part of the TCA is more open, comprising the River Kennet which forms an area of amenity space and a key route towards the town centre.
- 6.26 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.
- 6.27 Associated viewpoint: 5, 6, 7, 8
- 6.28 Townscape value: **Medium**

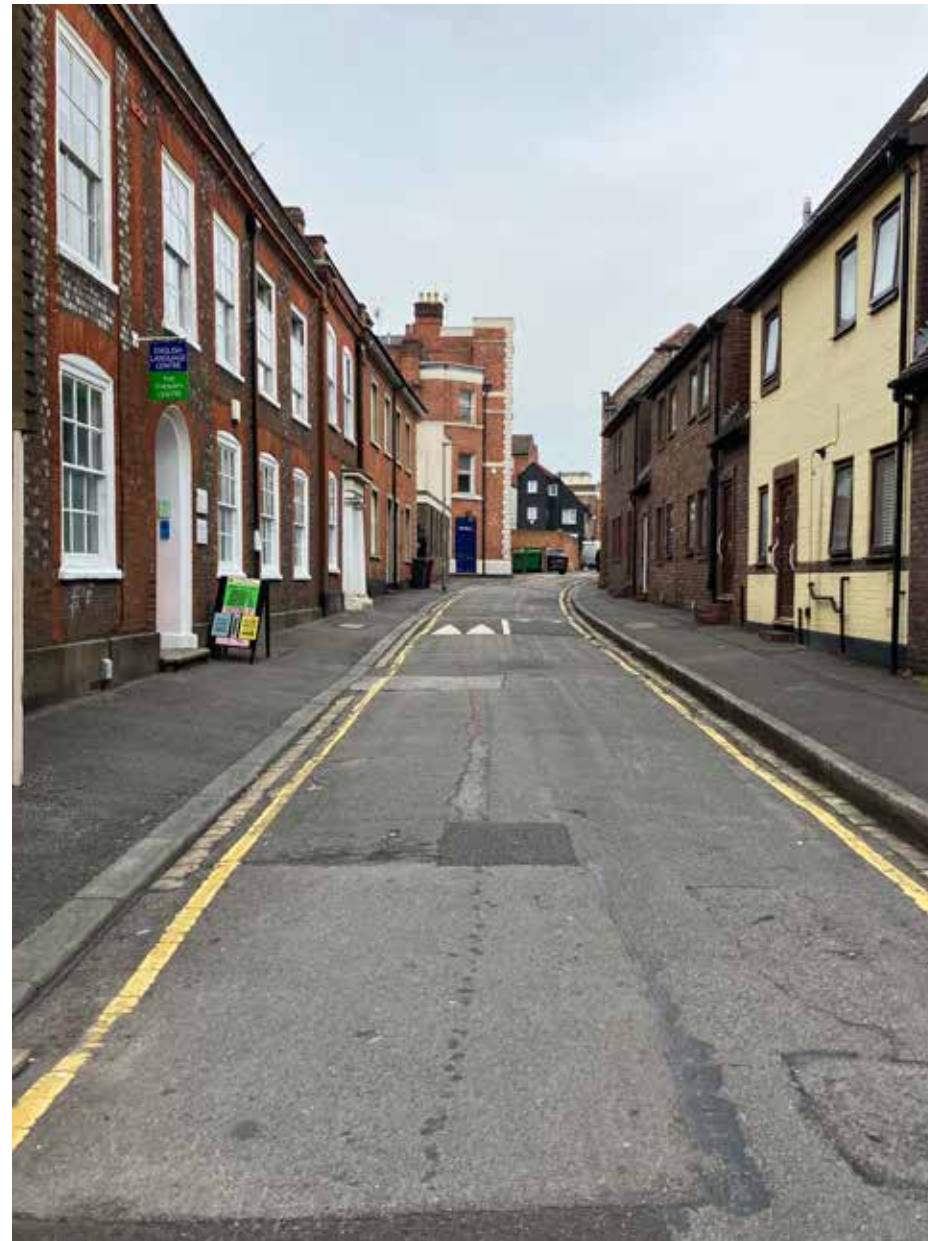


**Figure 6.6** Combination of modern and historic houses along Church Street

### TCA4: CIVIC CENTRE

- 6.29 Character area 4 comprises two areas of civic buildings to the northwest of the Site. The two parts of the TCA are separated by the historic thoroughfare of Castle Street, forming TCA 2b.
- 6.30 The most distinctive characteristic of the TCA is the inclusion of a number of buildings of institutional use. This includes Reading Magistrates Court, Reading Police Station, and Reading Borough Council offices. The Hexagon is also included within the TCA, comprising a multi-purpose theatre and arts venue in Reading. Whilst not solely institutional in use it remains operated by Reading Borough Council.
- 6.31 Building plots are large, which is a reflection of their use. The scale of the buildings predominantly remains at two to three storeys. They date to a range of eras, the Council offices 2014, Reading Police Station and Reading Magistrates Court appear to have been built in conjunction with one another, in the same architectural style and form which likely dates to the end of the 20th century.



**Figure 6.7** Reading Magistrates Court and Police Station

- 6.32

Most architecturally interesting is the Hexagon, built in 1977 in the shape of an elongated hexagon. The TCA does not include any designated heritage assets.
- 6.33

A further reflection of the area’s institutional use is the incorporation of areas of car parking and public realm around each of the buildings. Public realm is a key characteristic of the TCA. This includes the San Francisco Libre Walk, a paved pedestrian walkway which provides access into the town centre.
- 6.34

The TCA also incorporates the Lavender Place Community Gardens, which comprises an area of green open space, including allotments and mature vegetation. The gardens were formed on the former site of the old civic centre.
- 6.35

The TCA is partially located within an area identified as being appropriate for tall building by the development plan. This thus anticipates an increase in the number of tall buildings within and surrounding the character area. Its sensitivity to tall building development is thus reduced.
- 6.36

Associated viewpoint: None
- 6.37

Townscape value: **Medium**
- TCA5: TOWN CENTRE**
- 6.38

TCA5 comprises the primary shopping area within Reading town centre. It is located to the immediate north of the Site and borders TCA1 on its northern boundary.
- 6.39

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.
- 6.40

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.

- 6.41

The TCA also comprises one of the two main shopping centres within Reading, Broad Street Mall, which opened in 1971 and also incorporates a large multi storey car park and some office use. It comprises a large urban footprint, a reflection of its use and typical composition of associated car parking. The scale of the buildings increases to an 11 storey podium on Broad Street Mall.
- 6.42

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.
- 6.43

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.
- 6.44

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 evidenced by the consented redevelopment of Broad Street Mall Shopping Centre to provide three residential buildings of five to 20 storeys (planning ref: 182137). This has reduced the TCA’s sensitivity to further tall building development.
- 6.45

Associated viewpoint: 12
- 6.46

Townscape value: **Medium**



**Figure 6.8** Historic buildings within Reading town centre



**Figure 6.9** Broad Street Mall within Reading town centre

TOWNSCAPE SUMMARY

- 6.47

**Table 6.1** presents a summary of the townscape receptor baseline information.
- 6.48

Owing to the location of the Proposed Development to the south of the IDR, and the localised impact it will have on the immediate townscape environs within this part of Reading, it is not considered that the Proposed Development has the ability to affect the townscape character of several areas including Townscape Character Area 4 (Civic Centre) and 5 (Town Centre). These townscape character areas will remain unaffected by the Proposed Development and have been scoped out of the wider assessment of this report.

| REF. | TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREA      | TOWNSCAPE VALUE | FULL ASSESSMENT REQUIRED? |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | Large scale commercial/retail | Low             | Yes                       |
| 2    | Historic Core                 | High            | Yes                       |
| 3    | Residential                   | Medium          | Yes                       |
| 4    | Civic Centre                  | Medium          | No                        |
| 5    | Town Centre                   | Medium          | No                        |

**Table 6.1** Summary of Townscape Receptor Baseline.



# 7.0 BASELINE: VISUAL

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

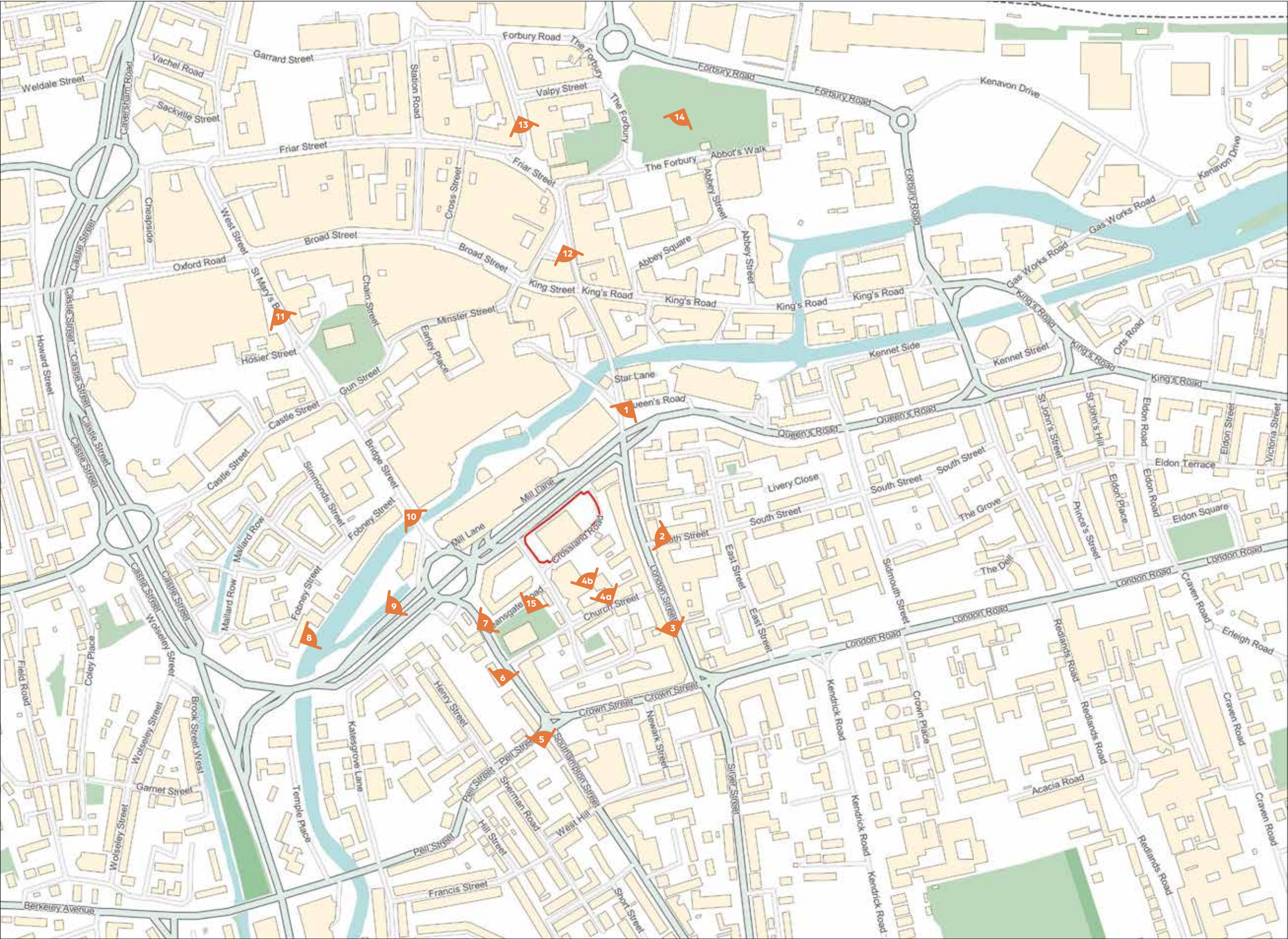
# BASELINE: VISUAL

7.1 A ZTV has been produced to outline the potential areas where the Proposed Development may be visible, up to a 1km from the Site in each direction. The ZTV (see **Figure 2.1**) was prepared by Montagu Evans using VuCity software and 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.

## REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS

7.2 To inform this BHTVIA, 16 Representative Views were selected to the support the assessment of the Proposed Development on surrounding heritage assets, townscape and visual receptors. 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.

7.3 The View Location Plan at **Figure 7.1** identifies the location for the verified views.



VIEWS LOCATION PLAN

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

LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

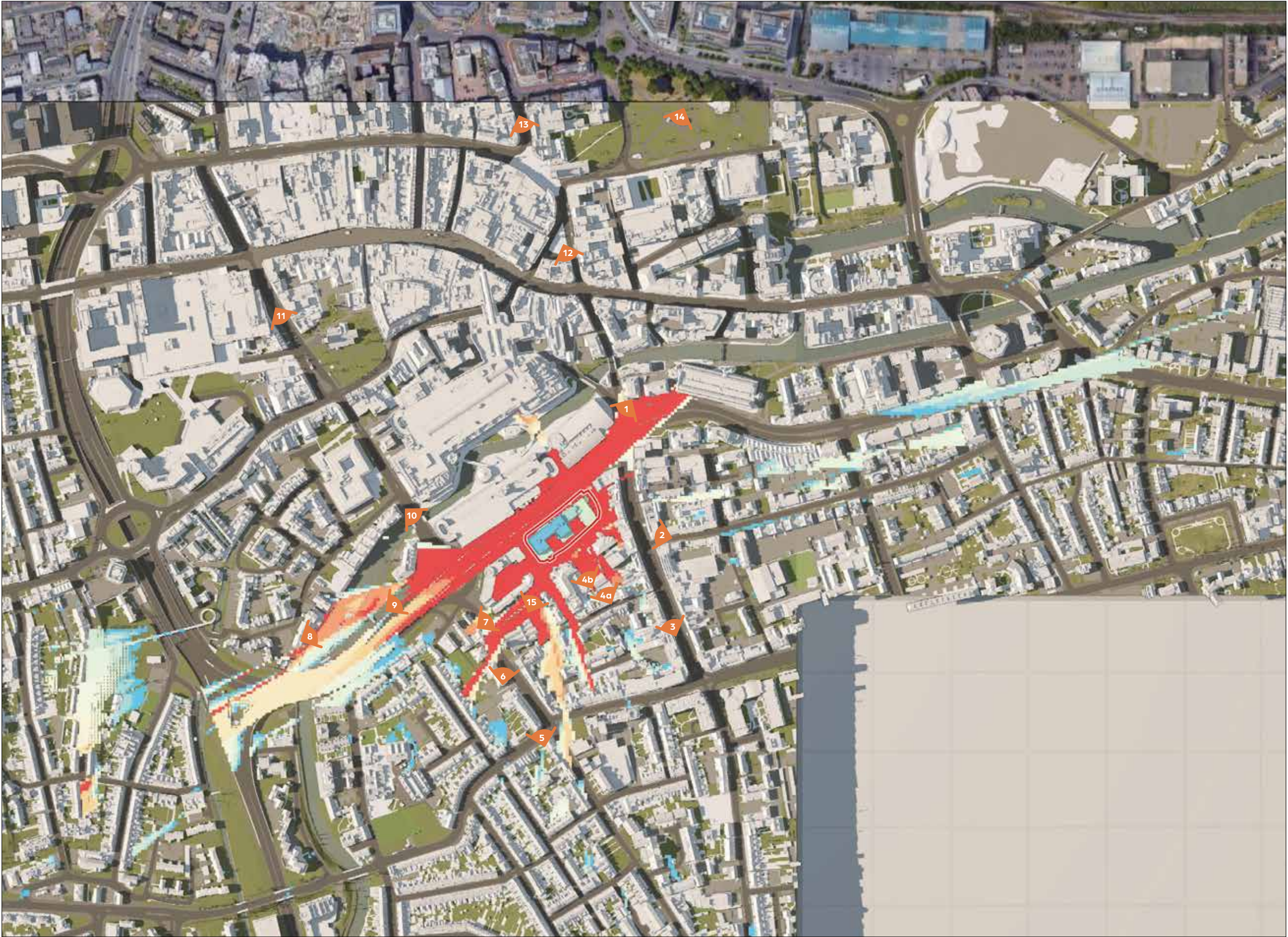
SCALE:  
1:5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 7.1 View Location Plan

▲ NORTH



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CHARTERED SURVEYORS  
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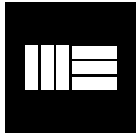
**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
July 2025

**SCALE:**  
1:5,000 @ A3

**FIGURE 7.2** View Location Plan overlaid with ZTV

▲ NORTH



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## LOCAL RESIDENTS

- 7.4 A number of representative views (2,3, 5 6 and 7) have been identified to illustrate the residential experience of receptors within and travelling around the residential areas to the northwest and south of the Site.
- 7.5 There are a number of residential areas located on the edge of the town centre, correlating with TCA3. The streets to the south of the town centre and the Site, comprise a series of x-y orientated, linear streets which also form part of the London Street CA. Most of the houses along here are terraces dating to the 19th century. To the northwest of the Site is a residential pocket comprising a residential estate of houses and flats dating to the late 20th century. It has an enclosed character, defined by dense vegetative borders.
- 7.6 Receptors in the residential areas to the east are likely to be residents of Pell Street, St Giles Close, Church Street and Henry Street. Owing to the enclosed nature of the linear streets, which are characterised by homogenous terraced housing on either side, views out of the area are limited and reserved to views along north-south orientated roads including Pell Street and London Street.
- 7.7 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, particularly in linear views looking north. Receptors will also 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.
- 7.8 The scale of development within the foreground of views from these residential streets, however, in views looking south along Pell Street and London Street the taller scale development including the seven storey Premier Inn and eight storey Oracle Shopping Centre which marks the receptors entrance into the town centre.
- 7.9 Residents of the housing estate to the northwest of the Site, owing to the enclosed nature of the development, may be less aware of the proximity of the town centre. The scale of development in the foreground follows a general datum of two to four storeys, given the homogenisation of architectural form. In views looking east along Maltings Place, the Reading borough Council Offices are discernible to the receptors, and the proximity of the town's civic centre is perceptible.



Figure 7.3 View 2: Junction with South Street/A327. Source: Cityscape



Figure 7.5 View 5: Junction with Pell Street/A327. Source: Cityscape



Figure 7.4 View 3: A327 Looking North. Source: Cityscape



Figure 7.6 View 6: St Giles Church. Source: Cityscape

- 7.10 Whilst the general experience of receptors is largely characterised by smaller scale residential development and amenity uses, intermittent views to the north make the receptor aware of the proximity of the town centre, IDR and larger scale development which aligns it.

- 7.11 Visual amenity value: **Medium**



Figure 7.7 View 7: Deansgate Road. Source: Cityscape

ROAD USERS

- 7.12 View 9 has been identified to illustrate the pattern of vehicular movement along the IDR.
- 7.13 The presence of the IDR ring road which provides access into and within Reading town centre, is located to the immediate north of the Site. The experience of road users will likely be drivers who are primarily concerned with activities and movement associated with the road.
- 7.14 The experience of receptors is defined by the four lanes of the IDR which travels, closest to the Site, on an east to west axis. The linear trajectory of the road forms a central viewing corridor, channelling the eye of the receptor in long views east and westward.
- 7.15 On the northern side of the IDR the townscape is characterised by a mix of residential housing developments, then transitioning to the larger scale and higher density development of the Oracle Shopping Centre and adjacent retail/commercial development.



Figure 7.8 View 9: Bridge Street/A329 looking east. Source: Cityscape

- 7.16 On the southern side of the IDR, the experience of road users is again characterised by a mix of larger scale commercial development on the IDR frontage, which then transitions to lower density housing estates and terraces, the smaller scale of which allows for views of St Giles' Church spire. As receptors travel closer to the Site, their view of the surrounding lower scale residential development is obstructed by the presence of higher density development including the seven storey Premier Inn hotel. Receptors will be aware of the change in built form between the larger scale commercial/retail development that aligns the IDR and the surrounding lower scale residential development to the south.
- 7.17 Given the elevated position of the road infrastructure, long views are afforded across the whole of Reading, from which receptors are able to appreciate the variety in the built form, particularly the range in density, including the town centre and buildings along the IDR increasing the height datum. Receptors will be aware of the heavily urbanised character of Reading and the tight knit grain of development. The principal focus on direction of movement will mean specific urban forms and details remain unnoticed.
- 7.18 Given that the visual experience of the receptor is predominantly characterised by the infrastructure and traffic associated with the IDR, with fleeting views of the wider townscape off Reading, the visual amenity value is identified as being low.
- 7.19 Visual amenity value: **Very Low**

COMMERCE USERS OF READING TOWN CENTRE

- 7.20 A number of representative views (1, 10, 11, 12, 13) have been identified to illustrate the pattern of pedestrian movement through the town centre. Receptors are likely to be commerce and amenity users of the retail and leisure outlets which characterise the town centre.
- 7.21 Reading town centre covers a large area which is centred around the main shopping high street of Broad Street. The area correlates with TCAs 1a and 5 and is surrounded by the A329 ring road (also partially incorporating it) and residential development on the edge of Reading town centre. Some routes within the town centre are completely pedestrianised. This includes Broad Street, Cross Street, Union Street, Butter Market, Town Hall Square and Queen Victoria Street.
- 7.22 Reading town centre has been subject to a high degree of change since the establishment of an urban settlement at the strategic crossing of the River Kennet in the 11th century. After the Second World War, Reading experienced significant change in its built environment and infrastructure. Following the clearance of fine grain, terraced and small residential properties, particularly along Castle Street, this area was infilled with larger urban footprints of the Broad Street Mall Shopping Centre (1971) and the Oracle Shopping centre (1999). As a result of this mixed, eclectic character, Reading town centre is a busy, urban built environment, which, as receptors, travel through, will have an awareness of.
- 7.23 Pedestrians and commuters within this area of visual amenity will be travelling through the retail/commercial core, as well as towards Reading Station. Pedestrians, including commuters, will be focused primarily on navigation from the outskirts of reading town centre to the retail/commercial core, particularly along Broad Street and Friar Street. Commuters are likely to be focused on movement to and from Reading Station, located to the north of the town centre.
- 7.24 To the south of the town centre, the experience of commerce users of the town centre who are approaching from the residential areas to the south, will be aware of the presence and proximity of the IDR. The open trajectory of the dual carriageway allows for long views to the east and west, in which development of a higher density and scale is perceptible.

- 7.25 For amenity users who are likely to be those utilising retail, hospitality and leisure premises; their focus will be reserved to the enjoyment of amenity space, public realm and designated pedestrianised areas. Key areas of public realm include the pedestrianised shopping street of Broad Street, as well as along Oracle Riverside, specifically designed for users of the Oracle Shopping centre.
- 7.26 The range and mix of architectural quality, age and character continues along the principal commercial streets of Broad Street and Friar 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.
- 7.27 In some areas, due to the dominance of the Oracle Shopping Centre and Broad Street Mall shopping centre, the diverse character of the town centre is less discernible and the homogenisation of the town centre by retail development is evident to the receptor.
- 7.28 Visual amenity value: **Low to Medium**



**Figure 7.10** View 10: Bridge Street junction looking south. Source: Cityscape



**Figure 7.12** View 12: Market Place looking south. Source: Cityscape



**Figure 7.9** View 1 Queen's Road/A329 looking West. Source: Cityscape



**Figure 7.11** View 11: The Minster (Grade I) looking south. Source: Cityscape



**Figure 7.13** View 13: Town Hall looking south. Source: Cityscape

AMENITY USERS OF FORBURY GARDENS

- 7.29 View 14 has been identified to illustrate the pedestrian experience of amenity users of Forbury Gardens.
- 7.30 Forbury Gardens is located to the northeast of Reading town centre, and to the northeast of the Site. It is a public park on the site of the outer court of Reading Abbey. The gardens are designated as a Grade II RPG and comprise an open greensward, the topography of which drops down from Forbury Hill. Formal planting and mature trees are a key characteristic of the gardens.
- 7.31 Receptors within Forbury Gardens are likely to be people using the space for amenity and enjoyment, with their focus on the natural landscape, in an otherwise heavily urbanised built environment. Routes through the park orientate around areas of seating and lead to the central statue of the Maiwand Lion (Grade II listed). There is also another listed structure to the southeast of the gardens, the Grade II listed Anglican Cross. Receptors are likely to have an appreciation of these designated heritage assets as they move through the park.



Figure 7.14 View 14: Forbury Gardens looking south. Source: Cityscape

- 7.32 Whilst mature trees are a feature of the park, the lack of vegetation density around the park’s borders allow for views outwards, providing visibility of larger scale, modern developments, including the presence of tall buildings.
- 7.33 Much of the experience from within the park would therefore be that of a major urban centre ‘pocket park’ with receptors having an awareness of the urban environment beyond its boundaries.
- 7.34 View 14 illustrates the experience of users of Forbury Gardens.
- 7.35 Visual amenity value: **Medium**

AMENITY USERS OF QUAKER MEETING HOUSE AND BURIAL GROUND

- 7.36 Views 4a and 4b have been identified to illustrate the experience of visitors to the Grade II listed Quaker Meeting House and associated burial ground.
- 7.37 The experience of the receptors is defined by the complex of buildings that make up the meeting house, as well as the area of green space to the rear, which comprises the burial ground.
- 7.38 The burial ground is characterised by an area of green open space, with a dense vegetative border on the northern, and western boundaries. The burial ground is a pleasant space, featuring formal landscaping, including planting and shrubs. The mature trees within the area provide a sense of visual enclosure and help to screen the surrounding development, reinforcing the quiet and contemplative nature of the space.
- 7.39 Glimpsed views are, however, afforded to the larger scale development comprising the Oracle Shopping Centre car park and warehouse building on Site, to the north of the IDR. This is further facilitated by the changing topography of the burial ground which drops down towards the boundary that aligns with the IDR. To the east, the adjacent residential development is perceptible, providing some visual enclosure to this eastern boundary which lacks more dense vegetative screening. These glimpsed views, becoming more perceptible in winter when the trees have shed their leaf, remind the receptor of the urban location of the Burial Ground and the extent of surrounding built form. This somewhat erodes the tranquil nature of the space.
- 7.40 Given the reflective and contemplative character of this area of visual amenity, receptors are likely to be highly engaged on the immediate environment, which will include the tombs and gravestones of the burial ground.
- 7.41 Visual amenity value: **Medium**



Figure 7.15 View 4A: Church Street looking north (Quaker’s Meeting House)



Figure 7.16 View 4B: View north from within burial ground (Quaker’s Meeting House)

## AMENITY USERS OF THE RIVER KENNET PATH

- 7.42 View 8 has been identified to illustrate the pattern of pedestrian movement along the northern bank of the River Kennet.
- 7.43 Receptors are likely to be pedestrians and amenity users of the pathway, as well as local residents.
- 7.44 The pathway follows the trajectory of the River Kennet, which flows on an east to west axis through the centre of Reading. From further west along the path (articulated by AVR View 9) the experience of the receptor is characterised predominantly by the residential housing estate on the northern side of the river, the body of water and the infrastructure that comprises the elevated IDR. From this direction, the pathway has a more informal character, comprising areas of grassy scrubland and lacking in street furniture or designated areas of public realm.
- 7.45 Whilst the presence of smaller scale housing, some of which is historic, reinforces the residential character on the northern side of the River, views to the opposing side are characterised by the urban nature of the IDR, as well as taller scale commercial and retail development which is perceptible aligning either side of it. The infrastructure of the IDR provides some sense of visual enclosure to the southern side of the River, however, views outwards are still afforded above this, to the taller scale development on the opposing side of the River, as well as the spire of the Church of St Giles.
- 7.46 Linear views looking eastwards enable the receptor to become aware of the proximity of the town centre, the urban forms of which are distinguishable by their large scale and higher density; marking receptors transition from the more residential areas to the east and the busier, retail and commercial core to the west.
- 7.47 As receptors travel eastwards, towards the town centre, the topography of the pathway becomes more elevated and formalised; comprising areas of paved public realm, seating and landscaping. The change in the character of development is perceptible, now comprising higher density, modern retail development of a larger urban footprint. The scale of development provides more visual enclosure, obstructing any long or open views outwards to the development beyond. The urban nature of Reading town centre is readily appreciable from this area of visual amenity.



Figure 7.17 View 8: River Kennet (north bank) looking east. Source: Cityscape

## AMENITY USERS OF ST GILES CHURCHYARD

- 7.48 View 15 has been selected to demonstrate the experience of amenity users of the churchyard of St Giles, as well as visitors to the Grade II listed church.
- 7.49 The churchyard is densely vegetated comprising a number of mature trees as well as shrubbery and planting. A narrow path to the south of the church provides a direct east to west access route, from the surrounding residential areas to the retail and commercial outlets on London Street.
- 7.50 From within the courtyard, receptors will have an awareness of the surrounding urban character, including the busy A-road to the immediate west of the church, and the IDR and associated development to the north.
- 7.51 Receptors using the church and churchyard are likely to have an appreciation of St Giles Church as a heritage asset. Yet in direct views from the church's principal entrance, it's location on the busy A-road is discernible, including the proximity of the urban infrastructure of the IDR and associated commercial/retail development to the north.
- 7.52 Gaps in the treeline will provide visibility to the surrounding residential development, of varying scales, styles and eras. The change in character from the modern development to the north and east and the historic character to the south and west will be particularly pertinent. The difference in character of development will also be noticeable, given the commercial, more urban development which is located along the IDR.



Figure 7.18 View 15: St Giles Churchyard. Source: Cityscape

- 7.53 These changes in the surrounding urban form will be noticeable from the northern part of the churchyard, where the more significant gaps in the tree line allow for such an appreciation. From here, the experience of receptors is likely to be similar to that of a urban 'pocket park', with trees marginally screening the wider, busy and urban environs.
- 7.54 To the south of the churchyard, the experience of the receptor differs, with a much more limited understanding for the surrounding area. Development to the south is located within closer proximity to the church, creating a sense of enclosure within this area, with users of Church Street having a more limited awareness for the urban, modern development to the north. The southern part of the churchyard also has a more historic character, given the presence of the grade II listed St Giles Vicarage.
- 7.55 Visual Amenity Value: **Medium**
- 7.56 In views from along the River Kennet Path, the presence of the IDR and taller scale development which aligns it is more perceptible to receptors.
- 7.57 Visual Amenity Value: **Low to Medium**

REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS

- 7.58     Pre-application discussions with the LPA identified 15 AVRs to support the assessment. The location of the representative views has been informed by the preparation of the ZTV and the two sets of data are overlaid at **Figure 7.2**. The existing and proposed photography for each view is provided at **Appendix 1.0**.
- 7.59     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**.

SUMMARY

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

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

**Table 7.1**     Summary of Visual Receptor Baseline.

**8.0**

# **PRE-APPLICATION AND POST SUBMISSION ENGAGEMENT**

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

# PRE-APPLICATION AND POST SUBMISSION ENGAGEMENT

## PRE-SUBMISSION

- 8.1 The proposals were subject to extensive pre-application engagement with RBC prior to submission in August 2024. Pre-application engagement was begun in December 2020.
- 8.2 Meetings were held in August, October and November 2023, and in January and March 2024 (8 pre-application meetings in total), of which Montagu Evans were involved with from October 2023.
- 8.3 In addition to pre-application engagement with the Council, the Design Southeast Review Panel was consulted in February 2024. A summary of the pre-submission pre-application feedback and consultation comments is provided in **Appendix 4.o**.
- 8.4 As part of the pre-application process, The Mid Thames Quakers and St Giles Church group were also engaged with, the details of which are included within the Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Cratus.

## POST-SUBMISSION

- 8.5 Following submission in August 2024, the Applicant has engaged in extensive consultation with the Council and other consultees including Reading Design Review Panel. Further comments were received from the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee and Katesgrove Community Association.
- 8.6 This post-submission consultation has informed the revisions to the submitted scheme which are summarised below:
  - 8.6.1 Reduction from 215 to 170 units;
  - 8.6.2 Changes to proposed height and massing, including – reduction along Mill Lane frontage from max. GF+10 storeys to max. GF+7 storeys, stepping down to GF+5 storeys along Crossland Road to the south and east towards the Conservation Area. Small ‘hib’ introduced at eastern end adjacent to Central Club;

- 8.6.3 Updates to detailed elevation design, including – revisions relating to brickwork detailing, metal cladding, a strong and well defined parapet line, introduction of Juliet balconies to part of Mill Lane frontage, and further articulation along frontage;
- 8.6.4 Setting back building along Letcombe Street to introduce greening and setting back of ‘middle finger’ on Crossland Road to unify garden spaces;
- 8.6.5 Introduction of 4 no. ground floor apartments with defensible space to Crossland Road;
- 8.6.6 Updates to proposed unit mix;
- 8.6.7 Internal changes to ground floor layout including relocation of flexible community space;
- 8.6.8 Removal of bin chutes throughout;
- 8.6.9 Removal of disabled car parking provision and on-street ‘essential use’ car parking spaces; and
- 8.6.10 Increased greening and improved pedestrian footway arrangements to eastern side of Crossland Road.
- 8.7 Owing to the nature and scale of the changes, it has been necessary to review the assessment of the submitted scheme.

**9.0**

# **ASSESSMENT: HERITAGE**

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

# ASSESSMENT: HERITAGE

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



## HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

Application Site

Conservation Areas

- A. Market Place and London Street
- B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
- C. Kendrick Road
- D. Eldon Square

Listed Buildings

Grade I

- 1. Church of St Mary
- 2. Church of St Laurence
- 3. Abbey Gate
- 4. Reading Abbey Ruins

Grade II\*

- 5. 3 and 75, London Street
- 6. 78-84, Southampton Street
- 7. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From Su71441/73234 to 71327/73133
- 8. The Simeon Monument
- 9. 15, Castle Street
- 10. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block
- 11. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings
- 12. Church of St Mary
- 13. Albion Place
- 14. St David's Hall
- 15. Holybrook House
- 16. Reading Town Hall

Grade II

Numbers 17-138 - see overleaf.

Registered Park and Gardens

- 139. The Forbury Garden(Grade II)

Scheduled Monuments

- 140. High Bridge
- 141. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.

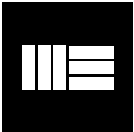
LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

SCALE:  
1: 5,000 @ A3

FIGURE 9.1 Heritage Asset Plan overlaid with ZTV

▲ NORTH



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LISTED BUILDINGS

LISTED BUILDINGS ON LONDON STREET

- 9.2
- The Proposed Development would be located 15m to the west and northwest of heritage assets in this group at the closest point. The group includes:
  - 54-58, London Street – Map Ref 17
  - 48-52, London Street – Map Ref 18
  - 62-66, London Street – Map Ref 19
  - 44 and 46, London Street – Map Ref 20
  - 68, 70, and 72, London Street – Map Ref 22
  - Nos 49-53 London Street – Map Ref 24
  - 41, London Street – Map Ref 25
  - 37 and 39, London Street – Map Ref 26
  - 35, London Street – Map Ref 31
  - No 33 (Former Everyman Theatre) – Map Ref 32
- 9.3
- The Proposed Development will introduce a new residential building to the wider setting of the listed buildings on London Street.
- 9.4
- The new building would be visible only at the rear of the listed buildings on the west side of Southampton Street. The Proposed Development has been designed to mitigate its impact on the setting of the listed buildings on London Street, within the CA. The massing of the building steps down considerably towards the east end of the Site, in response to the established building height of the historic ribbon development on London Street. The Proposed Development will replace an unattractive warehouse, palisade fencing and hardstanding on the Site with a carefully designed residential building and landscaped gardens. The Proposed Development would therefore improve the setting to the rear of the listed buildings.
- 9.5
- The rear of the buildings on Crossland Road are secondary in interest to the principal elevations on London Street. In this location, the Proposed Development would be almost entirely occluded except for at the northern end of London Street.
- 9.6
- The Proposed Development will preserve the intrinsic interest of the buildings in this group and the important historic and visual setting relationship between the heritage assets which line the thoroughfare would be maintained.

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

- 9.7
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 50m to the north of the Site.
- 9.8
- The Proposed Development would introduce a new building in the setting of the Meeting House. Through the Proposed Development, modern mid-rise development would be brought closer to the listed building, therefore intensifying the established urban context to the north. When approaching the building from Church Street, the Proposed Development would fall below the ridge line of the Meeting House and be hidden from view. This is demonstrated by View 4A.
- 9.9
- The Proposed Development has been designed to reduce the impact of a building of increased scale on the setting of heritage assets to the south and west.
- 9.10
- The massing of the building has been distributed to focus the taller elements of the scheme on the northern boundary of the Site, along Mill Lane. The rear of the building comprises three projecting blocks which step down towards Crossland Road. The blocks closest to the Quaker Meeting House (on the southern half of the Site) step down from eight to six storeys to address the most sensitive park of the Site. From within this space, the Proposed Development will not exceed and accords with the height datum set by Saxon House, which is prominent in the foreground of the views from the burial grounds
- 9.11
- The Proposed Development would occlude views of the Oracle Shopping Centre from within the setting of the listed building which is a benefit to the experience of views from within the Meeting House burial grounds. The materiality and form of the Oracle is incongruous in views north from the burial ground. The façade treatment of the Proposed Development will introduce greater variation and a materiality which responds positively to the established urban context.
- 9.12
- The materiality of the Proposed Development, which utilises red brick across the majority of the rear elevation, responds to the local vernacular materials of the listed building, and in turn the existing modern development to the rear of the Meeting House. The use of a lighter cladding at the upper storeys helps to reduce the visual prominence of the Proposed Development.
- 9.13
- Through the Proposed Development, the intrinsic special interest of the listed building, lying primarily in its association with the Quakers movement, is preserved.

- 9.14
- The Proposed Development would bring modern development closer to the boundary of the burial ground; however, this change would occur in the context of the existing setting to the Meeting House, which comprises modern residential and commercial development of three to nine storeys.
- 9.15
- The built form of the Proposed Development would be separated from the burial ground by the historic boundary wall, mature trees, Crossland Road, and the landscaped public realm within the Site. As such, the enclosed character of the courtyard and burial ground, which contributes to the quiet and contemplative character of the Meeting House grouping,.
- 9.16
- The Proposed Development may reduce noise pollution arising from the A329, which would help to maintain the contemplative character of the space. Historic England's GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets identifies the contribution made by environmental factors such as noise to the experience of a heritage asset within its setting.
- 9.17
- Within the Meeting House grouping, the spatial and functional relationship between the Meeting House and the burial ground which contributes to the special interest of the listed building would be maintained.
- 9.18
- The proposals will deliver beneficial changes within the setting of the Quaker Meeting House which include public realm and landscaping, and community space. Overall, we identify no harm to the setting of the Meeting House.

LISTED BUILDINGS ON CHURCH STREET

- 9.19
- The Proposed Development would be located approximately 75m to the north of the group at the closest point. This assets in this group includes:
  - 6b, Church Street – Map Ref 27
  - 6a, Church Street – Map Ref 28
  - 6c, Church Street – Map Ref 30
  - 11, Church Street – Map Ref 34
  - 7 and 9, Church Street – Map Ref 36
- 9.20
- The Proposed Development would introduce a new building to the north of the Church Street. The building would be largely occluded by interposing development and visibility would be limited to building gaps, principally the entrance to the Meeting House complex. Where visible, only the top two to three storeys of the Proposed Development would appear and would be understood as an incidental feature of the existing urban context to the north.

9.21 The introduction of a new building and increased density within the Site would have no effect on the setting of these heritage assets, nor their intrinsic interest as examples of 18th and 19th century domestic development. Through the Proposed Development, the setting relationship between the assets within the group, and importantly the ribbon development of London Street and the Church of St Giles to the west is preserved.

LISTED BUILDINGS IN CHURCH OF ST GILES GROUP

9.22 The Church of St Giles and the associated group of heritage assets is located approximately 70m to the southwest of the Site, on Southampton Street. This group includes:

- Wall Enclosing St Giles' Vicarage (Grade II) – Map Ref 38
- Church of and Churchyard Tombs (Grade II) – Map Ref 39
- St Giles Vicarage (Grade II) – Map Ref 41
- St Giles War Shrine (Grade II) – Map Ref 45

9.23 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 70m to the northeast of the heritage assets in this group. The heritage assets form a distinct group with a shared functional and visual relationship associated with their ecclesiastical use.

9.24 The Proposed Development would introduce a new building in the wider setting of the heritage assets, which would be intermittently visible, primarily in and around the churchyard of St Giles. The immediate setting of the Church of St Giles is formed by the churchyard, which is planted with mature trees which create a sense of green enclosure in an otherwise intensely urban environment.

9.25 Views out of the churchyard, to the north and east, are characterised by modern and large-scale development, and the Proposed Development would be understood as part of this established context. In views out of the church yard and east on Deansgate Road, the architectural treatment of the western façade would be discernible. Through the Proposed Development the intimate setting relationship between the church and the church yard is preserved.

9.26 Through the introduction of the Proposed Development, the spire of St Giles would be occluded from views from the north of London Street, as demonstrated by View 1. Pre-application advice letter identified harm from the loss of views of the spire in this location. We do not identify any harm in the loss of visibility of the spire in this location, as it is not considered

a key view that best displays the historic or architectural interest of the listed church. We note also that the consented scheme to the east of the Site (planning application ref. 221364) will occlude the spire in this view. The primacy of the spire, a quality which contributes to its interest, would be preserved throughout the local area, notably in views on Church Street and Southampton Street (Local View 2).

9.27 In close range views of the heritage assets, the Proposed Development would be largely occluded. Views 7 and 15 demonstrate where the west elevation of the Proposed Development would be visible within the wider setting of the Church. The west elevation has a residential character and regular appearance with red brick and glazing. The stepped form, from eight to six storeys, would be visible from this location. The Proposed Development would appear in the context of existing modern residential and commercial development to the south of the IDR, and on Deansgate Road and Church Street. From the southwest, the stepping down of the Proposed Development towards the lower scale historic development to the south is appreciable.

9.28 On Church Street, where there is an important setting interaction between the church and the Vicarage, and there would be no intervisibility between the Development and the listed buildings in this location.

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

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

9.30 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 185m to the east of the listed buildings.

9.31 The setting of the listed buildings has been entirely eroded through modern development and infrastructure. The Proposed Development would appear as a peripheral and incidental feature of the wider urban setting of the listed buildings. When looking west at the principal façades of the buildings, the Proposed Development would be entirely out of view.

9.32 Through the Proposed Development, the Site would continue to make a neutral contribution to the setting and therefore significance of the listed buildings. The intrinsic special interest of the buildings is preserved.

63 SOUTHAMPTON STREET AND 50 CROWN STREET - MAP REF 54

9.33 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 185m to the north of the listed building.

9.34 The Proposed Development would introduce a modern building of scale to the setting of the building and the two buildings would be viewed in conjunction. In longer distant views looking north on Southampton Street, the upper two to three storeys of the new building would be partially visible above the roofline of 63 Southampton Street and 50 Crown Street.

9.35 In this location, the separating distance between the listed building and the Development would be discernible and the roofline of the building, including the chimneys, would remain visible. Moving north on Southampton Street towards the principal façade of the building, the Proposed would be entirely occluded.

9.36 Through the Proposed Development the intrinsic interest of the listed building as an example of vernacular architecture would be preserved. The setting relationship between the listed building and the historic development which lines Southampton Street would be maintained.

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

9.37 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 230m to the north of the listed buildings.

9.38 The Proposed Development would appear as a new building in the wider setting of the listed buildings in this group. Looking north on Southampton Street there would be a kinetic experience of the Proposed Development, with the upper two to three storeys of the Proposed Development coming in and out of view. There would be no direct interaction between the listed buildings on the west side of Southampton Street and the Development. Looking west at the principal façades of the buildings in this group, the Proposed Development would be entirely out of view.

9.39 Where visible, the Proposed Development would be appreciated as an incidental feature of the wider skyline. There is an established character of modern and tall development in views north towards the commercial centre of Reading and the Proposed Development would be understood in this context.

9.40 Through the Proposed Development, the special interest of the listed buildings as examples of 18th and 19th century development would be preserved. The setting relationship between the buildings and other historic development on Southampton Road, which contributes to its interest would be maintained.

QUEEN'S CRESCENT – MAP REF 67

9.41 The Proposed Development would be located approximately 205m to the west of the listed buildings on Queen's Crescent.

9.42 The Proposed Development would introduce a new building to the wider setting of the listed buildings, separated physically and visually by interposing development.

9.43 Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the terrace would be extremely limited, with only the crown of the tallest element of the Proposed Development visible above the roofline of the crescent in longer distance views from the east. In this location, the Proposed Development would be experienced kinetically and would be occluded as one moves west on Queen's Road. In closer range views, where the architectural quality of the Georgian terrace is best appreciated, the Proposed Development would be entirely occluded.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Listed Buildings on South Street and Sidmouth Street

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

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

9.50 At this distance, the Proposed Development would be largely occluded by interposing development and the separating distance between the heritage assets on South Street and Sidmouth Street, and the new building would be readily appreciated. Intervisibility between the heritage assets and the Proposed Development would be extremely limited, confined to building gaps and axial views on roads. In longer distance views from within the setting of these assets, only the upper two to three storeys would be visible and would appear as an incidental feature in the wider roofscape of Reading.

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

CONSERVATION AREAS

LONDON STREET/ MARKET PLACE CONSERVATION AREA – MAP REF A

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

9.53 The Proposed Development would introduce a mid-rise, modern residential building to the setting of the CA. In Sub Area 2 of the CA, there would be intermittent visibility of the Proposed Development, focused on the north end of Southampton Street, the A329 and around the church of St Giles. The principal façade of the Development would be appreciated from the junction of the A329.

9.54 On Church Street, the Proposed Development would come into view in axial views north (where Church Street meets St Giles Close). On the narrow lane leading west from London Street (where the CAA identifies a key view of St Giles), the Proposed Development would be completely occluded by the Quakers Meeting House and the other listed Buildings which line the north side of the Church Street.

9.55 Where visible within this small part of the CA, the Proposed Development would be understood as part of the existing modern development to the north and the relationship between the designated and non-designated heritage assets within the CA would be preserved.

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

9.57 The CA boundary defines an enclave of historic development which is enclosed to the north, east and west by modern large-scale development. In the context of this established setting, the Proposed Development will replace the unattractive light-industrial structure, hardstanding and fencing which currently occupies the Site. Along the north-and-western boundary of the CA, the Proposed Development would be an improvement on detracting appearance of the IDR and Oracle Shopping centre.

- 9.58
- The Proposed Development steps down in height to the south and east on Crossland Road, towards the lower scale of the CA. The chosen materiality of the Proposed Development reflects the local and historic material of the CA, and Reading more widely, in the use of red and grey brick. The south elevation incorporates panels of diaper pattern brick work, which is a distinctive local feature.
- 9.59
- In this part of the CA, green space is limited to the Quaker burial ground and St Giles’ churchyard. The Proposed Development will encourage movement along the northern boundary of the CA by incorporating a large area of landscaping, which will be open to the public. The gardens will incorporate raised planters, green walls, hedges, shrubs and benches and would be a marked improvement on the existing condition of the Site.
- 9.60
- The IDR and the modern development which lines it to the north and south has a character that is distinct from the historic development of the CA. In contrast to the lower scale buildings of the CA, which are constructed in local vernacular materials, these buildings are larger in scale and display modern materials including cladding and perforated metal sheeting. The Proposed Development has been designed to mediate between these two contrasting areas by incorporating the materials of the CA and stepping down from eight storeys to five at the eastern end.
- 9.61
- Through the Proposed Development, the character and appearance of the CA, defined by fine historic urban grain and ecclesiastical buildings, would be preserved.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 9.62
- The cumulative scheme (Central Club, planning ref. 221364) set out in **Section 2.0** has been considered in terms of potential effects on heritage assets within the study area. This scheme is illustrated in the diametric image at **Figure 2.2**.
- 9.63
- The cumulative scheme is a four-storey residential and community use building located within the CA boundary, on the opposite side of Crossland Road to the Site. The Proposed Development would be visible in conjunction with the adjacent cumulative scheme, particularly in views from the northeast, within the London Street/Market Place CA.
- 9.64
- The IDR and the adjacent development has an modern urban character which is distinct from the historic development of the CA. The Proposed Development alongside the cumulative scheme would be read and understood alongside the existing and emerging development on the IDR.
- 9.65
- We note that views of the church of St Giles from the north of London Street would be occluded by the Central Club scheme (planning ref. 221364). The committee report for this consented scheme does not identify harm from the loss of visibility of the spire in this view.
- 9.66
- In the cumulative scenario, the judgements of impact on the heritage assets found in this assessment would remain the same.



**10.0**

# **ASSESSMENT: TOWNSCAPE**

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

# ASSESSMENT: TOWNSCAPE

- 10.1
- The following section assess the effect of the Proposed Development on the identified townscape character set out in **Section 6.0**.
- 10.2
- The Design and Access Statement prepared by CJCT provides a detailed discussion on the design rationale and architectural approach. The immediate townscape environs of the Site comprise the busy, urban IDR to the north, with the built form comprising the Oracle Shopping Centre and Reading town centre beyond. The Site is in a highly sustainable location, being a 13-minute walk to Reading Station, which provides links to London and the south-west.
- 10.3
- The Site is located within close proximity to the Market Place and London Street CA, to the immediate east, which includes a high number of grade II\* and II listed buildings. To the immediate south is the grade II Reading Quaker Meeting House, and to the southwest is the grade II listed Church of St Giles, beyond which is a large-scale residential area.
- TOWNSCAPE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
- 10.4
- The Site is considered appropriate for a building of the Proposed scale and height for the following reasons.
- 10.5
- The Site is located between three townscape character areas: TCA1: Large Scale Commercial, TCA2: Historic Core and TCA3: Residential.
- 10.6
- The existing townscape character of TCA 1 (within which the Site is located), specifically 1b, is that of mid-rise commercial and retail development of up to nine storeys, which occupy large building plots. The townscape character along the IDR is fragmented and the busy road is a barrier between development to the north and south. The Site turns its back on the pedestrian experience along this busy route in the current condition.

- 10.7
- The Site, comprising a modern two storey warehouse and areas of open hardstanding, has a poor relationship with the pedestrian environment, and to the buildings on the north and south side of the IDR. At present, there is no public access or clear entrances to the Site, and it does not encourage pedestrian movement along Mill Lane or Crossland Road. The existing Site creates a break in the urban fabric of the busy arterial route, through its low scale, large areas of hardstanding and lack of a defined building line.
- 10.8
- Within TCA1, there is variety in building heights. Immediately to the north of the IDR and seen in combination with the Site in views west and east along the IDR are the Oracle Shopping Centre, multistorey car park and Vue Cinema. The buildings in proximity to the site on the IDR and which form the building line and height context to the north are up to nine storeys (Oracle) and use modern materials including cladding and perforated metal sheets.
- 10.9
- On the south side of Mill Lane (within TCA1), buildings are of a lower scale at two to seven storeys. To the west of the Site, the Premier Inn has a stepped form, increasing from three to seven storeys on the north west corner, at the junction of Mill Lane and Southampton Road.
- 10.10
- There are significant opportunities to improve the way buildings on this site contribute to the public realm, both through built form and landscaping, and improve the experience of the townscape in this location on the edge of the Conservation Area. A detailed analysis of how the proposals present an enhancement to the townscape character of TCA1 is set out later in this section.
- 10.11
- The quantum of development on the Site has been driven by the desire to make best use of the land in this central Reading location. The height, form and architectural treatment of the development has been designed to integrate the Site with its surroundings by responding to the existing townscape and heritage context.
- 10.12
- This is especially clear in the height strategy and the differentiation in heights of the Proposed Development. The existing buildings on the four sides of the Site comprise:
  - Nine storey Oracle Shopping Centre, multistorey car park and Vue Cinema to the north;

- Seven storey Premier Inn to the west;
  - One to four storey buildings on London Street within the Market Place/ London Street CA; and
  - The undeveloped green space of the Quaker Meeting House burial ground.
- 10.13
- The proposed residential building has been designed to fit into this context, addressing the IDR and stepping down towards the lower building heights of the CA and Quaker Meeting House.
- 10.14
- The Proposed Development focuses massing along the northern boundary of the Site, reaching eight storeys to the northwest. The height and massing of the building would reflect the established scale of development within TCA1 and along the IDR, which reaches heights of nine storeys. A building of similar scale provides visual balance between the north and south sides of the IDR.
- 10.15
- The introduction of a building of greater height and scale in this location is not incongruous in the setting of the listed buildings on London Street, where the nine storey Oracle is visible to the rear. The building has been designed to mediate between the contrasting building heights of TCA1 and 2, stepping down to five and six storeys to the south and east of the Site where building heights on London Street and Crossland Road are typically three and four storeys. In the cumulative scenario, the Proposed Development would step down to five storeys adjacent to the four storey Central Club development.
- 10.16
- The façade treatment along the north elevation (which uses vertical setback panels) has been designed to break down the massing of the building and introduce a rhythm which replicates the ribbon development of London Street, incorporating traditional building materials and responding to the architectural language used on the Premier Inn.



## TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- Application Site
- 1 a. Large scale commercial/retail  
b. Large scale commercial  
c. Large scale commercial
- 2 a. Historic core  
b. Historic core  
c. Historic core
- 3 a. Residential  
b. Residential
- 4 a. Civic centre  
b. Civic centre
- 5. Town centre

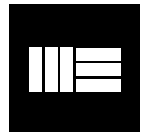
**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
July 2025

**SCALE:**  
1:5,000 @ A3

**FIGURE 10.1** Townscape Character Area Plan  
overlaid with ZTV

▲ NORTH



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CHARACTER AREA 1: LARGE SCALE COMMERCIAL

10.17 TCA1 has a **High** susceptibility to the Proposed Development, given the Site is located within this Character Area. When calibrated with the Low value of the area, the subsequent sensitivity is **Medium**.

HEIGHT, SCALE AND MASSING

- 10.18 The Proposed Development will introduce a new building of up to eight storeys, which will replace the former John Lewis warehouse on Site. The new building will provide new build to rent homes, which reflects the emerging residential use of TCA1, as evidenced by the draft site allocation and other submitted applications within the area.
- 10.19 The height of the building at five to eight storeys is in line with the existing mid-rise building heights throughout the TCA, particularly on the IDR. This is reflected by 'low' sensitivity to tall building development identified for the area within *Reading's Tall Building Strategy (2018)*.
- 10.20 The Proposed Development has been designed to position the greatest height in the less sensitive, northern parts of the Site, in response to the scale of buildings which line the IDR, including The Oracle Shopping Centre and Vue Cinema (nine storeys). The eight storey block on the northern frontage of the Site mirror the building line and scale of the Oracle opposite; introducing a consistency to the streetscape.
- 10.21 The Proposed Development reduces in height from eight storeys to five storeys on the eastern boundary to Crossland Road. The building incorporates vertical recesses and a variation in the roof line and parapet height, which reduces the appearance of massing on the principal façade, particularly when viewed from the east (View 1) within the TCA, which also creating visual interest.
- 10.22 When viewed from the west, the building forms a cohesive grouping with the seven storey Premier Inn building, which also incorporates a stepped form.
- 10.23 Located at the boundary of TCA 1 and TCA 2, the Proposed Development mediates between the lower scale of the historic core to the south and larger scale commercial buildings to the north. The Proposed Development reduces in height to the south of the building, from eight to six storeys on the southern boundary. The building incorporates three projecting bays, which reduces the density of development on Crossland Road.



Figure 10.2 CGI of principal elevation to Mill Lane, from east. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.

FAÇADE TREATMENT AND MATERIALITY

10.24 The Proposed Development has a clear base, middle and top. The base is defined by a tall single storey which is recessed behind a colonnade to provide greater public realm along the northern boundary of the Site. The Proposed Development seeks to maintain the strong building line along the IDR, which is a key characteristic of the TCA. The introduction of an open ground floor, with a well-defined principal entrance will provide better visual permeability and will enhance the building’s relationship with the street.

10.25 The middle of the building is characterised by blocks separated by vertical set back elements which are clad in aluminium. There is some variation between the eastern and western portions of the principal façade. These design elements provide visual interest and help to reduce the appearance of massing, particularly in axial views from the east. This is further emphasised through the variation in façade treatment across the principal façade, with different brick tones, window treatment and parapet heights. Some vertical blocks incorporate recessed balconies and decorative brick work, to again give the impression of a series of buildings.

10.26 The top of the building is defined by aluminium cladding with vertical banding which is set back from the brick façade. The set back and lighter colour of the cladding provides relief at roof level and reduces the visual prominence of the building.

10.27 The Proposed Development incorporates the colours and materials of the local area. The use of different tones of red brick, in combination with grey brick and the incorporation of diaper brick work references local building traditions and materials.

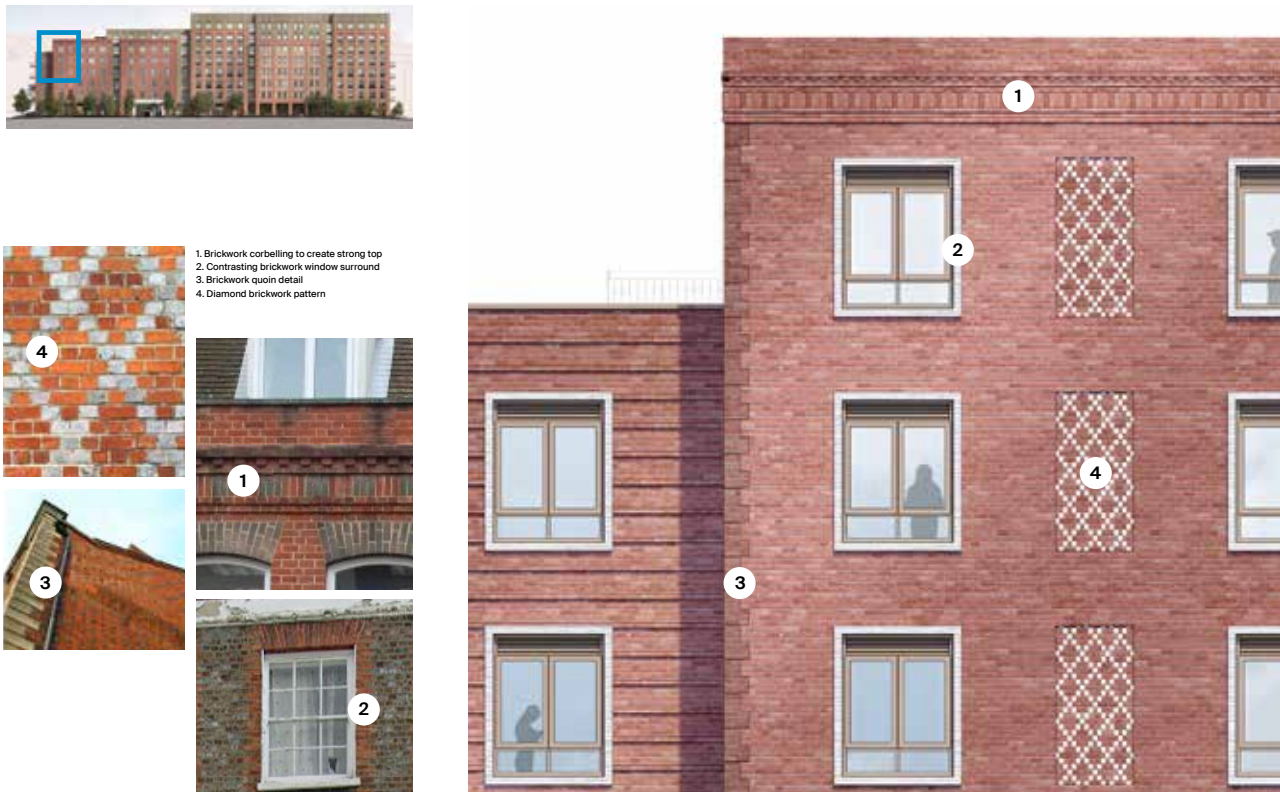


Figure 10.3 Bay study of eastern block of principal elevation. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.

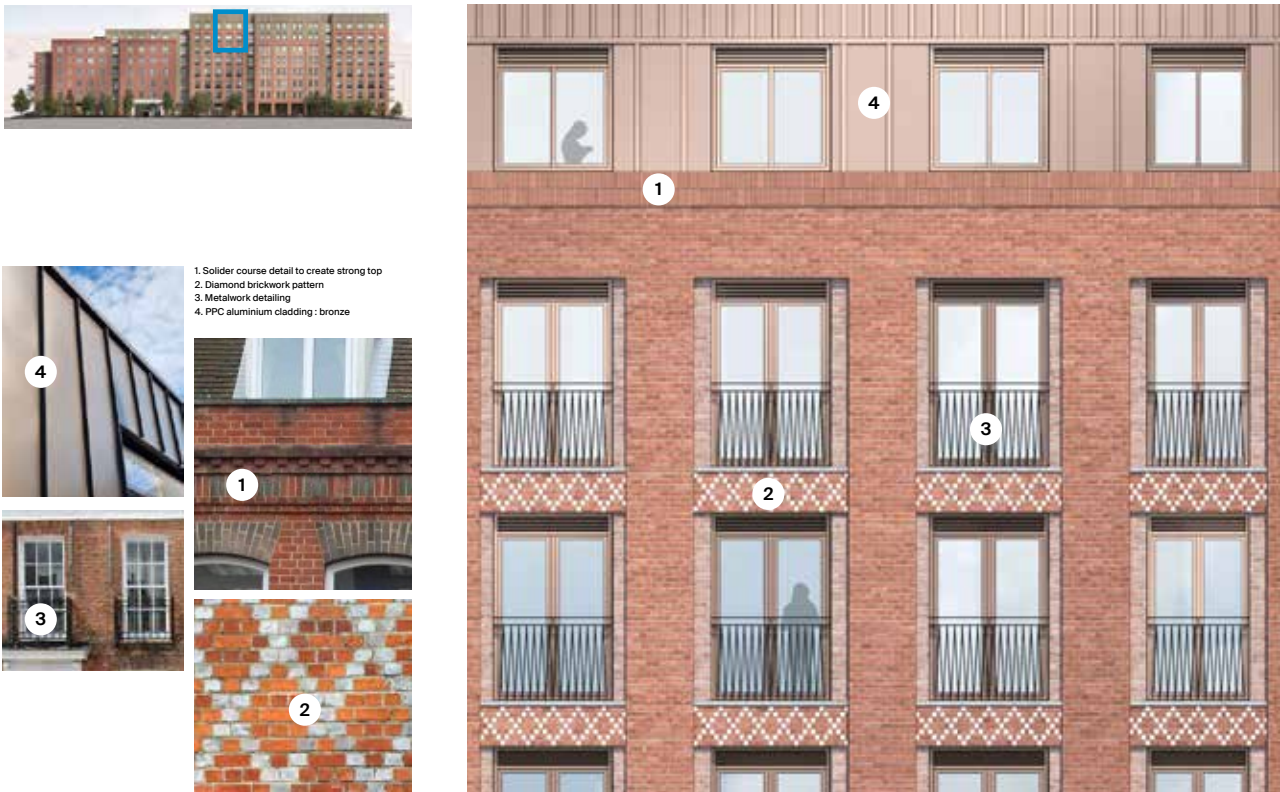


Figure 10.4 Bay study of central block of principal elevation. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.

## LANDSCAPING AND PUBLIC REALM

- 10.28 The Proposed Development incorporates improvements to the public realm and landscaping of the Site. The Proposed Development would ensure the removal of the hostile palisade fencing and hard standing which surround the Site currently. The Proposed Development would introduce an increased area of public realm along the northern boundary of the Site, incorporating planting beds and new paving. The introduction of additional planting, active frontages and a colonnade at ground floor on Letcombe Street would be a marked improvement on the existing condition of the Site.
- 10.29 On Crossland Road, the boundary of the Site would be marked by a brick boundary wall and hedge planting. The Proposed Development would introduce an area of publicly accessible landscaped open space which wraps around the projecting bays of the building. The amenity space, comprising a mix of small trees, shrubs, herbaceous planting and landscaped areas, will improve the appearance of the TCA. The incorporation of open green space to the rear of the Site will encourage pedestrian movement away from the IDR, offering new links to the areas south of the busy arterial road.
- 10.30 For the reasons outlined above, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Medium** magnitude of impact on TCA<sub>1</sub>, resulting in an effect **of Moderate Beneficial**. A beneficial effect is identified for the redevelopment of a Site which is currently a detracting feature within the TCA, and its replacement with a building of contextual design, which revitalises the Site and surrounding townscape with a use that is more aligned to the emerging policy aspirations for the area.



**Figure 10.5** CGI showing principal entrance and landscaping to Mill Lane. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.



**Figure 10.6** CGI showing landscaping within publicly accessible open space to rear of Site. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.



**Figure 10.7** CGI showing aerial view of landscaping within publicly accessible open space, incorporating hard and soft landscaping, and seating.

CHARACTER AREA 2: HISTORIC CORE

- 10.31 TCA2: has a **Medium** susceptibility to the Proposed Development, given the largely localised impact on the northwestern part of the TCA. When calibrated with the High value of the area, this will result in a sensitivity of Medium to High. Applying professional judgement and considered the localised impact on only part of the TCA, the sensitivity is judged to be **Medium**.
- 10.32 The Proposed Development will have a localised effect on the north and northwest part of Townscape Character Area 2. The proposals include the integration of active frontages at the ground floor of the building, at the eastern end of the building. The introduction of active frontages at this level references the character of buildings within TCA2, particularly those that incorporate a residential use at the upper floors, with an active, commercial or retail use at ground floor. There will be an appreciation of

this in views from the northern element of the TCA, looking westwards. The provision of active frontages and improved public realm immediately surrounding the Site, including the removal of palisade railings and hardstanding would enhance the pedestrian experience on Letcombe Street and Crossland Street..

10.33 The scale of the building, at five to eight storeys, has been reduced towards the low-scale character of the buildings comprising TCA2. The arrangement of storey heights has incorporated lower scale blocks of five and six storeys to the east of the Site, in closest proximity with TCA2. Further features including a distinguished base, middle and crown seek to mitigate the impact of scale, adding a human proportionality to the building. The top of the building will be particularly distinguishable through the use of lighter, aluminium cladding and parapet detailing. The visibility of this element of the building from within TCA2, will have a wayfinding

function and thus increased permeability in northerly pedestrian routes along London Street.

10.34 The upper elements will be visible from parts of the TCA. The materiality of the building has been selected to reference the historic character of the surrounding townscape, particularly the buildings which are located along London Street, within TCA2. The use of red and grey bricks and brickwork detailing, which are prevailing material characteristics of the TCA, seek to integrate the proposals within their surrounding townscape context.

10.35 The integration of an integrated amenity space along Crossland Road, which will be publicly accessible, would provide relief and greenery, including trees and planting in an otherwise densely urban environment. The position of the garden aligns with the Quaker Burial ground within TCA2, giving Crossland Road a greener character and creating a more appealing pedestrian environment.



Figure 10.8 Bay study of rear elevation of building showing integration of historic brickwork patterns. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.



Figure 10.9 CGI showing stepped massing to rear of Proposed Development, and boundary treatment and landscaping to Crossland Road. Source: DAS prepared by CJCT.

10.36 For the reasons outline above, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Low** magnitude of impact eon TCA2: Historic Core, resulting in an effect of **Minor Beneficial**. A beneficial nature of effect is identified given the introduction of a high-quality building of scale, the architectural quality of which will be visible from within TCA2, as well as the upgrades to public realm and amenity space which will enhance permeability and wayfinding from within the TCA and contribute to a wider strategy for increased public realm amenity and activation.

CHARACTER AREA 3: RESIDENTIAL

10.37 TCA3 has a **Medium** susceptibility to the Proposed Development, given that the Proposed Development will have a localised impact on the northern element of the TCA. When calibrated with the Medium value of the TCA, the subsequent sensitivity is **Medium**.

10.38 The provision of a new building comprising build to rent flats, would accord with the existing residential character and uses in the surrounding townscape, including TCA3.

10.39 In views looking north from within the TCA, towards the Site and the IDR, the mid-rise building of up to eight storeys will be perceptible. The Proposed Development would appear as a transitional building, mediating between the height of the commercial and relate buildings on the IDR (up to nine storeys) and the lower scale residential development.

10.40 The building height steps down to six storeys on the southern boundary, helping to mediate between the scale of the residential buildings within the TCA. The impact of the increased massing on the Site is further mitigated through the use of three projecting north-south blocks and the stepping of the uppers storeys.

10.41 The Proposed Development evokes the local building materials of the modern and historic residential development to the south in the use of red brick tones and grey brick detailing, helping to integrate it in the existing townscape. View 7 demonstrates how the building integrates with the existing modern urban context TCA 3. The use of vernacular red brick at lower levels further contextualise the Proposed Development with the residential character of development to the south of Church Street and along Deansgate Road.

10.42 The proposed landscape and public realm improvements, including a publicly accessible green space, will enhance the outlook from the boundary of TCA 3. In an otherwise urban area, the introduction of attractive open space will encourage pedestrian movement through the TCA towards the Site.

10.43 For the reasons outlined above, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Low** magnitude of impact on TCA3: Residential, given the localised impact on the northern part of the TCA which is within closest proximity to the Site. The building will mainly have wayfinding effects on the wider TCA, with increased permeability to the Site and IDR as residents travel towards the town centre. This will result in a **Minor Beneficial** effect, given the proposed use of the building is more aligned to the prevailing character of TCA3, as well as the provision of a building of high architectural quality with associated public realm and landscaping improvements, including a Neighbourhood Garden which will be publicly accessible.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

10.44 The cumulative scheme set out in **Section 2.0** has been considered in terms of potential effects on townscape receptors within the study area. This scheme is illustrated in the diametric image at **Figure 2.2**.

10.45 Across the local area, the Development would be visible in conjunction with the Central Club cumulative scheme (planning ref. 221364). The cumulative scheme would be read and understood alongside the emerging development along the southern side of the IDR, as part of both emerging site allocations. The susceptibility of receptors to the Development in the study area would remain the same in the cumulative context, with the likely effects also remaining the same in the cumulative scenario.

SUMMARY

10.46 **Table 10.1** provides an overview of the townscape receptor considerations and summarises the assessment set out above.

| REF | TOWNSCAPE RECEPTOR            | VALUE  | SUSCEPTIBILITY | SENSITIVITY | MAGNITUDE | LIKELY EFFECT       | LIKELY EFFECT (CUMULATIVE) |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------|----------------|-------------|-----------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1   | Large scale commercial/retail | Low    | Medium         | Medium      | Medium    | Moderate Beneficial | Moderate Beneficial        |
| 2   | Historic Core                 | Medium | Medium         | Medium      | Low       | Minor Beneficial    | Minor Beneficial           |
| 3   | Residential                   | Medium | Medium         | Medium      | Low       | Minor Beneficial    | Minor Beneficial           |

Table 10.1 Summary of likely effects on townscape receptors



# 11.0 ASSESSMENT: VISUAL

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

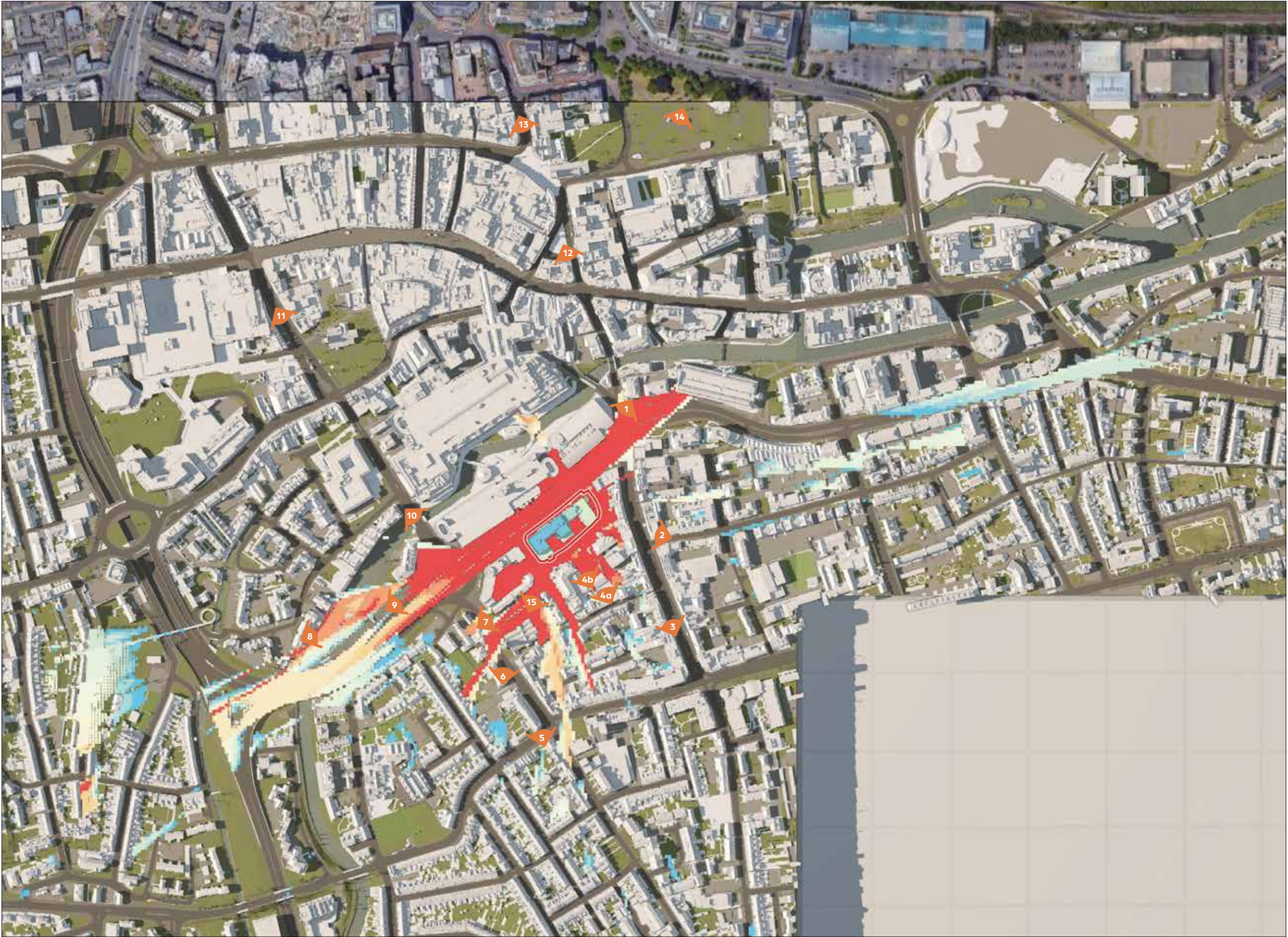
# ASSESSMENT: VISUAL

## EXTENT OF VISIBILITY

- 11.1

The ZTV at **Figure 2.1** demonstrates the visibility of the Proposed Development in the immediate area. A plan showing the ZTV overlaid with the Views Plan is provided at **Figure 11.1**. The ZTV applies a colour gradient which represents degree of visibility. Areas of red and orange indicate where the lower levels of the building will be visible, and therefore a greater extent of the proposed development is visible. The lighter colours indicate where the upper elements of the building will be visible from, and therefore where the building is seen to a lesser extent.
- 11.2

The building will be most visible from the immediate surrounding streets, demonstrated by the areas in red, where the majority of the Proposed Development will be perceptible. This comprises the wide, dual carriageway of the IDR, visibility from here a result of the Site's location on this main route through the town. To the south of this, the Proposed Development will be prominent on from Crossland Road, and visible on parts of Church Street and Deansgate Road. Within the wider area, visibly extends further west along the IDR, as well as the residential area to the north of the River Kennet and Southampton Street. To the east, there would be glimpsed views of the upper storeys on Queens Road.



**VIEWS LOCATION PLAN**

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

**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
July 2025

**SCALE:**  
1:5,000 @ A3

**FIGURE 11.1** View Location Plan overlaid with ZTV

▲ NORTH



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REPRESENTATIVE VIEWS  
GROUP 1: LOCAL RESIDENTS

- 11.3

Receptors within this group are likely to be residents of the surrounding areas, including that of the development along Church Street, Deansgate and Letcombe Close, as well as the wider residential environs; who will be highly engaged with their surroundings and the introduction of new built form. As such, the susceptibility of receptors to the Proposed Development will be High. When calibrated with the Medium value of this area of visual amenity, the sensitivity is Medium to High. Professional judgement has been applied to identify a sensitivity of **Medium**.
- 11.4

The tight knit urban grain and density of development, (albeit predominantly lower scale) and alignment of streets within this part of Reading has afforded a sense of visual enclosure which has reduced visibility of the Proposed Development in longer views. This, combined with the extent of separation distance has meant that visibility from large parts of the visual amenity area is limited, as demonstrated by the ZTV. This is further demonstrated by AVR Views 2, 3 and 5 which indicate with the Proposed Development shown in a blue wireline, is wholly occluded from view.
- 11.5

The Proposed Development will thus be noticeable in close up views, from the residential roads immediately surrounding the Site. This is demonstrated by AVR View 7, which looks east on Deansgate Road. The staggered, three-finger approach to massing is perceptible, as the western element of the building gradually decreases in height towards the eastern end, towards the lower scale residential development on this side. The set back ranges between the finger blocks seek to reduce the apparent mass of the building further.
- 11.6

The use of a contextual materiality which references the historic vernacular of Reading, including decorative brickwork, allows the new building to visually integrate with its surroundings, appearing as a cohesive addition to the existing character of the area.
- 11.7

In close up views, the introduction of courtyards and planting to the rear will provide activation at ground floor and enhance the visual amenity area at street level. This would be a marked improvement on the present outlook, in which the Site is unattractive and hostile.
- 11.8

Given the extent of visibility from the immediate surrounding streets, as well as the considerable visual changes at ground floor level, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Medium** magnitude of impact



Figure 11.2 AVR View 2 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.3 AVR View 2 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

on the visual amenity area, resulting in a **Moderate Beneficial** effect. A beneficial nature of effect is identified given the introduction of contextual, purposefully designed architecture which integrates comfortably within the existing visual amenity area, and provides particular enhancement to the visual interest at ground floor level.



Figure 11.4 AVR View 3 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.5 AVR View 3 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape



Figure 11.6 AVR View 5 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.8 AVR View 6 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.10 AVR View 7 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.7 AVR View 5 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape



Figure 11.9 AVR View 6 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.11 AVR View 7 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

GROUP 2: ROAD USERS

- 11.9      Receptors within this group are likely to be road users of the IDR, who will be primarily focused on wayfinding and activities associated with the road. Given the existing urban character of this visual amenity area, they will have a Low susceptibility to the proposals. When calibrated with the Very Low value of the visual amenity area, this results in a sensitivity of Low.
- 11.10    The Proposed Development will be particularly visible in close up views, from the elevated section of the IDR, located in closest proximity to the Site. From here the Proposed Development will be appreciable in fleeting glimpses as receptors travel in both easterly and westerly directions along the IDR.
- 11.11    The Proposed Development will be seen in conjunction with the existing, commercial, retail and leisure development which characterises this part of the IDR. The nature of this low-quality, utilitarian development, enables the new building to be seen as a welcome addition to the quality and character of architecture in this part of Reading.
- 11.12    The placement of the tallest, eight storey block of the Proposed Development, to the less sensitive northern and western part of the Site, allows it to sit in conjunction with the surrounding scale of built form; with the Premier Inn to the immediate west (seven storeys) and The Oracle Shopping Centre and Vue Cinema to the immediate north (nine storeys). This establishes a consistent height datum on the IDR, creating a sense of enclosure to the busy thoroughfare which is reinforced through the repositioning of the building line.
- 11.13    As receptors travel eastwards along the IDR, they will have an appreciation for the contextual design approach and use of materials which evoke the historic vernacular of Reading, predominantly comprising the use of buff and red brick.

- 11.14    The form and set back of the upper storeys, and incorporation of vertical cladding elements would reduce the apparent mass of the building in oblique views. The visual amenity of the IDR would be improved through the replacement of the existing, detracting structures on Site, and the introduction of landscaping and public realm along the footpath to the south. The building would appear cohesive in views along the IDR, mediating between the lower development of London Street and the larger scale retail and commercial development in this location.
- 11.15    As such, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Low** magnitude of impact on the visual amenity area, resulting in an effect of **Minor Beneficial**. A beneficial nature of effect is identified given the restoration of visual enclosure to the south of the IDR through the provision of contextual and purposefully designed architecture, as well as its function as a legibility marker in longer views from the east and west.



Figure 11.12 AVR View 9 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.13 AVR View 9 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

### GROUP 3: COMMERCE USERS OF READING TOWN CENTRE

- 11.16 Receptors within this group are likely to be amenity users and pedestrians of Reading town centre, who will primarily be navigating the key shopping routes to the north of the Site, including Friar Street, Broad Street, St Mary Butts and Market Place. Given their focus on retail, commercial and leisure facilities within the town centre, their susceptibility to the Proposed Development is considered to be Low. When calibrated with the Low to Medium value of the area, this results in a sensitivity of Low.
- 11.17 The density of development, alignment of streets and tight-knit urban grain of this central part of Reading has afforded a sense of visual enclosure which has reduced visibility of development further afield (including the Site). This, combined, with the extent of separation distance has meant that visibility from large parts of this visual amenity area is limited, as demonstrated by the ZTV.
- 11.18 This is further reinforced by Views 10, 11, 12 and 13, each of which demonstrate no intervisibility with the Proposed Development, given the extent of separation distance and interposing built form.
- 11.19 The maximum point of visibility is demonstrated by View 1, at the junction of Queens Road and the IDR. From this location, the principal and eastern elevation will be seen. The stepped form of the rear of the building would also be appreciable, and it would be seen to step down to the more sensitive historic development of London Street. The principal elevation incorporates vertical elements and set backs which reduce the impression of massing from this location. The incorporation of planting along Mill Lane would further improve the visual amenity of this view, which is otherwise intensely urban in character.
- 11.20 The use of traditional building materials and colours, comprising red and grey brick, would be appreciable in views from this junction, and help to embed the Proposed Development within the existing townscape.
- 11.21 Given that the Proposed Development is predominantly occluded from large parts of the visual amenity area, given the extent and nature of interposing development, as well as the considerable separation distance; this has resulted in a localised effect, as articulated by View 15. As such, the Proposed Development is considered to have a **Low** magnitude of impact on the visual amenity area, resulting in an effect of **Minor Beneficial**. A beneficial nature of effect is identified given the restoration of building frontage and visual enclosure to the south side of the IDR, as well as a contextual design approach including mass mitigation features.



Figure 11.14 AVR View 1 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.16 AVR View 10 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.15 AVR View 1 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.17 AVR View 10 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.18 AVR View 11 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.20 AVR View 12 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.22 AVR View 13 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.19 AVR View 11 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.21 AVR View 12 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.23 AVR View 13 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

#### GROUP 4: AMENITY USERS OF FORBURY GARDENS

- 11.22 Receptors within this group are likely to be amenity users of Forbury Gardens who will be engaged in their surroundings, with no awareness of the Site, given the extent of separation distance. As such, the susceptibility of users of Forbury Gardens to the Proposed Development is Low. When calibrated with the Medium value of the visual amenity area, professional judgment has been applied to identify a sensitivity of Low.
- 11.23 AVR 14 demonstrates visibility from within Forbury Gardens. The Proposed Development (indicated by the blue wireline) is completely occluded from view given the extent of interposing development and separation distance. As such, the magnitude of impact is **Nil**, resulting in an effect of **None**.



Figure 11.24 AVR View 14 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.25 AVR View 14 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

**GROUP 5: AMENITY USERS OF QUAKER MEETING HOUSE AND BURIAL GROUND**

- 11.24 Receptors within this group are likely to be visitors to Reading Quaker Meeting House. Given their focus on this contemplative space, yet proximity to the Proposed Development, their susceptibility is considered to be **Medium**. When combined with the Medium value of this visual amenity area, the sensitivity of visual receptors is **Medium**.
- 11.25 The experience of these receptors is represented by View 4A and 4B. The rear elevation of the Proposed Development would be visible from within the burial ground, which would increase the sense of enclosure to the north. The massing and form of the rear of the building has been designed to reduce the visual prominence of the building from this location. The stepped form of the building means that the closest block to the burial ground is six storeys, stepping up to eight in the north of the Site. View 4B demonstrates that the Proposed Development would accord with the height datum established by Saxon Court to the west of the burial ground. The materiality of the building further corresponds with that of the residential development either side of the burial ground, and the chosen colour of the upper storeys ensures that the top of the building appears lighter weight.
- 11.26 The Proposed Development would occlude the Oracle and Vue buildings to the north of the Site, which previously detracted from the visual amenity of the area. The Proposed Development is considered to be an improvement on the current outlook from the garden, which looks north across the Site towards the IDR and the Oracle (buildings of no architectural merit).
- 11.27 The Proposed Development will form part of receptors’ kinetic experience as they move around the burial ground, with the Proposed Development, in some views, appearing as merely a background element. In summer, when the trees on the northern boundary of the burial ground turn to leaf, the Proposed Development will be further occluded from view.
- 11.28 Owing to the proximity of the Proposed Development to visual receptors within the burial ground, the overall magnitude of impact is **Medium**, resulting in an effect of **Moderate Beneficial**. A beneficial nature of effect is identified owing to the occlusion of the Oracle Shopping centre.



Figure 11.26 AVR View 4A (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.28 AVR View 4B (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.27 AVR View 4A (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.29 AVR View 4B (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

## GROUP 6: AMENITY USERS OF RIVER KENNET PATH

- 11.29 Receptors within this group are likely to be pedestrians travelling to and from the town centre from the surrounding residential areas, local residents and amenity users of the path. Given their focus on wayfinding, they are likely to be partially engaged with their surroundings with limited to no awareness of the Site. As such, receptors in this group are considered to have a Low susceptibility to the proposals. When calibrated with the Low to Medium value of the visual amenity area, this results in a sensitivity of **Low**.
- 11.30 Owing to the topography of the footpath and scale of the Proposed Development, only the southwestern block of the building would be visibility from this location (as demonstrated by View 8). From the west, the roofline of the Proposed Development would meet that of the Premier Inn, appearing as a cohesive element in the existing townscape context. The stepped brick parapet of the Proposed Development and aluminium cladding above creates a staggered massing when viewed from this direction. The lower elements of the Proposed Development would remain obscured by existing development and the IDR. In summer months, the Proposed Development will be further occluded by vegetation.
- 11.31 When travelling along the River Kennet Footpath, the Proposed Development would appear subservient in scale to the modern development on the north side of the IDR and along the River Kennet. As receptors travel further eastwards, their experience is a kinetic one in which the Proposed Development appears in and out of view, being obstructed by other large scale development including the Oracle Shopping Centre and Vue Cinema, which create a sense of enclosure along the river.
- 11.32 Where visible, the Proposed Development would remain largely peripheral to the visual experience of the receptor, given the extent of interposing development, as well as the three-lane dual-carriageway of the IDR.
- 11.33 For the reasons outlined above, it is considered that the Proposed Development has a **Very Low** magnitude of impact on the visual amenity area, resulting in a Negligible Beneficial effect. A beneficial nature of effect is identified given the provision of purposefully designed, high-quality and contextual architecture.



Figure 11.30 AVR View 8 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.31 AVR View 8 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

GROUP 7: AMENITY USERS OF ST GILES CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD

- 11.34
- Receptors within this group are likely to be visitors to the grade II listed church and churchyard. Given their focus and engagement on this contemplative space, they are likely to have a Low susceptibility to the Proposed Development, given their limited awareness of the surrounding built form, reinforced by the heavily vegetated churchyard. When calibrated with the Medium value of the area of visual amenity, this results in a sensitivity of **Medium**.
- 11.35
- The Proposed Development will largely be obscured from view within the churchyard. To the south and the east of the church, the Proposed Development would be occluded by the church, vegetation and modern development.
- 11.36
- The ZTV identifies some potential visibility in the north of the churchyard, which is demonstrated by View 15. From here, the southwestern elevation of the Proposed Development would be glimpsed through mature trees and the stepped form of the rear blocks will be appreciable.
- 11.37
- View 7 represents the experience of receptors as they approach the church from Southampton Street, where the Proposed Development would be visible along Deansgate Road. The Proposed Development would be experienced in this way, coming in and out of focus, as receptors move around the surrounding streets.
- 11.38
- The massing of the Proposed Development is broken down through the stepping down of the rear projections, the articulation of the southwestern façade and the lighter materiality and set back applied to the upper storeys. The red brick of the building would respond to the materiality of the existing modern housing.

- 11.39
- The Proposed Development represents an opportunity to enhance to the visual amenity of the wider area, in replacing an unattractive light-industrial Site with a residential building incorporating landscaping. Overall, the visual amenity of the churchyard and the experience of receptors moving around the church would remain.
- 11.40
- Overall intervisibility will be transient, and part of receptors' kinetic experience as they move around the wooded churchyard. The enclosure of the church yard and visual amenity of the church will be preserved. with the nearby presences of the IDR, A237 road and large-scale development to the west of the church and nearby roundabout/flyover.
- 11.41
- If receptors approach the church from the north end of London Street, the Proposed Development would obscure a view of the spire. As receptors move past the Site or approach from Crossland Road, Church Street, Bridge Street or Southampton Street, the primacy and way finding function of the spire is maintained. In urban environments such as these, landmarks are experienced kinetically, coming in and out of focus through building gaps and on axial routes. The principal views of the spire identified in the Local Plan and the London Street CA Appraisal are maintained through the Proposed Development and therefore the visual amenity of the church remains unaffected.
- 11.42
- Given the localised impact to the northeastern part of the churchyard, with views from the rest of the churchyard largely limited, the magnitude of impact on the visual amenity area is Low, resulting in a **Minor to Minor-Moderate Beneficial** effect. Professional judgement has subsequently been applied to identify a **Minor Beneficial** effect, given the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development from only a limited area of the churchyard. A beneficial nature of effect is identified given the provision of purposefully design, high-quality and contextual architecture.



Figure 11.32 AVR View 15 (proposed). Source: Cityscape.



Figure 11.33 AVR View 15 (cumulative). Source: Cityscape.

CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT

- 11.43
- The cumulative scheme set out in **Section 2.0** has been considered in terms of potential effects on visual receptors within the study area. This scheme is illustrated in the diametric image at **Figure 2.2**.
- 11.44
- Across the local area, the Development would be visible in conjunction with the Central Club cumulative scheme (planning ref. 221364). The cumulative scheme would be read and understood alongside the emerging development along the southern side of the IDR, as part of both emerging site allocations. With the introduction of the four storey Central Club, the spire of St Giles Church would be almost entirely obscured from the position of View 1. The susceptibility of receptors to the Development in the study area would remain the same in the cumulative context, with the likely effects also remaining the same in the cumulative scenario.

SUMMARY

- 11.45
- Table 11.1** provides an overview of the visual receptor considerations and summarises the assessment set out above.

| REF               | VISUAL RECEPTORS                              | VALUE         | SUSCEPTIBILITY | SENSITIVITY | MAGNITUDE | LIKELY EFFECT         | LIKELY EFFECT (CUMULATIVE) |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2,3,5,6,7         | Local Residents                               | Medium        | High           | Medium      | Medium    | Moderate Beneficial   | Moderate Beneficial        |
| 9                 | Road Users                                    | Very Low      | Low            | Low         | Low       | Minor Beneficial      | Minor Beneficial           |
| 1, 10, 11, 12, 13 | Commerce/Amenity Users of Reading Town Centre | Low to Medium | Low            | Low         | Low       | Minor Beneficial      | Minor Beneficial           |
| 14                | Amenity Users of Forbury Gardens              | Medium        | Low            | Low         | Nil       | None                  | None                       |
| 4a, 4b            | Amenity Users of the Quaker Meeting House     | Medium        | Medium         | Medium      | Medium    | Moderate Beneficial   | Moderate Beneficial        |
| 8                 | Amenity Users of River Kennet Path            | Low to Medium | Low            | Low         | Very Low  | Negligible Beneficial | Negligible Beneficial      |
| 15                | Amenity Users of St Giles Churchyard          | Medium        | Low            | Medium      | Low       | Minor Beneficial      | Minor Beneficial           |

**Table 11.1** Summary of likely effects on visual receptors.



# 12.0 CONCLUSION

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

# CONCLUSION

- 12.1
- This report has been prepared by Montagu Evans LLP on behalf of John Lewis Partnership BTR Ltd, to accompany a detailed application for full planning permission to redevelop the Site at Mill Lane, Reading. The proposals comprise the replacement of the existing building on Site with a new building which ranges in heights of up to eight storeys, to provide a total of 170 built to rent homes. The Proposed Development also comprises the provision of landscaped public realm along the perimeter of the Site and communal rear courtyard gardens, providing much needed amenity space within the area.
- 12.2
- In line with Paragraph 207 of the NPPF (2024), this document has identified and described the significance of heritage assets (listed buildings, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets) within the identified study area. This includes heritage assets that are likely to experience a setting effect arising from the Proposed Development.
- 12.3
- Equally, this report has set out the baseline townscape context which has played an important part in informing the Proposed Development, as well as the identification of representative viewpoints which provide an understanding of the visual amenity of receptors within the surrounding area. Strategic viewpoints have also been identified and assessed, including those identified within the Development Plan and Conservation Area Appraisals.

## HERITAGE

- 12.4
- The Proposed Development has been designed to respond positively to designated and non-designated heritage assets in the locality and the character of Reading more widely. The Site does not contain any heritage assets, nor is it within a conservation area. It is, however, in the setting of a number of heritage assets considered in detail in this assessment.
- 12.5
- The Proposed Development mediates between the large-scale development to the north of the A329 and the low-scale historic development to the south and east. The stepped form of the building ensures that the larger scale blocks face Mill Lane to the north, these reduce in height to the east and south towards the Market Place and London Street CA.
- 12.6
- The Site in its existing condition comprises a warehouse building with associated car parking and servicing areas , enclosed by palisade fencing. At present the Site makes a neutral contribution to, and in some instances is a detracting feature of the setting of heritage assets within the vicinity of the Site. In combination with other modern development and infrastructure, the Site is a detracting feature along the northern boundary of Sub Area 2 of the CA, in particular. The Proposed Development represents an improvement on the existing condition of the Site, at a scale that is appropriate for the relative sensitivities of the location.
- 12.7
- Owing to the scale and form of the Proposed Development, and urban context of the Site, visibility of the tallest elements of the scheme is relatively limited. Visibility is concentrated within local street views and axial views on main roads. In places, the upper storeys of the Proposed Development will be visible as an incidental feature of the existing urban skyline of Reading, all the while experienced with buildings of similar scale and massing in that context.
- 12.8
- It is concluded that the Proposed Development will have a neutral effect on the setting and significance of heritage assets within the identified study area. Heritage assets in close proximity to the Proposed Development will benefit from the introduction of landscaping and activated ground floor frontages, which will increase pedestrian movement and appreciation of heritage assets.

- 12.9
- In the cumulative scenario, there will be an intensification of modern development within the boundary of the London Street CA, to the east of the Proposed Development with the construction of the Central Club. The two developments would be located at the edge of the CA, on the south side of the IDR, where the historic urban grain has been entirely eroded. There would be no greater impact arising from the Proposed Development in the cumulative scenario.

## TOWNSCAPE

- 12.10
- The existing building on Site forms a detracting feature in the surrounding townscape, by virtue of its low-quality, utilitarian appearance; as well as its associated, vacant hard-standing, and hostile boundary treatment.
- 12.11
- Owing to the location of the Proposed Development to the south of the IDR, and the localised impact it will have on the immediate townscape character within this part of Reading, it is not considered that the Proposed Development has the ability to affect the townscape character of several areas including Townscape Character Area 4 (Civic Centre) and 5 (Town Centre). These townscape character areas will remain unaffected by the Proposed Development and have been scoped out of the wider assessment of this report (see **Section 6.o**).
- 12.12
- The Proposed Development has been designed to respond to and enhance the immediate and surrounding townscape context, as well as introduce change consistent with the emerging character and land uses in this part of Reading, which, driven by policy aspirations is evolving to become increasingly residential. The residential use of the Proposed Development will better align the Site to the emerging policy aspirations for the area.
- 12.13
- The Proposed Development would have the greatest impact on Townscape Character Area 1. The Proposed Development would bring improvements to the appearance, function and use of the Site to the benefit of Townscape Character Area 1. The height and scale of the building has been designed to mediate between the larger scale of Townscape Character Area 1 and smaller scale of Townscape Character Areas 2 and 3 to the south and east. The height of the building is considered appropriate for its location, while making the best use of the Site to provide residential units.

- 12.14

The chosen materials further respond to and enhance the existing townscape context, through the use of red brick, grey brick and diaper brickwork detailing. The lighter colour cladding helps to reduce the perception of massing within the TCA, particularly on Crossland Road. The Proposed Development would further improve the contribution made by the Site to Townscape Character Area 1, through the introduction of public realm, landscaping and active frontages. These elements will better integrate the Site with its surroundings and encourage pedestrian movement through the Site. When considering these factors, it is concluded that the Proposed Development would result in a Moderate Beneficial effect on the Townscape Character Area 1.
- 12.15

The Proposed Development would be visible in some areas of Townscape Character Areas 2 and 3. A beneficial nature of effect is identified to these areas, considering the replacement of a poor quality industrial structure and upgrades to public realm and amenity space.
- 12.16

It is considered that the likely effect of the Proposed Development would not increase or decrease in the cumulative scenario, with both schemes being read and understood as part of the emerging development along the southern side of the IDR.
- 12.17

In conclusion, the Proposed Development would give rise to townscape effects ranging from Moderate Beneficial to Minor Beneficial. The Proposed Development would provide demonstrable benefits to the existing building on the Site, which would in turn meet the policy aspirations of the Local Plan, including *Policy EN6 New Development in a Historic Context* which requires development to be sensitively designed having regard to the prevailing scale, height, character, building lines, materials and architecture.

VISUAL AMENITY

- 12.18

The Proposed Development comprises the replacement of the existing poor quality and utilitarian building on Site, which has detracted from the visual amenity of the area. The new building comprises a contextual design approach in terms of massing, scale and materiality, as well as rear courtyards and a number of active frontages at ground floor level.
- 12.19

In the context of visual amenity, the impacts to visual receptors are considered to either maintain the quality of the existing visual amenity (in the context of Amenity Users of Forbury Gardens) or result in effects which are wholly positive, including a Moderate Beneficial effect on Amenity Users of the Quaker Meeting House.
- 12.20

It is not considered that the likely effect of the Proposed Development would increase or decrease in the cumulative scenario, with both schemes being read and understood as part of the emerging development along the southern side of the IDR, as part of both emerging site allocations.
- 12.21

In summary, the Proposed Development is considered to form a positive contribution to the overall visual amenity and enjoyment of this area of Reading, introducing a building which has been designed to respond to the existing context. Importantly, and in line with Policy EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest, the Proposed Development will not give rise to any adverse visual and amenity impacts, nor will it adversely affect strategic and local views.

SUMMARY

- 12.22

In conclusion, the Proposed Development would improve the appearance, character and function of the Site, introducing a new residential use which seeks to revitalise the streetscape and surrounding area, in line with the policy aspirations for this part of Reading.
- 12.23

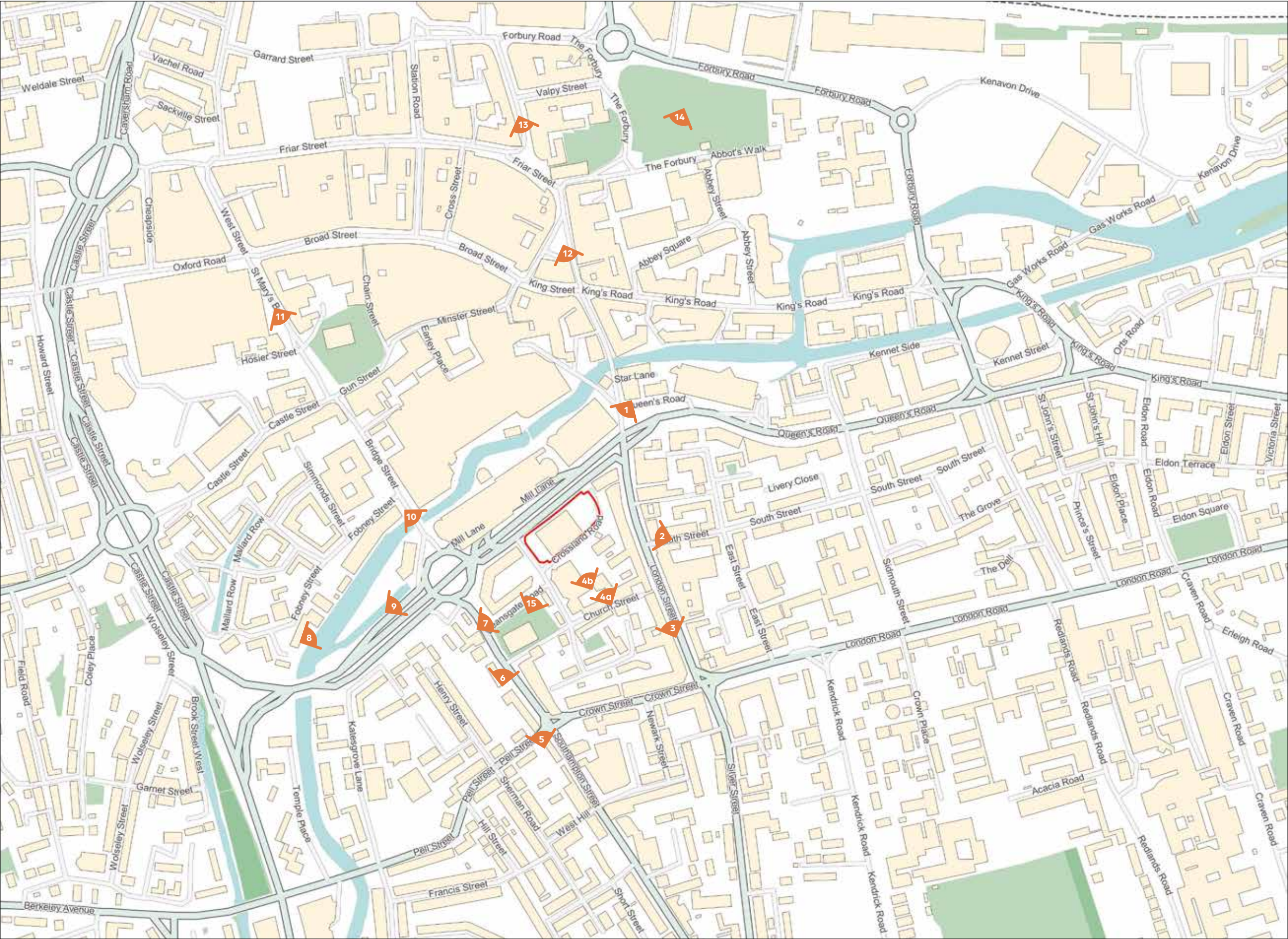
We find that the Proposed Development is in full compliance with the policies set out in the adopted Development Plan concerning the historic building environment and townscape/visual considerations.
- 12.24

In this report, we have set out the likely effects arising on the identified heritage assets, townscape receptors and visual receptors. In relation to heritage, no harm has been identified to any heritage assets within the study area. The decision maker is therefore able to discharge their legal duties as set out in Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and, in doing so, consider the Proposed Development is consistent with the NPPF and Development Plan.



# **APPENDIX 1: HERITAGE ASSETS, TOWNSCAPE AREAS AND VIEWPOINT LOCATION PLANS**

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



VIEWS LOCATION PLAN

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

LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

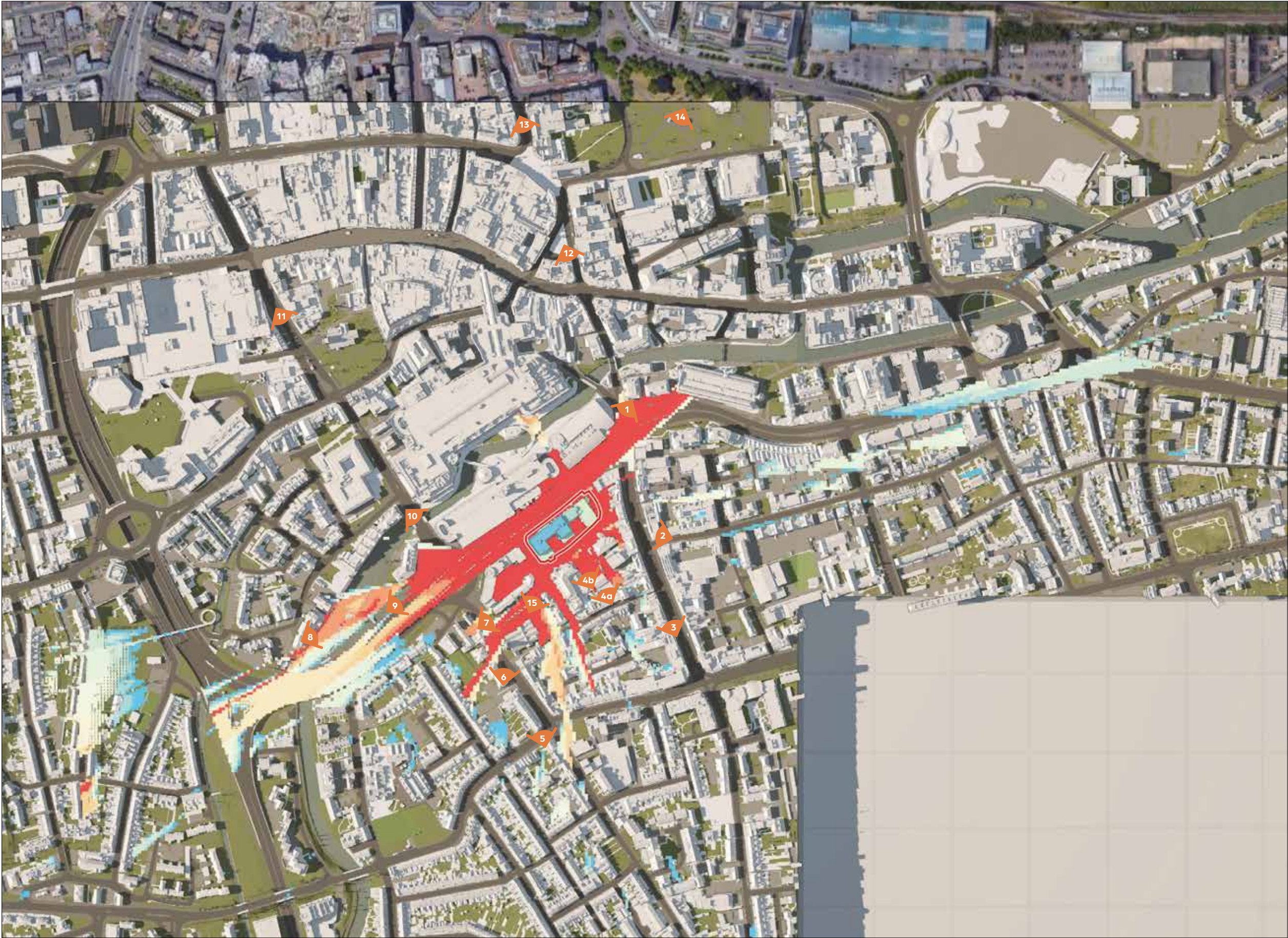
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FIGURE:

▲ NORTH



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**VIEWS LOCATION PLAN**

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

**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
July 2025

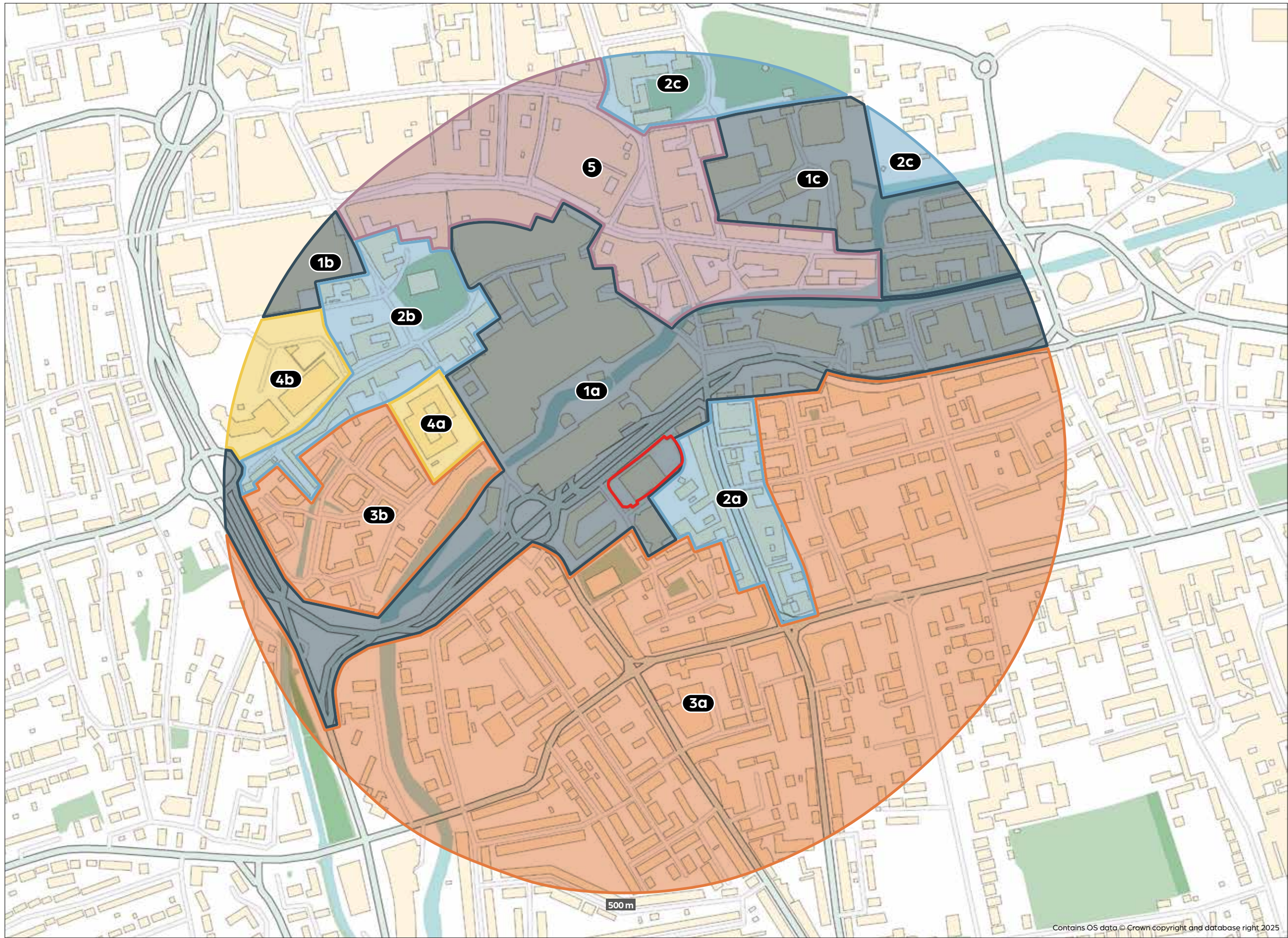
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## TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

- Application Site
- a. Large scale commercial/retail  
b. Large scale commercial  
c. Large scale commercial
  - a. Historic core  
b. Historic core  
c. Historic core
  - a. Residential  
b. Residential
  - a. Civic centre  
b. Civic centre
  - Town centre

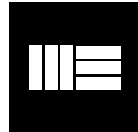
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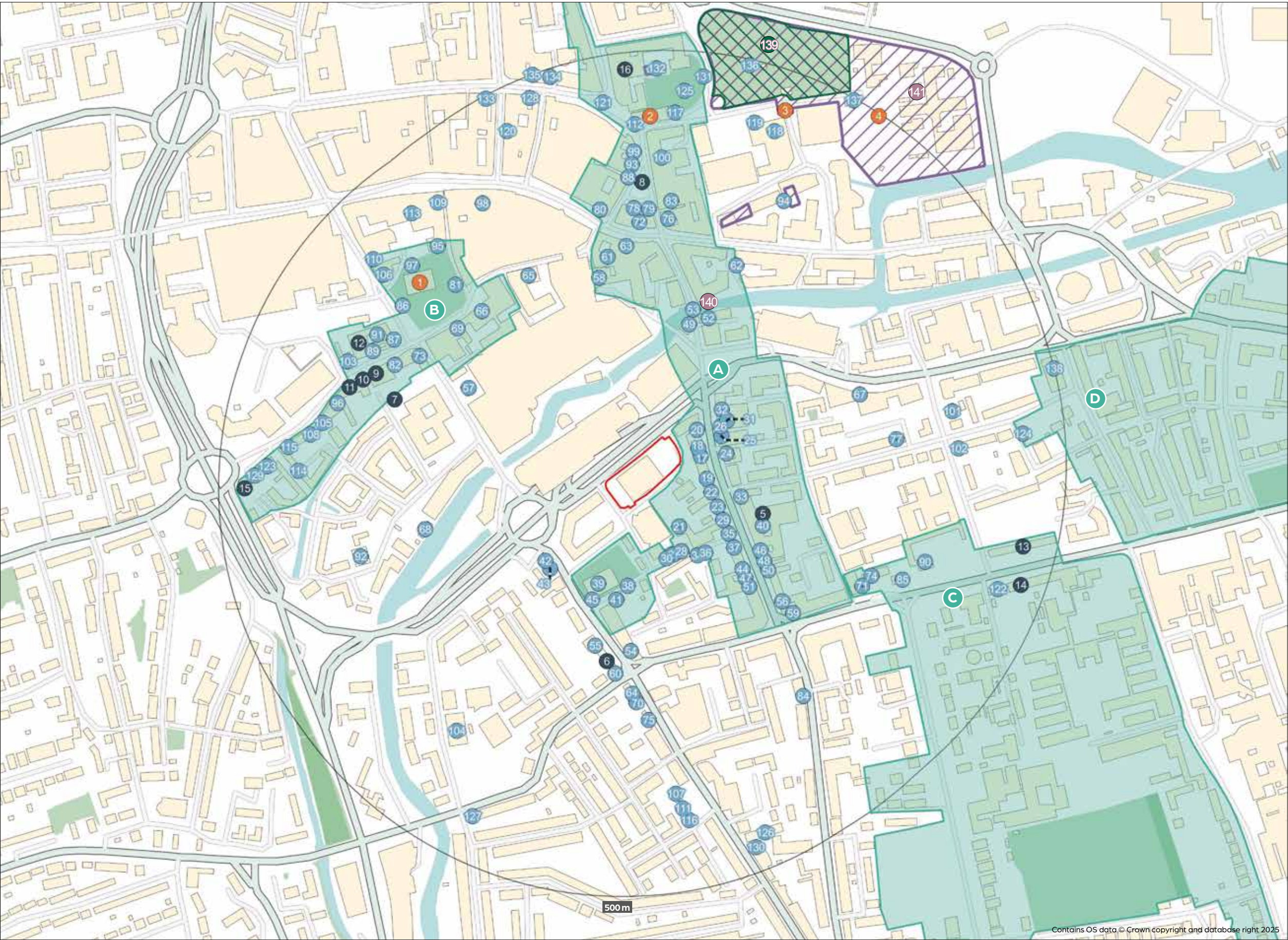
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FIGURE:

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# HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

- Application Site**
- Conservation Areas**
- A. Market Place and London Street
  - B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
  - C. Kendrick Road
  - D. Eldon Square
- Listed Buildings**
- Grade I**
- 1. Church of St Mary
  - 2. Church of St Laurence
  - 3. Abbey Gate
  - 4. Reading Abbey Ruins
- Grade II\***
- 5. 3 and 75, London Street
  - 6. 78-84, Southampton Street
  - 7. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From Su71441/73234 to 71527/73133
  - 8. The Simeon Monument
  - 9. 15, Castle Street
  - 10. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block
  - 11. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings
  - 12. Church of St Mary
  - 13. Albion Place
  - 14. St David's Hall
  - 15. Holybrook House
  - 16. Reading Town Hall
- Grade II**
- Numbers 17-138 - see overleaf.
- Registered Park and Gardens**
- 139. The Forbury Garden(Grade II)
- Scheduled Monuments**
- 140. High Bridge
  - 141. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.

LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

SCALE:  
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FIGURE:

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HERITAGE ASSET PLAN - KEY

Conservation Areas

- A. Market Place and London Street
- B. St Mary's Butts and Castle Street
- C. Kendrick Road
- D. Eldon Square

Listed Buildings

Grade I

- 1. Church of St Mary
- 2. Church of St Laurence
- 3. Abbey Gate
- 4. Reading Abbey Ruins

Grade II\*

- |                                                                                    |                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 5. 3 and 75, London Street                                                         | 8. The Simeon Monument                                  |
| 6. 78-84, Southampton Street                                                       | 9. 15, Castle Street                                    |
| 7. Culvert on Holy Brook Running South Westwards From Su71441/73234 to 71327/73133 | 10. 17 Castle Street, Front Railings and Mounting Block |
|                                                                                    | 11. 19 Castle Street and Associated Front Railings      |

Grade II

- |                                               |                                               |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17. 54-58, London Street                      | 49. 2 and 4, London Street                    | 81. Group of 4 Churchyard Tombs, East of St Mary's Church                                                                               | 111. 148 and 150, Southampton Street                                                   |
| 18. 48-52, London Street                      | 50. 101, and 103, London Street               | 82. 3 and 5, 7, 9, 11, and 13, Castle Street                                                                                            | 112. Drinking Fountain on South Side of St Laurence's Tower                            |
| 19. 62-66, London Street                      | 51. 110 and 114, London Street                | 83. 1 and 2, Market Place                                                                                                               | 113. Congretional Church and Numbers 89 and 89a                                        |
| 20. 44 and 46, London Street                  | 52. Coroner's Court                           | 84. Former Rising Sun Temperance Tavern                                                                                                 | 114. Vachel Almhouses                                                                  |
| 21. Reading Quaker Meeting House              | 53. High Bridge                               | 85. Kendrick View                                                                                                                       | 115. 47 and 49, and 51, Castle Street                                                  |
| 22. 68, 70, and 72, London Street             | 54. 63, Southampton Street                    | 86. Harrinson Testimonial Cross, and Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain                                                                    | 116. 152, Southampton Street                                                           |
| 23. 74 and 76, London Street                  | 55. 72-76, Southampton Street                 | 87. The Horn Inn, and 35, 36 and 37 St Mary's Butts                                                                                     | 117. St Laurence's Church and Churchyard, and Twelve Tombs in St Laurence's Churchyard |
| 24. Nos 49-53 London Street                   | 56. Sargents Embrook                          | 88. Corn Exchange Arcade Entrance                                                                                                       | 118. Assize Courts                                                                     |
| 25. 41, London Street                         | 57. Seven Bridges House                       | 89. 8, and 10 and 12 Castle Street                                                                                                      | 119. Shire Hall                                                                        |
| 26. 37 and 39, London Street                  | 58. Building on South East Corner             | 90. Kendrick Girls' School, and No 41 (Kendrick Girls' School) including Street Wall Extending to East and Turning into Sidmouth Street | 120. 1-31, Queen Victoria Street                                                       |
| 27. 6b, Church Street                         | 59. 3 and 5, London Road                      | 91. Former Cottage at Rear of No 8                                                                                                      | 121. Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue                                                     |
| 28. 6a, Church Street                         | 60. 86, Southampton Street                    | 92. Simmonds Malthouse                                                                                                                  | 122. 16-22, London Road                                                                |
| 29. 80, London Street                         | 61. The George Hotel                          | 93. Trustee Savings Bank, and 32, Market Place                                                                                          | 123. Talbot House                                                                      |
| 30. 6c, Church Street                         | 62. House at Rear of Nos 18 and 20 Kings Road | 94. Abbey Mill Ruins                                                                                                                    | 124. Walls Enclosing Garden to West of No 44 (Watlington House)                        |
| 31. 35, London Street                         | 63. 17 and 18, King Street                    | 95. Church House, Reading, and Building to West of Church House                                                                         | 125. Tracery Fragments in The Churchyard of The Church of St Laurence                  |
| 32. No 33 (Former Everyman Theatre)           | 64. 92-96, Southampton Street                 | 96. 21, 23 and 25, 27, and 33-37, Castle Street                                                                                         | 126. The British School                                                                |
| 33. 69, London Street                         | 65. Telephone Exchange                        | 97. Group of Four Churchyard Tombs North of The Church of St Mary                                                                       | 127. Former Kennet Arms                                                                |
| 34. 11, Church Street                         | 66. 11 and 12, 13 and 14, and 15 Gun Street   | 98. Saxone                                                                                                                              | 128. 154, and 155, Friar Street                                                        |
| 35. 86, and 88, London Street                 | 67. Queen's Crescent                          | 99. The Coopers Public House, and 23-26, 27 and 28, 32 and 33-34, Market Place                                                          | 129. 59 and 61, Castle Street                                                          |
| 36. 7 and 9, Church Street                    | 68. Building Now Part of Courage's Brewery    | 100. National Westminster Bank                                                                                                          | 130. 157 to 161 Southampton Street and 163, The Hop Leaf Inn                           |
| 37. 90, 92, and 94, London Street             | 69. 7, 8, 9, and 10, Gun Street               | 101. 3 and 5, Sidmouth Street                                                                                                           | 131. Wall and Gatepiers of St Laurence's Graveyard                                     |
| 38. Wall Enclosing St Giles's Vicarage Garden | 70. Rose Cottage                              | 102. 9, Sidmouth Street                                                                                                                 | 132. Municipal Buildings                                                               |
| 39. Church of St Giles and Churchyard Tombs   | 71. 33 and 35, London Road                    | 103. Sun Inn                                                                                                                            | 133. 147, Friar Street                                                                 |
| 40. 77 and 79, and 81, London Street          | 72. 3-5 King Street                           | 104. The Henry Building at Katesgrove Primary School including Boundary Wall and Former Caretaker's Cottage                             | 134. 11, 12, 13, and 14, Friar Street                                                  |
| 41. St Giles Vicarage                         | 73. 2 and 4, and 6-10 Bridge Street           |                                                                                                                                         | 135. 15 Friar Street and Numbers 1 and 26 Harris Arcade, Reading                       |
| 42. 26, Southampton Street                    | 74. The Cedars, and The Kendrick School       |                                                                                                                                         | 136. Maiwand Memorial                                                                  |
| 43. 28, Southampton Street                    | 75. 106, Southampton Street                   |                                                                                                                                         | 137. 10, and 11 and 12, Abbot's Walk                                                   |
| 44. 104, London Street                        | 76. 7, and 8, High Street                     |                                                                                                                                         | 138. Wesley Methodist Church                                                           |
| 45. St Giles' War Shrine                      | 77. 43-49, South Street                       |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| 46. 89-93, London Street                      | 78. 48 and 49, and 50 and 51, Market Place    |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| 47. 108, London Street                        | 79. 52 Market Place, 10 High Street           |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |
| 48. 95 and 97, and 99, London Street          | 80. 2 and 3 and 3a, Broad Street              |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                        |

Registered Park and Gardens

- 139. The Forbury Garden(Grade II)

Scheduled Monuments

- 140. High Bridge
- 141. Reading Abbey: a Cluniac and Benedictine monastery and Civil War earthwork.

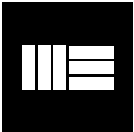
LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

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FIGURE:

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# HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

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- Numbers 17-138 - see overleaf.
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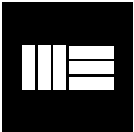
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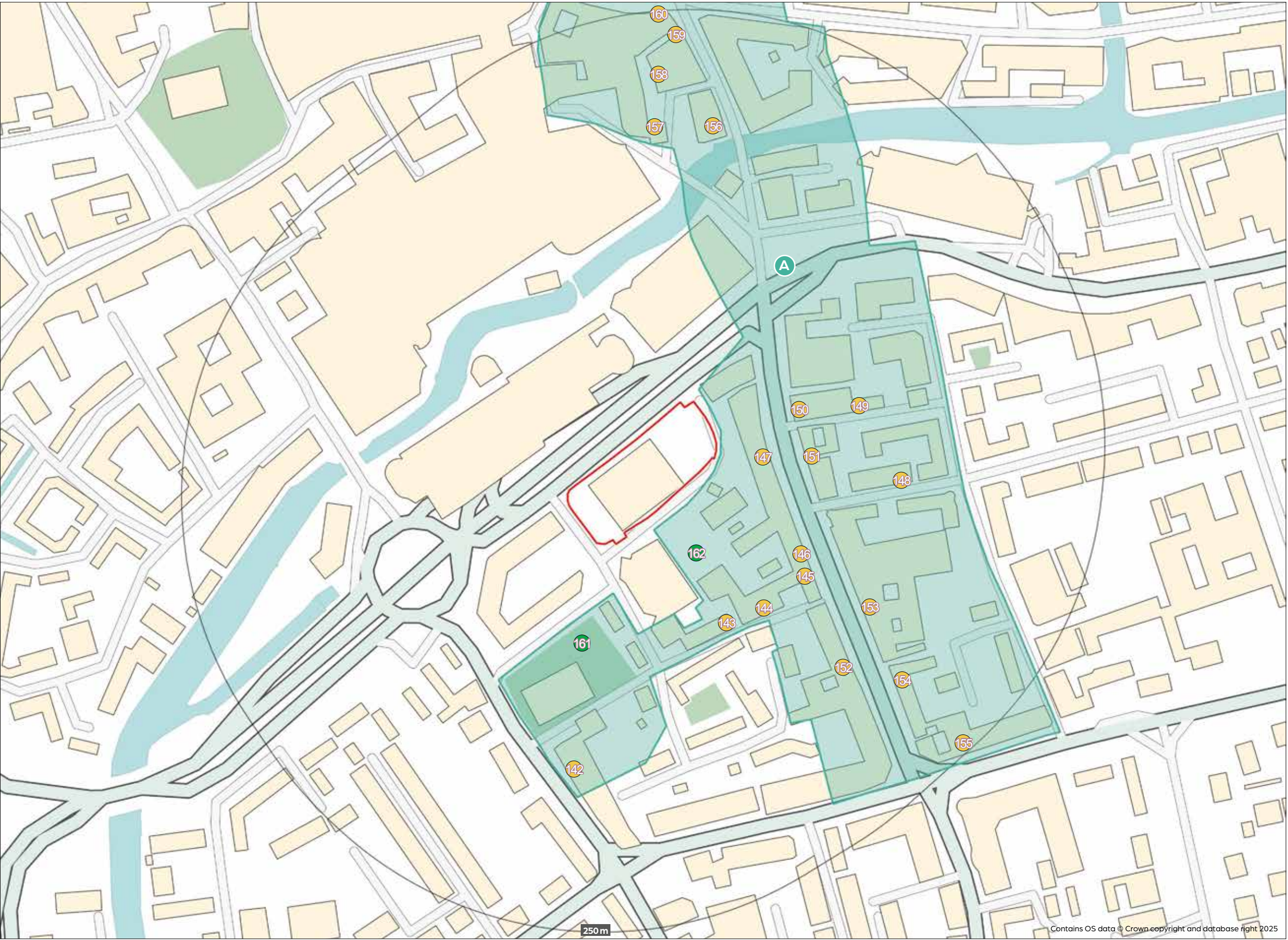
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## NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSET PLAN

Application Site

Conservation Areas

A. Market Place and London Street

### Buildings of Townscape Merit

- 142. St Giles Church Hall
- 143. 4-6 Church Street
- 144. Folk House
- 145. 82-84 London Street
- 146. 78 Church Street
- 147. 60 London Street
- 148. 1-13 (odd) South Street
- 149. 1-4 London Court
- 150. 43-47 (odd) London Street
- 151. 55 & 57 London Street
- 152. 106 London Street
- 153. 85 & 87 London Street
- 154. 107 London Street
- 155. 7-11 (odd) London Road
- 156. 22 Duke Street
- 157. Building on Yield Hall Place
- 158. Building on Thorn Lane
- 159. 2-8 (even) Duke Street
- 160. 24-26 King Street

### Significant Open Spaces

- 161. Churchyard of St Giles Church
- 162. Burial ground of Friends' Meeting House

LOCATION:  
Mill Lane, Reading

DATE:  
July 2025

SCALE:  
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FIGURE:

▲ NORTH



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# **APPENDIX 2: EXISTING, PROPOSED AND CUMULATIVE AVRS PRÉPARED BY CITYSCAPE**

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

VIEW 1: QUEEN'S ROAD / A329 LOOKING WEST

EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 2: JUNCTION WITH SOUTH STREET / A327**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 3: A327 LOOKING NORTH**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



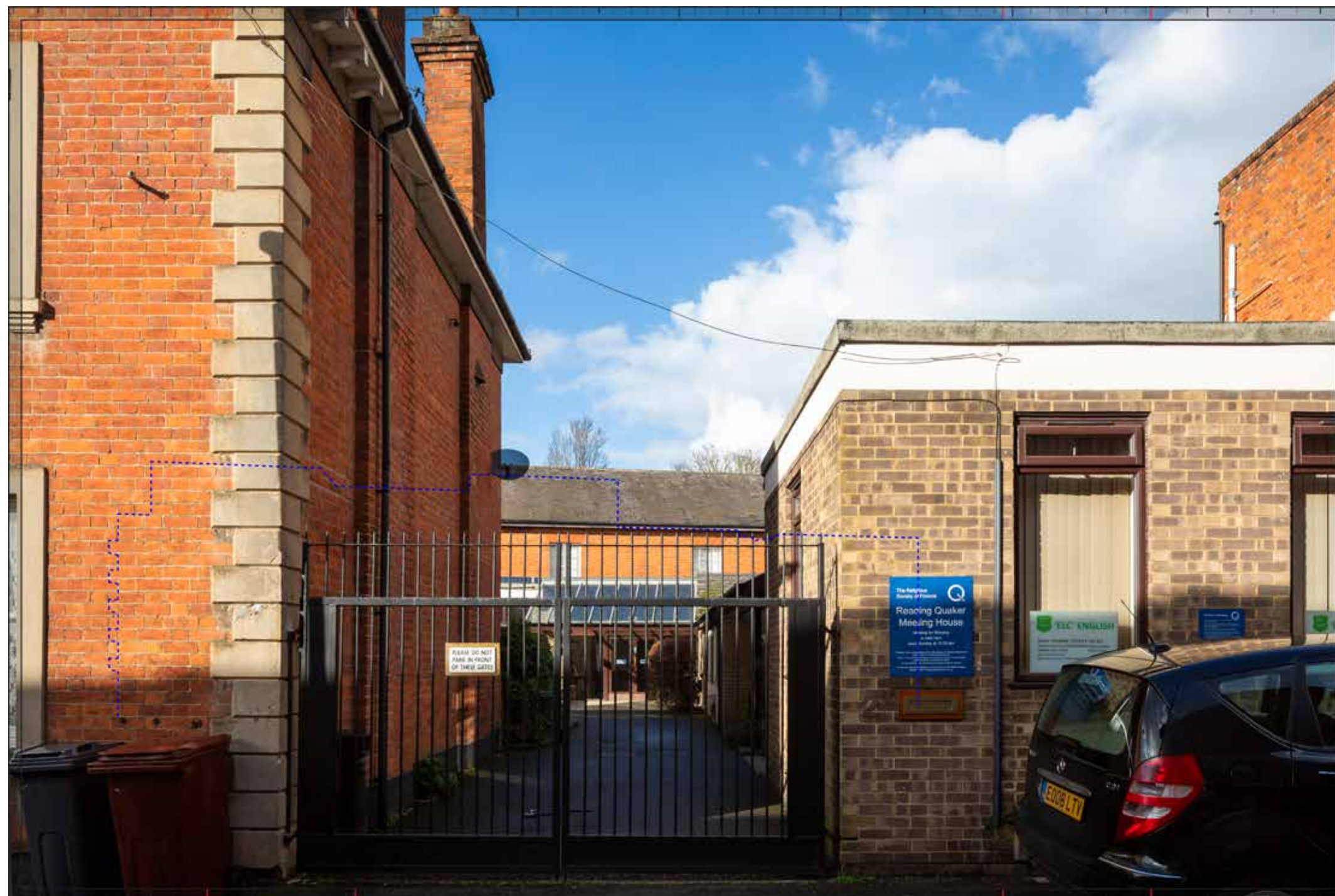


**VIEW 4A: CHURCH STREET LOOKING NORTH - QUAKER'S MEETING HOUSE**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 4B: BURIAL GROUND LOOKING NORTH - QUAKER'S MEETING HOUSE**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 5: JUNCTION WITH PELL STREET / A327**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





## VIEW 6: ST GILES CHURCH

### EXISTING



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 7: DEANSGATE ROAD**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 8: RIVER KENNET (NORTH BANK) LOOKING EAST**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



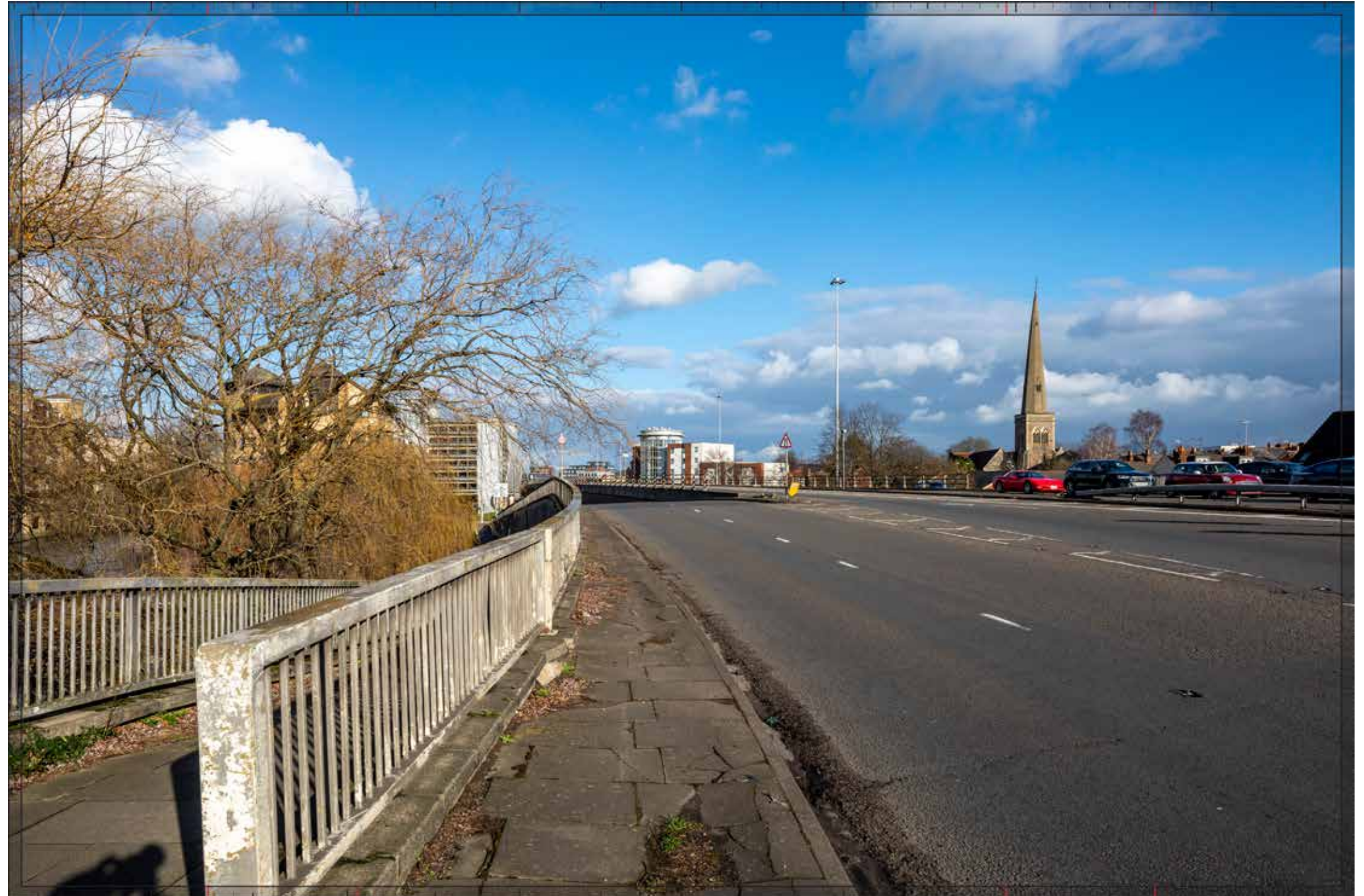
CUMULATIVE



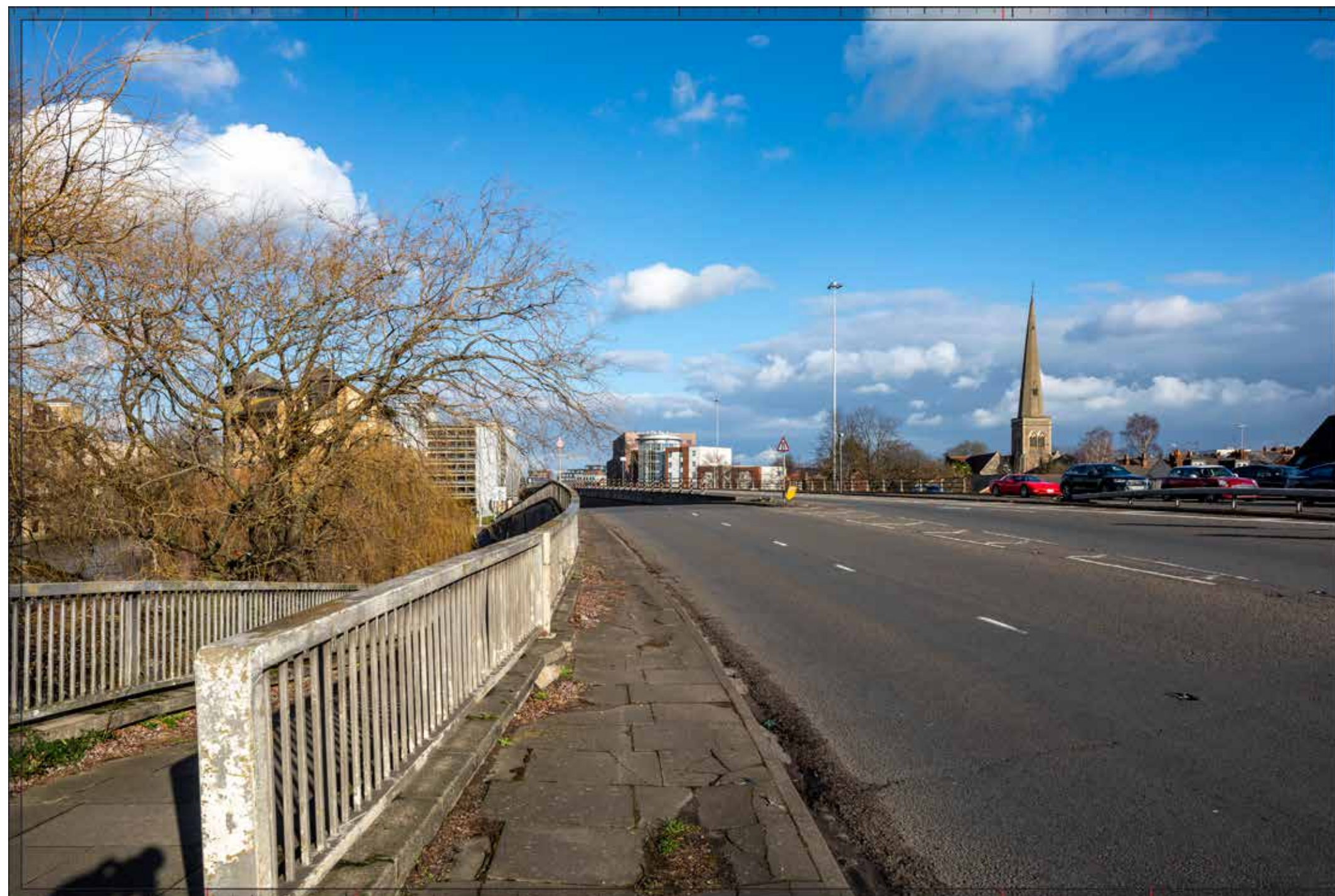


**VIEW 9: BRIDGE STREET / A329 LOOKING EAST**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 10: BRIDGE STREET JUNCTION LOOKING SOUTH**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 11: THE MINSTER (GRADE I) LOOKING SOUTH**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 12: MARKET PLACE LOOKING SOUTH**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 13: TOWN HALL LOOKING SOUTH**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 14: THE FORBURY LOOKING SOUTH**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE





**VIEW 15: ST GILES CHURCHYARD**

**EXISTING**



PROPOSED



CUMULATIVE



# APPENDIX 3: CITYSCAPE AVR METHODOLOGY

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

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# **John Lewis Partnership – Reading**

## **Berkshire**

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**Accurate Visual Representation Methodology**

June 2025

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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  |
|------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|--------------|--------------|---------|------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|-------|
| 1    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Render            | D30210 | 471787.43 | 173232.48 | 38.90        | 1.60 M       | 211°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 05/04/2024 | 09:43 |
| 2    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29630 | 471828.63 | 173066.85 | 44.74        | 1.60 M       | 278°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 12:16 |
| 3    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29631 | 471861.59 | 172942.40 | 45.74        | 1.60 M       | 312°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 12:31 |
| 4    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Render            | D30211 | 471737.49 | 173022.04 | 43.38        | 1.60 M       | 322°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 05/04/2024 | 11:25 |
| 4A   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29632 | 471764.49 | 172985.22 | 43.73        | 1.60M        | 335°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 13:50 |
| 5    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29633 | 471678.57 | 172817.66 | 44.89        | 1.60 M       | 1°      | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 12:55 |
| 6    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29634 | 471634.41 | 172885.37 | 42.58        | 1.60 M       | 20°     | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 13:10 |
| 7    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Render            | D29636 | 471597.37 | 172949.65 | 40.69        | 1.60 M       | 34°     | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 13:32 |
| 8    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29637 | 471358.92 | 172917.19 | 38.16        | 1.60 M       | 65°     | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 14:34 |
| 9    | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Render            | D29638 | 471386.60 | 172905.22 | 43.44        | 1.60 M       | 61°     | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 14:21 |
| 10   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29640 | 471496.31 | 173103.69 | 39.79        | 1.60 M       | 110°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 14:56 |
| 11   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29641 | 471321.66 | 173370.30 | 43.91        | 1.60 M       | 131°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 15:32 |
| 12   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29643 | 471699.86 | 173470.17 | 43.87        | 1.60 M       | 183°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 15:45 |
| 13   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29644 | 471642.02 | 173618.14 | 44.19        | 1.60 M       | 175°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 10:58 |
| 14   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D29646 | 471848.79 | 173629.39 | 43.21        | 1.60 M       | 193°    | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 11/02/2024 | 11:19 |
| 15   | Type 4             | Better than 0.05m             | Wireline          | D30277 | 471656.81 | 172968.92 | 42.64        | 1.60 M       | 21°     | 24mm | Standard lens for open spaces | 73.74         | 03/05/2024 | 18:36 |

0.0 Introduction

0.1 Methodology overview

The methodology applied by Cityscape Digital Limited to produce the ‘Type 4 Photomontages survey / scale verifiable’<sup>1</sup> 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;”<sup>2</sup>

“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).”<sup>3</sup> and

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

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 06/19<sup>5</sup>.

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](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](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](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](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](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 tiff<sup>6</sup> 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

<sup>6</sup> 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 06/19<sup>7</sup> 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 GPS<sup>8</sup>) 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

<sup>7</sup> '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](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.

<sup>8</sup> <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 06/19<sup>9</sup> 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 camera<sup>10</sup>:

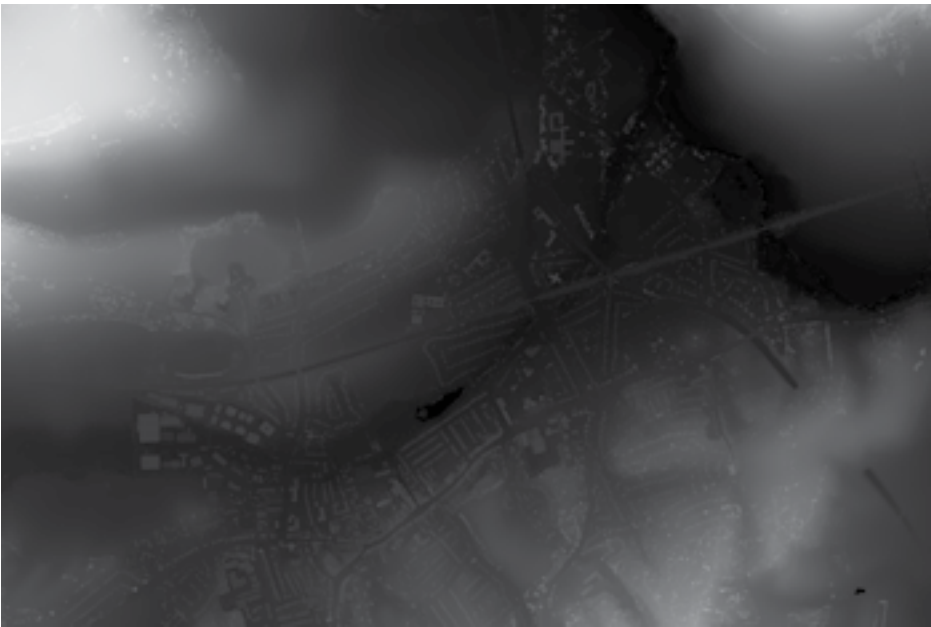
| Distance from camera | Apparent shift |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 10m                  | 5.7°           |
| 100m                 | 0.57°          |
| 1,000m               | 0.057°         |
| 10,000m              | 0.006°         |

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’<sup>11</sup>.

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

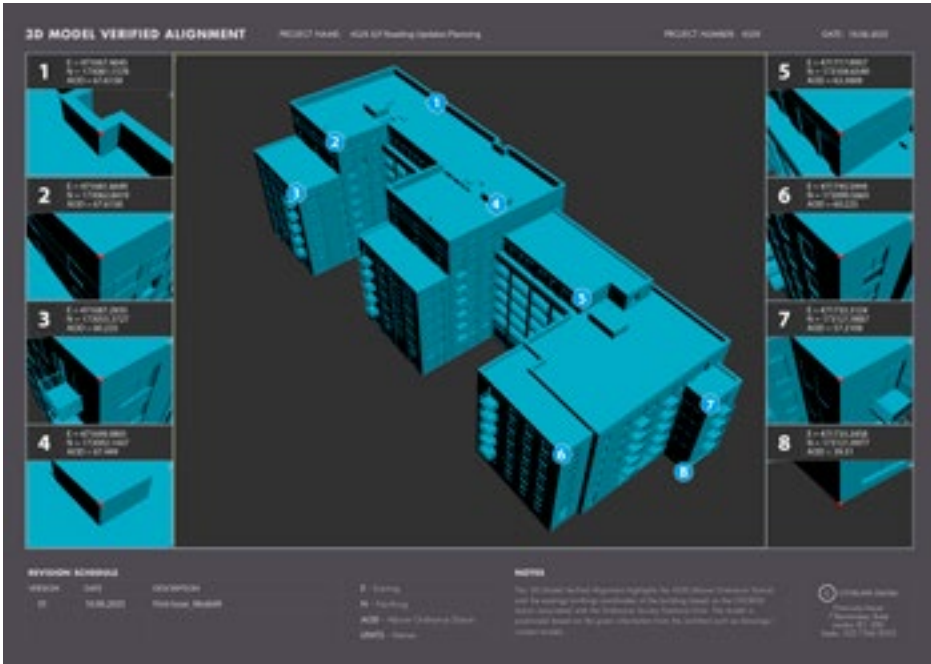
A wireframe 3D model of the proposed scheme if not provided is created by Cityscape from plans and elevations provided by the architects and from survey information of the ground levels on site and various other points on and around the site, such as the edge of adjacent roads and pavements etc. provided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

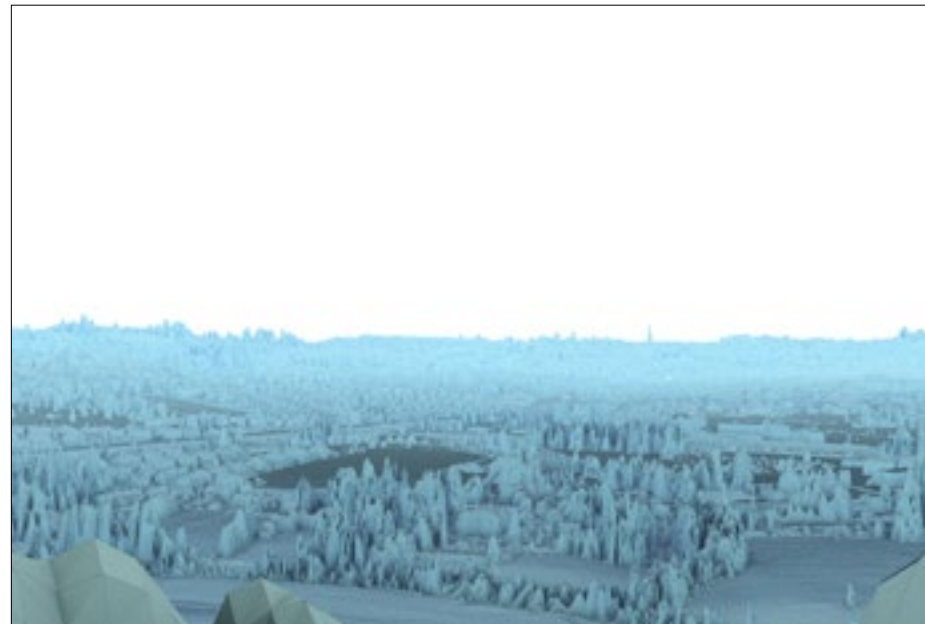
The data is combined in a 3D software package and is then used to situate Cityscape's virtual camera such that the 3D model/DSM aligns exactly over the background plate (as shown in Figure 20) (i.e. a 'virtual viewer' within the 3D model would therefore be standing very close to the same viewpoint from 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 texturing<sup>12</sup>.

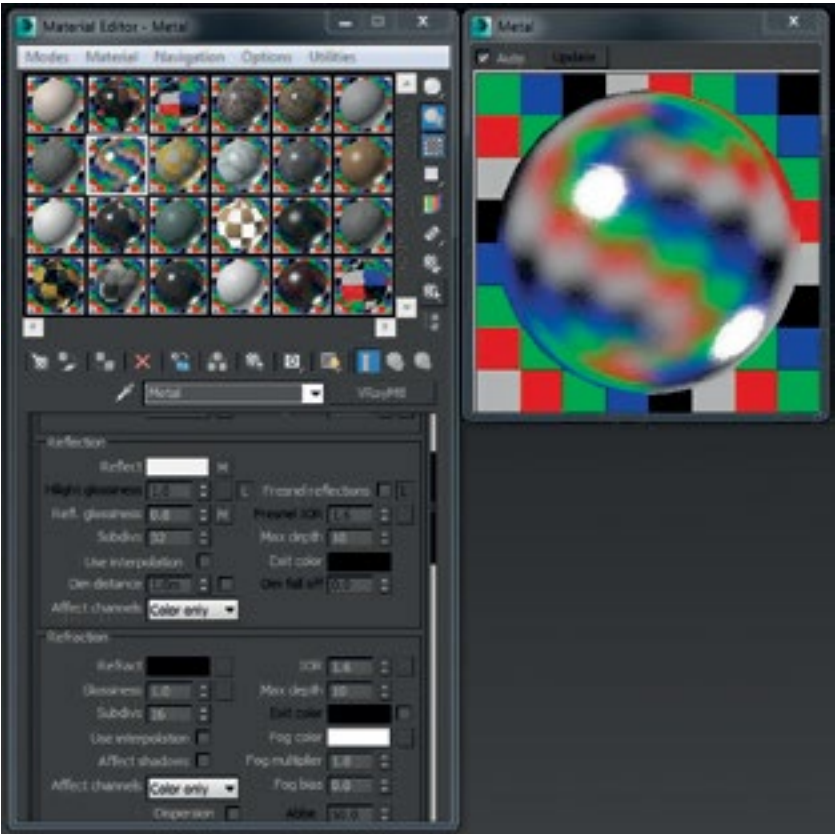
Prior to rendering, Cityscape requires details from the architect regarding the proposed materials (e.g. type of glass, steel, aluminium etc.) to be utilised.

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).

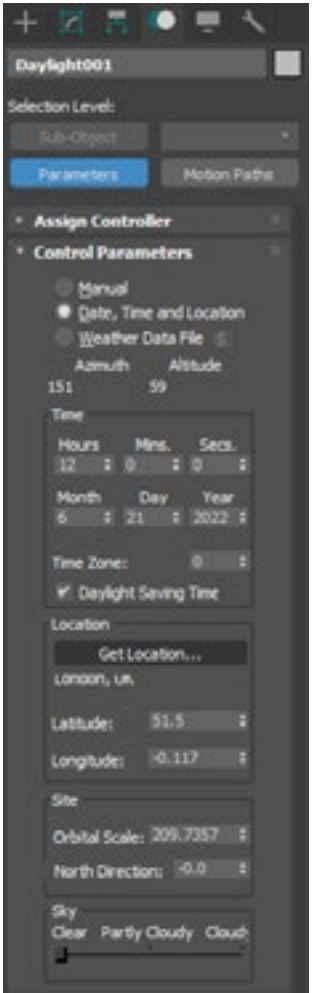
### 8.4 Lighting and sun direction

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.

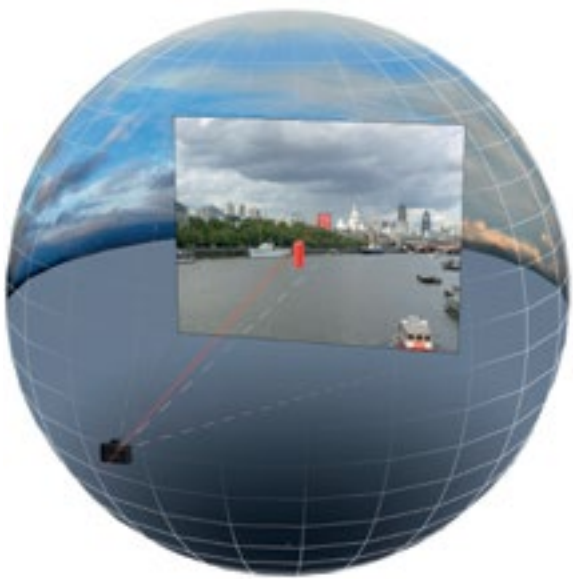
The 3D model of the proposed scheme is placed within the selected sky (see Figure 23) and using the material properties also entered, the computer calculates the effects of the sky conditions (including the sun) on the appearance of the proposed scheme.



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

<sup>12</sup> 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



Cityscape Digital

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London SE1 2DD

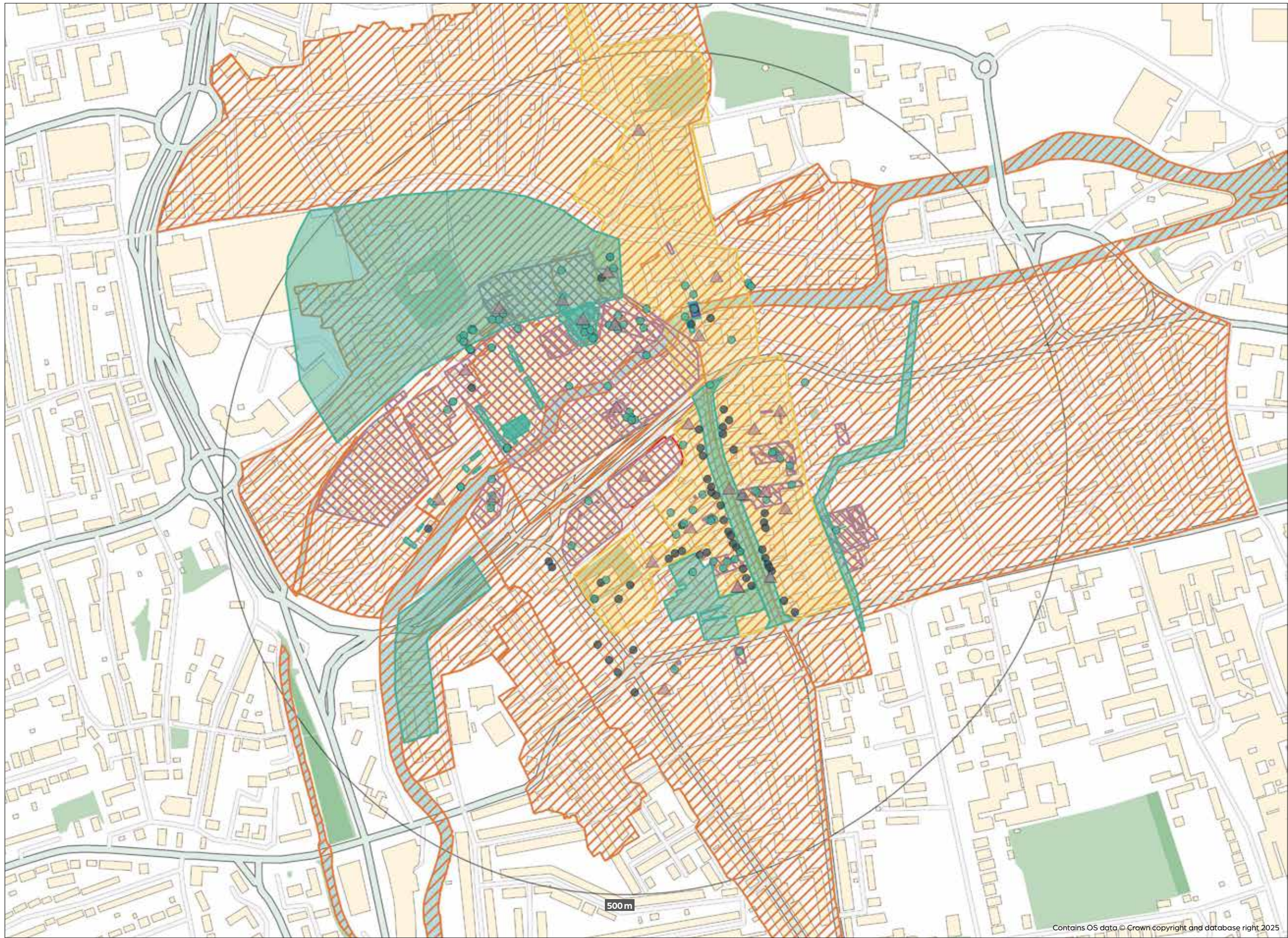
020 7566 8550

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# APPENDIX 4: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD DATA

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



**GLHER REPORT**

- Application Site
- Event Geometry
  - Events - Point
  - Events - Region
- Monument Geometry
  - Monument - Point
  - Monument - Line
  - Monument - Region
- Designated Heritage Assets
  - Listed Buildings
  - Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Rapid HLC Geometry
  - HLC - Region
- Area Geometry
  - Market Place and London Street CA

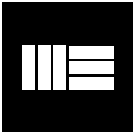
**LOCATION:**  
Mill Lane, Reading

**DATE:**  
June 2025

**SCALE:**  
1:5,000 @ A3

**FIGURE:**

**▲ NORTH**



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# **APPENDIX 5: PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT (PRE-SUBMISSION)**

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

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

| CONSULTEE AND FORM/<br>DATE OF CONSULTATION        | SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/DISCUSSION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | WHERE IN THIS VOLUME COMMENTS ARE ADDRESSED                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  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| Written Pre-Application Advice dated 25th May 2024 | <p>The proposal should step down from the larger scale buildings on the north side of the IDR and have a more intimate relationship with the smaller scale buildings on the southern side of the IDR. The hotel to the west of the site, whilst not of a particularly high-quality design, nonetheless demonstrates a significant drop in height and bulk across the IDR/flyover, addressing the transition in scale between the two-character areas more appropriately. When viewed from the east, the proposals appear to create a canyon-like effect when viewed in conjunction with the existing Oracle buildings, particularly given the similarity in height across the IDR. Furthermore, the disparity between the tallest part of the proposals at the western end of the site (11 storeys) and the three/four storey hotel and residential buildings beyond is uncomfortable and would not read well in townscape terms when viewed from the IDR, Letcombe Street or Church Street, and should be reconsidered.</p> <p>The proposed development, by reason of its scale, building form, massing and height, would have a low to moderate degree of harm to the settings of listed buildings, the character and appearance of the conservation area and the view of the spire of St Giles Church.</p> <p>Given the location of the site in such close proximity to a number of Listed Buildings, the Conservation Area, and its visibility within several longer views, any proposal on this site would likely have an impact on these assets. It is therefore important to ensure that the impact is either to enhance the heritage assets, or where that is not possible, harm is minimised and that the public benefits of the scheme would outweigh any harm arising. Many of the issues with the proposals identified in the preceding section (Design and Townscape) directly relate to the consequent impact of the proposals on the heritage assets surrounding the site.</p> <p>The scale, height and massing of the proposals, in particular the maximum height of 11 storeys, which adds to the bulky and out of scale appearance of the proposal, the proposal would result in harm to the Conservation Area. The</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to at a low to moderate degree to the character of the Conservation Area. The design approach in terms of materials, details, ground floor layout and provision of green space is supported, and would complement the character of the Conservation Area, however, this would not be sufficient to overcome the harm caused by the scale and bulk of the proposed building.</p> <p>The Quaker Meeting House outlook from this part of the Listed Building would be significantly altered by the proposals, which would result in less than substantial harm at a moderate level to the setting of this Listed Building.</p> <p>A Views Assessment, with the Zone of Theoretical Visibility information as suggested by the DRP, should be submitted alongside the application to address the above concerns. A full Heritage Statement should also be submitted which addresses the harm caused to the various heritage assets.</p> <p>Overall, whilst the scheme has positive aspects in terms of the detailed design approach, ground floor layout and provision of green space at ground floor level, the scale and massing of the scheme would result in a scheme which would sit uncomfortably in its context, failing to fully relate to the more sensitive area to the south of the IDR. The proposal would fail to appropriate address the townscape, from both longer views and from a more immediate context. Due to the scale, mass and bulk of the building, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm at a low to moderate level to several heritage assets.</p> | <p>The massing and form of the building has been developed in conjunction with RBC through the 7 x design Pre-Application. The west of the site was the agreed location for height on the site to ensure the building was not see from London Street (Market Place &amp; London Street Conservation Area).</p> <p>The massing has been revised several times through the design evolution to provide a better transition to the Market Place &amp; London Street Conservation Area.</p> | <p>These comments have been addressed in the townscape assessment section at Section 10.0. of this report. For the sake of clarity, the key points are reiterated here:</p> <p>The placement of the building’s greater massing to the less sensitive, northern parts of the Site responds to the surrounding taller scale of buildings which align the IDR. The massing has been reduced in height, towards the low-scale character of buildings comprising the CA.</p> <p>The arrangement of storey heights has incorporated lower scale blocks of six and four storeys to the east of the Site, in closest proximity with the surrounding residential development. This has mitigated the scale of the building in key views from within the CA, as well as the breaking up of massing blocks through a three-fingered approach.</p> <p>A setback to the uppermost storey and use of a lighter brick tonality at upper levels, allows the taller components to appear as more subtle additions on the skyline.</p> <p>The locations of verified views for the application have been agreed with RBC. The visual assessment for this has been undertaken at Section 11.0. of this report.</p> <p>Comments in relation to the identified harm to the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of nearby listed buildings have been addressed in the heritage assessment section of the report (Section 9.0). For the sake of clarity, the key points are reiterated here:</p> <p>As demonstrated by the ZTV at Figure 5.2, there will be no intervisibility between the principal façades of the listed buildings on London Street and the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would be visible only from the rear of these buildings, along the boundary of the CA. The existing condition of this outlook is poor, characterised by modern infrastructure, large scale commercial development and light industrial buildings. Were therefore identify no harm to the listed buildings on London Street.</p> <p>Through the introduction of the Proposed Development, the spire of St Giles would be occluded from views from the north of London Street, as shown in Figure 11.13. The primacy of the spire, a quality which contributes to its interest, would be preserved in the local area, notably in views on Church Street and Southampton Street (Local View 2) would be maintained.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be visible within the setting of the Church of St Giles, notably within the church yard to the north. In this location the Proposed Development would be understood as part of the existing urban setting of the church and the high quality of its design would be appreciated. The Proposed Development would be separated physically from the church yard by intervening roads and development. In the principal views of the church from the north and west, the Proposed Development would be occluded. The relationship between the church and the elements of its setting which contribute to its special interest, notably the churchyard, monuments, vicarage and hall, would be preserved. This report, as explained in full at Section 9.0, does not find harm to the significance of the Church of St Giles.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would introduce a new building in the setting of the Meeting House. From within the courtyard and on Church Street, the Proposed Development would be viewed in conjunction with the listed building in views of the south elevation. The impact of the Proposed Development in the setting of the Meeting House has been mitigated through the variation in its massing, which steps away from the meeting house, and the use of contextual materiality. A full assessment is provided in Section 9.0 of this report.</p> <p>Despite the introduction of the Proposed Development, the elements of its setting which contribute to its interest are maintained and its intrinsic value preserved. Overall, we have identified a low level of less than substantial harm to the Meeting House.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would appropriately address the townscape, in the immediate context by the following:</p> <p>The design of the exterior facade comprises vertical proportions and columns, which seek to provide a strong vertical frontage opposite the large-scale buildings immediately opposite, including that of The Oracle Shopping Centre.</p> <p>The vertical articulation not only contextualises the scale of the building but adds architectural interest and quality to the TCA. The retainment of this building line to the IDR is a key characteristic of the TCA and one that is further enforced by the introduction of active frontages at ground floor level, on the northern elevation.</p> <p>The introduction of an open ground floor, with a well-defined principal entrance will provide better visual permeability and will enhance the building’s relationship with the street. The proposed design and uses at ground floor will create vibrant and active frontage which will serve a placemaking function and improve the appearance of the Site boundary to the immediate north.</p> <p>And in the wider context, and in more longer views:</p> <p>The incorporation of a distinguished base, middle and crown seek to mitigate the impact of scale, adding a human proportionality to the building. The top of the building will be particularly distinguishable through the use of vertical corbels and parapet detailing. The visibility of this element of the building from the wider townscape, will have a wayfinding function and thus increased permeability towards the Site.</p> |

Table 5.1      Summary of Consultation prior to submission in September 2024

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