Assael

D&AS

Waterfront Square / Reading

Design & Access Statement Addendum

October 2025 | A4012

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5.1 Conclusion

1.0 Introduction

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1.1 The purpose of this document

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Assael Architecture for Packaged Living and Bridges Fund Management. The purpose of this document is to set out the proposed amendments to the proposals for the demolition of existing office and substation buildings and development of a residential-led mixed use scheme (hereafter 'the site').

A planning application for the development of the site was submitted to Reading Borough Council (RBC) in July 2024 (PL/24/0958), from here on referred to as the 'Original Proposed Development'. Further amendments to the design have been requested by the local planning authority and the Design South East (D:SE) review panel.

1.2 Proposed amendments

Following discussions with RBC and feedback from the D:SE panel, the Applicant has sought to review the scheme and as a result the following amendments have been made:

- Reduction in units from 254 dwellings (15 x studios, 105 x 1 bed, 116 x 2 bed, 15 x 3 bed) and 268 sqm commercial floorspace to 236 dwellings (22 x studios, 92 x 1 bed, 110 x 2 bed, 12 x 3 bed) and 246 sqm (GEA) commercial floorspace
- Ground floor - Norman Place increased by 1m in width. Access to car park improved, public square increased in size
- Second to Seventh Floor - Block A1 reduced by 1m width with consequent increase to podium area. Core layouts updated to reflect changes to massing.
- Fifth to Seventh Floor - Chamfer introduced to Block A1. Core layouts updated to reflect changes to massing.
- Seventh floor - Block A1 reduced by 1 storey.
- Eighth Floor - Block B2 reduced in length with consequent increase in accessible roof terrace (50% larger)
- Brick parapets replaced with railings
- Block B1 amended through an increase in the variety of materials and tones to break up the Norman Place elevation
- Block B1 - increased fluting detail provided to top floors of main block and metal detail added to window heads to visually enhance the crown of the building
- Throughout - additional checkerboard detail added to window heads
- Blocks A1 and A2 - greater detail provided to lower edge buildings on the river frontage to provide greater contrast with floors above.

1.3 Description of development

Demolition of existing office and substation buildings and residential-led site redevelopment within 1-11 storey buildings comprising residential (Class C3) and ground floor commercial uses (Class E), together with various associated works including replacement pedestrian and vehicle access routes, car/cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping and a public open space adjacent to the river.

1.4 The professional team

Client
Packaged Living

Funder
Bridges

Architect
Assael Architecture

Planning consultant
Opus Works

Heritage & townscape consultant
Lichfields

Transport consultant & flood risk assessment
Stantec

Cost consultant
Arcadis

MEP, M&E VT, and accoustic consultant
Hoare Lea

Daylight consultant
GIA

Landscape architect
Assael Exteriors

Civil and structure consultant
Hexa Consulting

Sustainability consultant
Element

Ecology consultant
TEP Ecology

Archeology consultant
Oxford Archaeology

Air quality consultant
Hydrock

Building control consultant
Sweco

Fire engineer
Mars Fire Engineering

Introduction

2.0 Design process

Design response

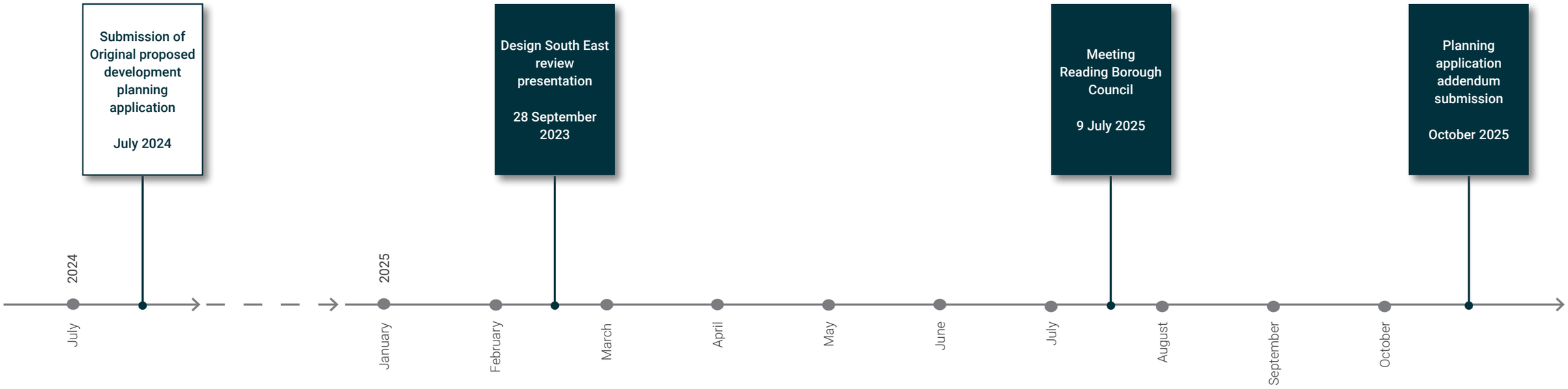
Landscape

Conclusion

2.1 Post submission consultation process

Following submission of the Original Proposed Development in July 2024, the applicant team have continued to engage with officers at RBC and the Design South East review panel. Engagement with local stakeholder groups has also continued, including Reading Civic Society and CADRA.

This design process and response sections identify the key areas in which the consultation process has informed the amendments to the design and demonstrates the key changes that have led to the Amended proposed development.



2.1.1 Design South East review panel (28/02/2025)

A post submission Design South East review panel presentation was held in early 2025. The original proposed development was presented and feedback received.

A summary of the feedback can be found opposite.





Visualisations of the original proposed development

2.1.2 Summary of Design South East feedback

Site layout and footprint.

- The panel previously recommended that the design team look in depth at the context and the pattern of streets from the river to the town. The design team have chosen instead to refine aspects the previous approach, and whilst some of the changes have had a positive impact on the scheme, the more fundamental changes needed to create a more contextually sensitive proposal have not been made. For example, the introduction of other typologies such as townhouses could enrich the scheme by creating a streetscape.
- The widening of Norman Place and the increase in separation from Thames Court was welcomed as it was felt that they enable this route to be more generous and legible and no longer feel like an alleyway. The ground floor units, with street entrances, also help animate this streetscape.
- From the studies presented,the panel felt it that the main courtyard garden will not receive sufficient sunlight. The kitchen garden rooftop space should not be considered as a compensation for this; the courtyard must provide useful amenity

Form, scale and massing

- The panel noted an improvement to scale and massing. The southern elevations to Vastern Road are generally successful and the breaking down of the form into a family of blocks is positive. The three elements work well at the urban scale and in relation to the road
- It was felt that the west facing elevation of the ‘green block’ is less successful and the lack of a break prevents light from the southwest from entering the courtyard. A break in the form would admit light into the central space and help to break down the scale of this elevation. This would also allow the ‘green block’ to become a more distinctive landmark
- Further consideration should be given to further the modelling of the form to benefit residents and the quality of the courtyard. For example, the judicious removal of some units and could improve daylighting in the central courtyard
- The footprint depth of the residential blocks, which is currently shown at 17/18 metres, is being driven by the extensive use of double-loaded residential corridors. The design team should explore how a reduction in the depth of some or all of the wings will improve the layouts of the apartments and enable the overall massing to be reduced in bulk. This in turn could make a more generous courtyard space.
- Moving away from corridor-driven layouts to clustered arrangements of flats around lift cores (akin to a Mansion Block) would allow the depth of the blocks to be reduced to 15/16 metres and enable more dual aspect flats
- The panel noted that, if double-loaded corridors are used, a different, narrower apartment typology could be used at the top three or four levels to create a setback around the courtyard elevations. This pulling back would allow more light into the courtyard space

Materials and detailing

- The material colour palette was commended as an effective response to the context. The light-coloured material proposed in the interior of the courtyard was also felt to be an appropriate choice that will help reflect light into this space
- The panel felt that the north facing elevation was not yet successful. Whilst the gable ends appear to be similar in character, their different footprint geometries suggest they should be different. The panel suggested this could be achieved by using a different material or by having the western leg responding to the context of Thames Court and the eastern leg responding to the Thames Water building
- The parapets around the higher level terraces appear heavy and consideration could be given to these being perforated so that the parapets read more as a terminating cornice than a dense band, or reduced in height and a simple, metalwork balustrade used
- The panel noted that the application of fluting to the southern elevation was distinctive but not resolved. They suggested that consideration should be given to reversing the hierarchy of the fluting so that it is wider at the lower level and narrower at the top, to make the block appear less top heavy

Key recommendations

- Adopt a more contextually and environmentally response to massing, evolving a solution that maximises sunlight penetration into the central courtyard space and improves daylight levels in the single-aspect residential units facing it.
- Break the western flank of the building to allow more light into the central courtyard space and improve the elevation.
- Reconfigure the floorplates and vertical circulation to reduce the need for double stacked corridors and to reduce the mass of the blocks.
- Enable the western wing, along the river frontage, to step down to the height of Thames Court.
- Amend the formal delineation of the cycle route to encourage cyclists to use the Norman Place carriageway.
- Refine the northern elevation that faces the Thames to acknowledge the different characters of the eastern and western wings

2.2 Post feedback design studies

Following feedback from the post-submission Design South East (D:SE) panel presentation and feedback from Officers, a series of design studies were carried out, which explored several ways in which the massing and layout could be amended to respond to the feedback.

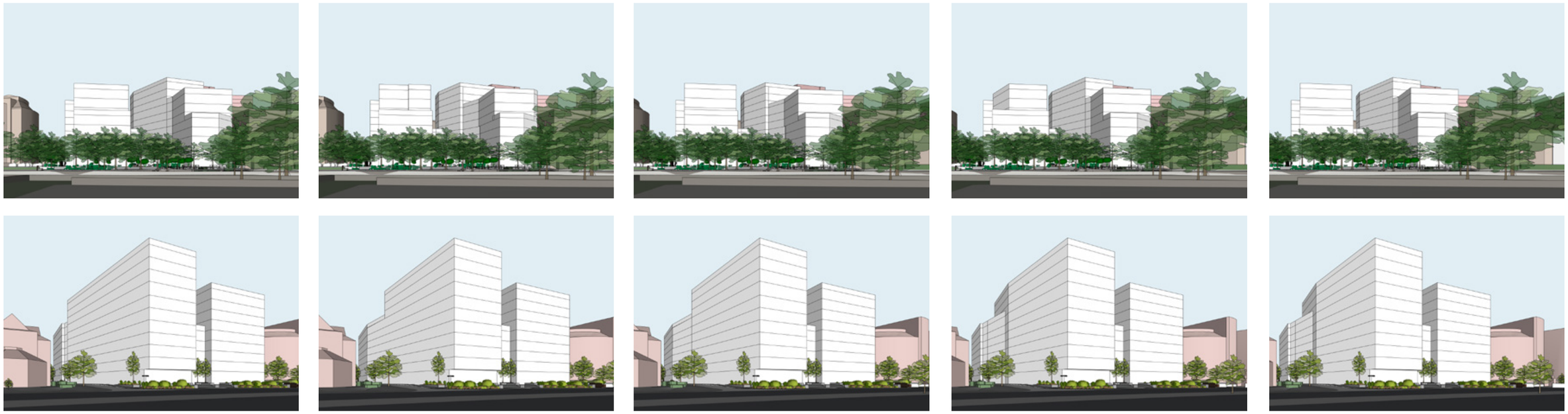
2.2.1 Officer feedback

The options set out below were presented to RBC Officers at a meeting on 9 July 2025. It was felt that the proposed options did not go far enough to address the feedback and further amendments were requested.

The key points to address were:

- Break down the length of block B1 by reducing the massing at the upper floors
- Reducing the width of blocks A1 and B2 to provide more space along Norman Place and across the residents podium garden
- Refine the footprint of block A1, through use of a chamfered massing to reduce the width of the building further when viewed from the river
- Increase the width of the podium
- Increase the width of the footpath along Norman Place
- Develop and enhance the architectural character

As submitted	Design study 1	Design study 2	Design study 3	Design study 4
	‘Mansion style’ blocks	Thinner blocks	Chamfered massing	Combined
254 homes	242 / 236 homes	247 / 241 homes	245 homes	244 homes
	The D:SE panel suggested exploring and option where the standard block arrangement was replaced by a series of connected mansion blocks, each with a small number of homes per floor clustered around the core. This option resulted in thinner blocks, which in turn created a larger podium space; however, the number of cores increased, which complicated the access arrangements and contradicted the principles of a BtR scheme, where residents have access to spaces throughout the building.	The narrower blocks produced by the ‘mansion style’ option resulted in a wider podium and a modest reduction in the massing, both of which positively contributed to the appearance and quality of the scheme. Design study 2 looked at how these positives could be retained whilst retaining the central corridor access arrangement.	Although the narrower blocks improved the massing, when viewed from the river. The D:SE and Officers both suggested reducing the perceived massing of building A1 from the river and building B1 when viewed from Vastern Road. Study 3 looked to address this feedback by chamferring these blocks to slim down the massing and shorten the length of the elevations. This move also contributed positively to the massing of the building.	The final study combined the chamfered massing with the narrower blocks, resulting in a massing that was both reduced and more broken down.



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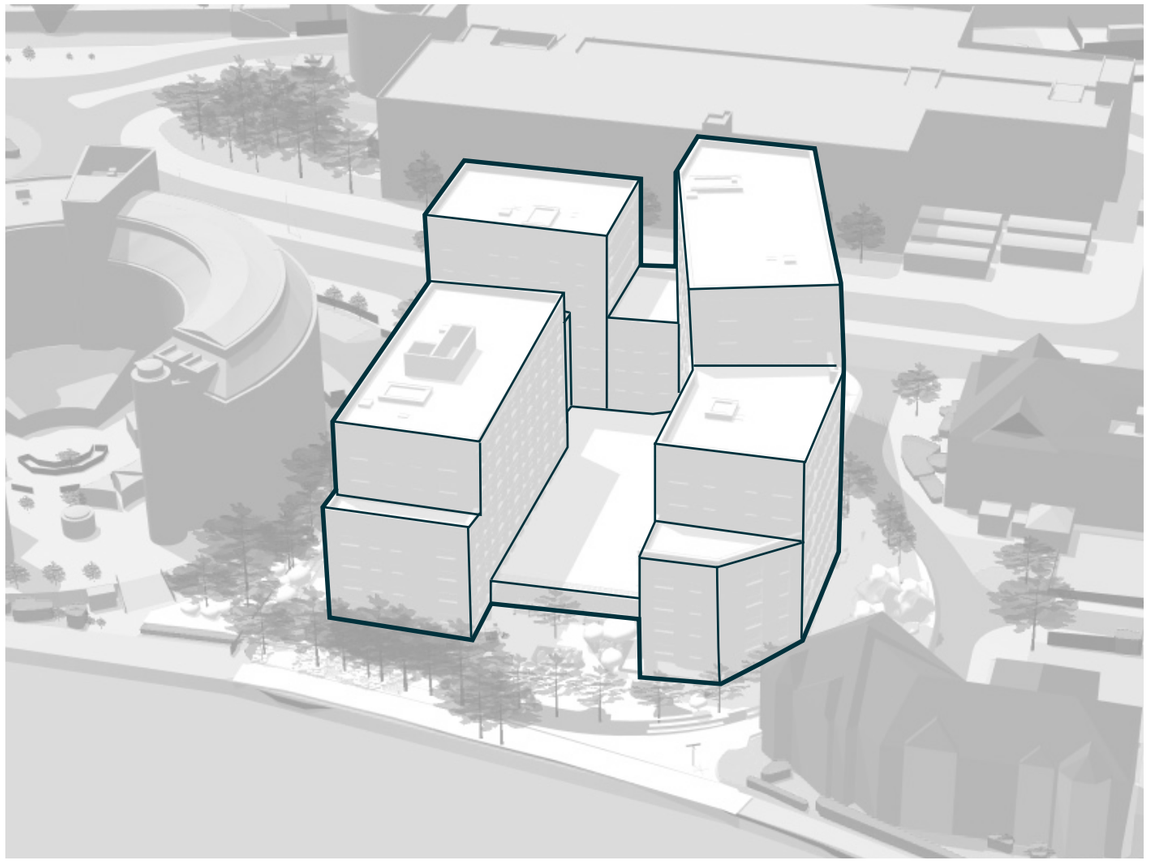
Landscape

Conclusion

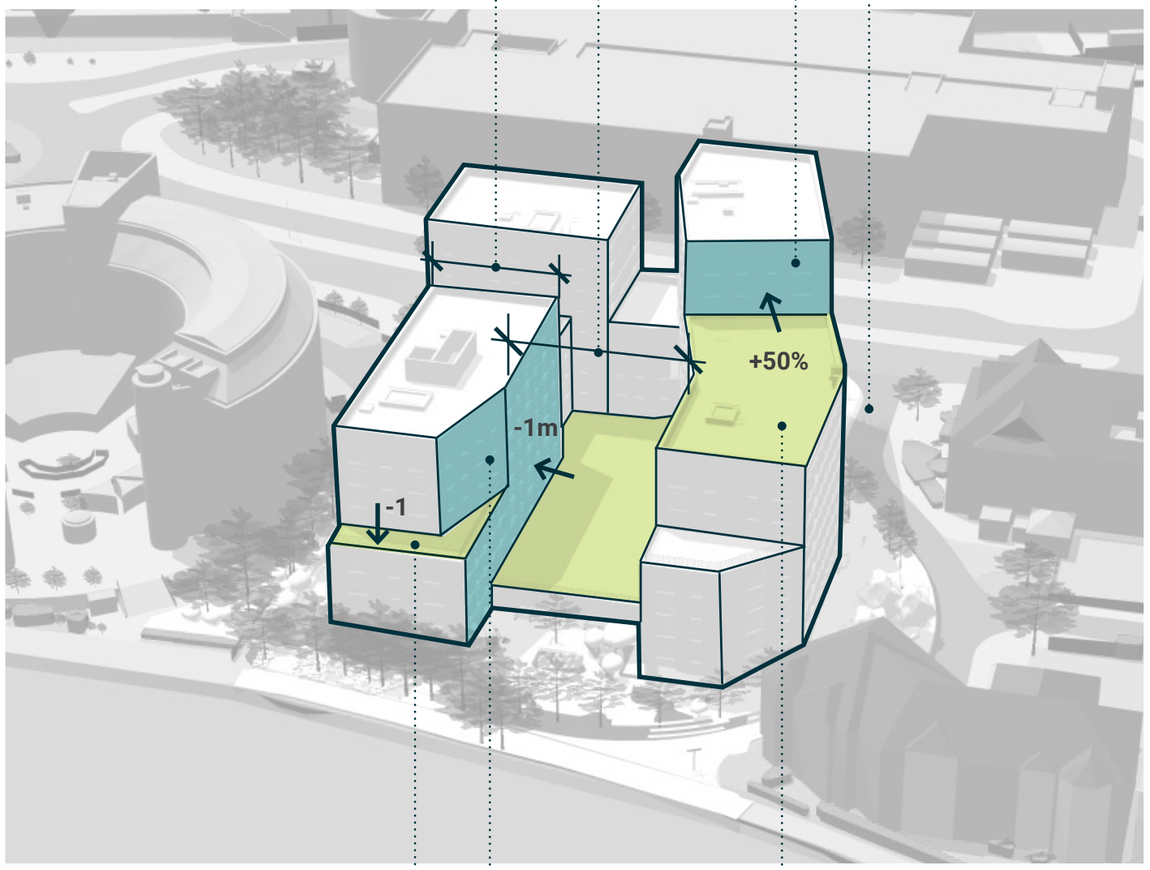
3.1 Summary of key changes

Following RBC Officers feedback, further refinements have been made to the massing and layout of the scheme, all of which positively contribute to the layout massing and appearance of the scheme.

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



3.2 Summary of proposals

A summary of key figures and how they have changed are as follows:

Original proposed development

254 homes

15	Studios	(7 %)
105	1 beds	(41 %)
116	2 beds	(46 %)
15	3 beds	(6 %)

14,539 sq m	*156,502 sq ft*	Net Internal Area
21,549 sq m	*231,955 sq ft*	Gross Internal Area
23,349 sq m	*251,331 sq ft*	Gross External Area

(Including 508 sqm GIA residents internal amenity space)

Accessibility

5%	Part M4(3) homes
95%	Part M4(2) homes
5%	Accessible cycle spaces

Commercial

268 sq m	*2,885 sq ft*	Gross Internal Area
277 sq m	*2,990 sq ft*	Gross External Area

Car parking provision

18	Spaces within podium (of which **8** are accessible bays)

Cycle parking

136	Long stay residential spaces
14	Visitor spaces

Amended proposed development

236 homes

21	Studios	(9 %)
93	1 beds	(39 %)
110	2 beds	(47 %)
12	3 beds	(5 %)

13,298 sq m	*143,149 sq ft*	Net Internal Area
18,776 sq m	*202,113 sq ft*	Gross Internal Area
20,390 sq m	*218,063 sq ft*	Gross External Area

Residents shared amenity

459 sq m	*4,941 sq ft*	Gross Internal Area

Accessibility

5%	Part M4(3) homes
95%	Part M4(2) homes
5%	Accessible cycle spaces

Commercial

236.1 sq m	*2,542 sq ft*	Gross Internal Area
246 sq m	*2,648 sq ft*	Gross External Area

Car parking provision

18	Spaces within podium (of which **8** are accessible bays)

Cycle parking

124	Long stay residential spaces
14	Visitor spaces

3.3 Layout

In response to the feedback received at the D:SE review meeting and from Officers at RBC, the following amendments have been made to the layouts:

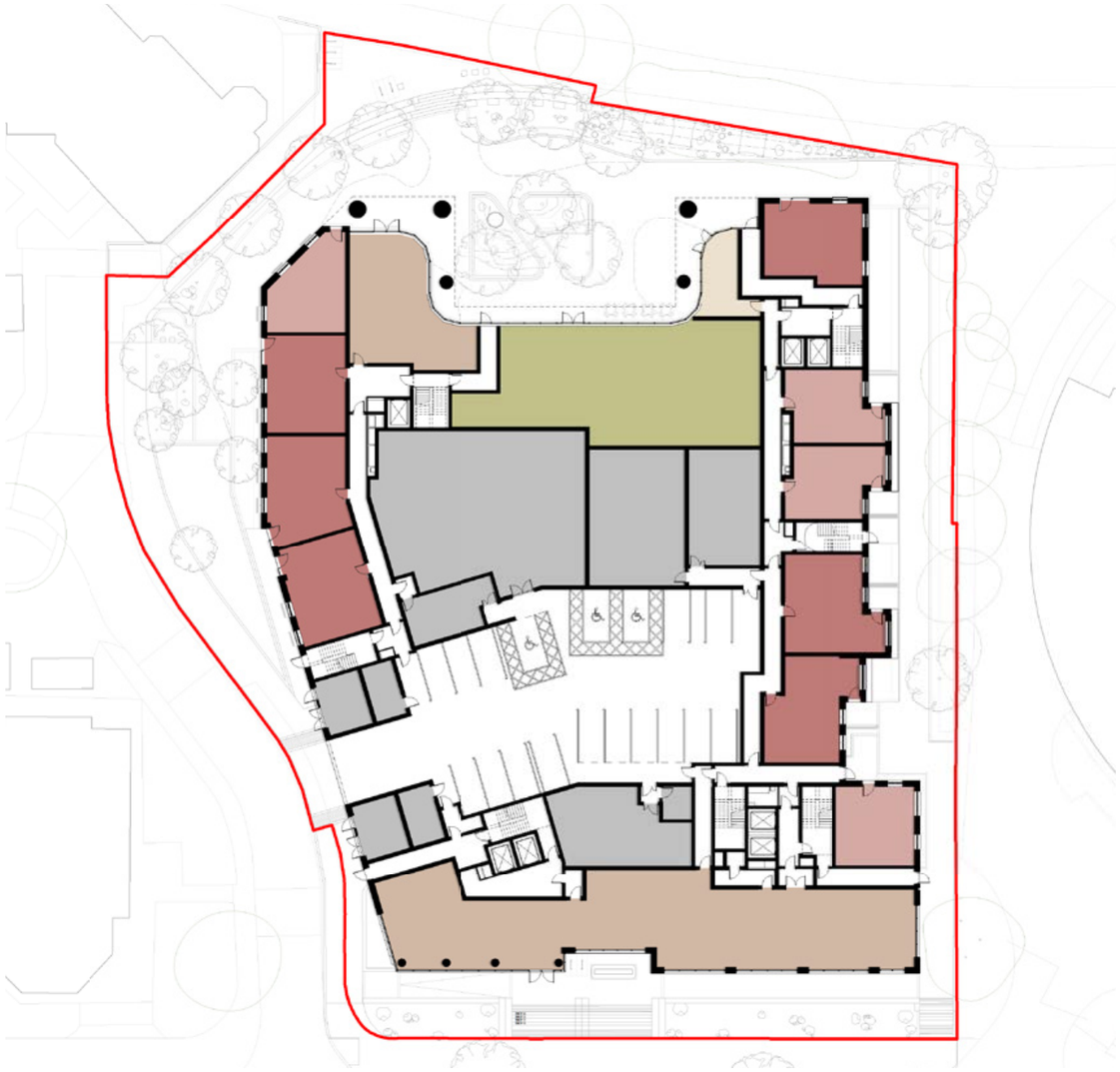
3.3.1 Ground floor

1. Building B1 set back at ground by 1m along Norman Place
2. Car park access improved
3. Cores redesigned to reflect latest fire regulations
4. Mix of homes amended to reflect changes to building cores and new building line

Key

Commercial Space
Amenity Space
Entrance Lobby
Plant/ancillary
Studio apartment
1 Bed apartment
2 Bed apartment
3 Bed apartment

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



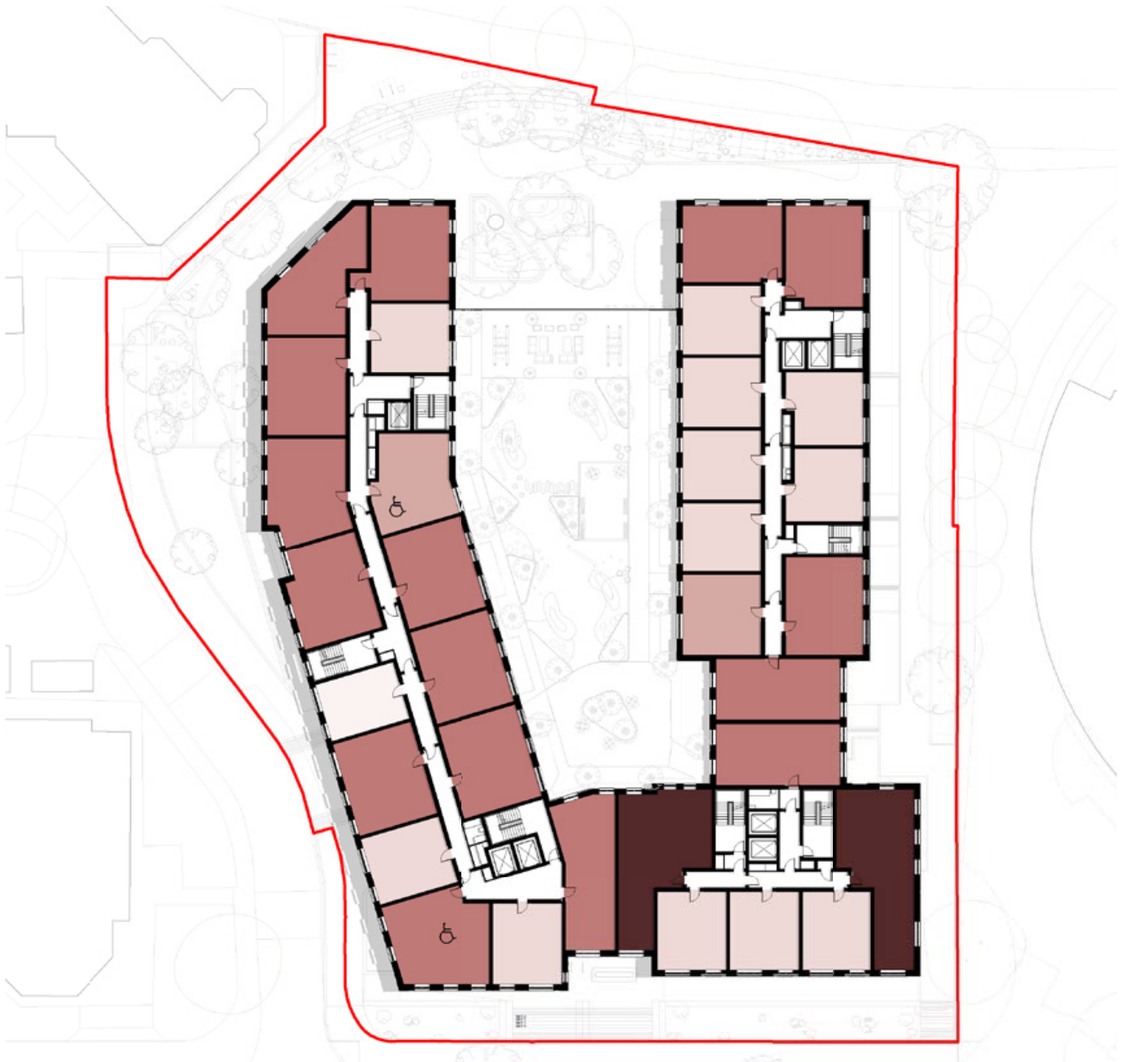
3.3.2 Second to fourth floor

1. Building A1 reduced in width by 1m
2. Podium increased in width by 1m
3. Mix of homes updated
4. Cores redesigned to reflect latest fire regulations

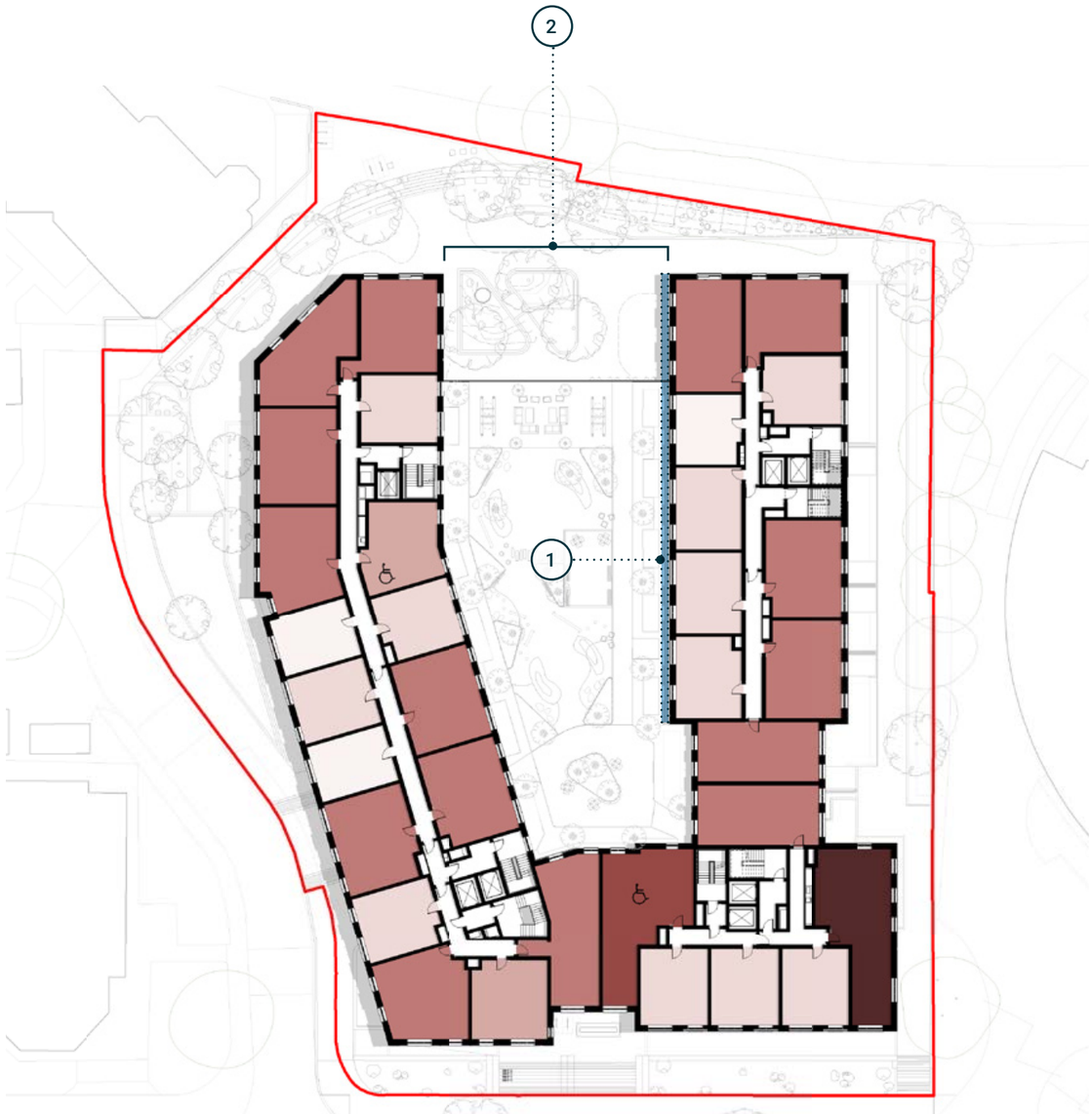
Key

- Commercial Space
- Amenity Space
- Entrance Lobby
- Plant/ancillary
- Studio apartment
- 1 Bed apartment
- 2 Bed apartment
- 3 Bed apartment

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



3.3.3 Fifth to seventh floor

1. Building A1 chamfered at upper floors
2. Mix of homes updated
3. Cores redesigned to reflect latest fire regulations

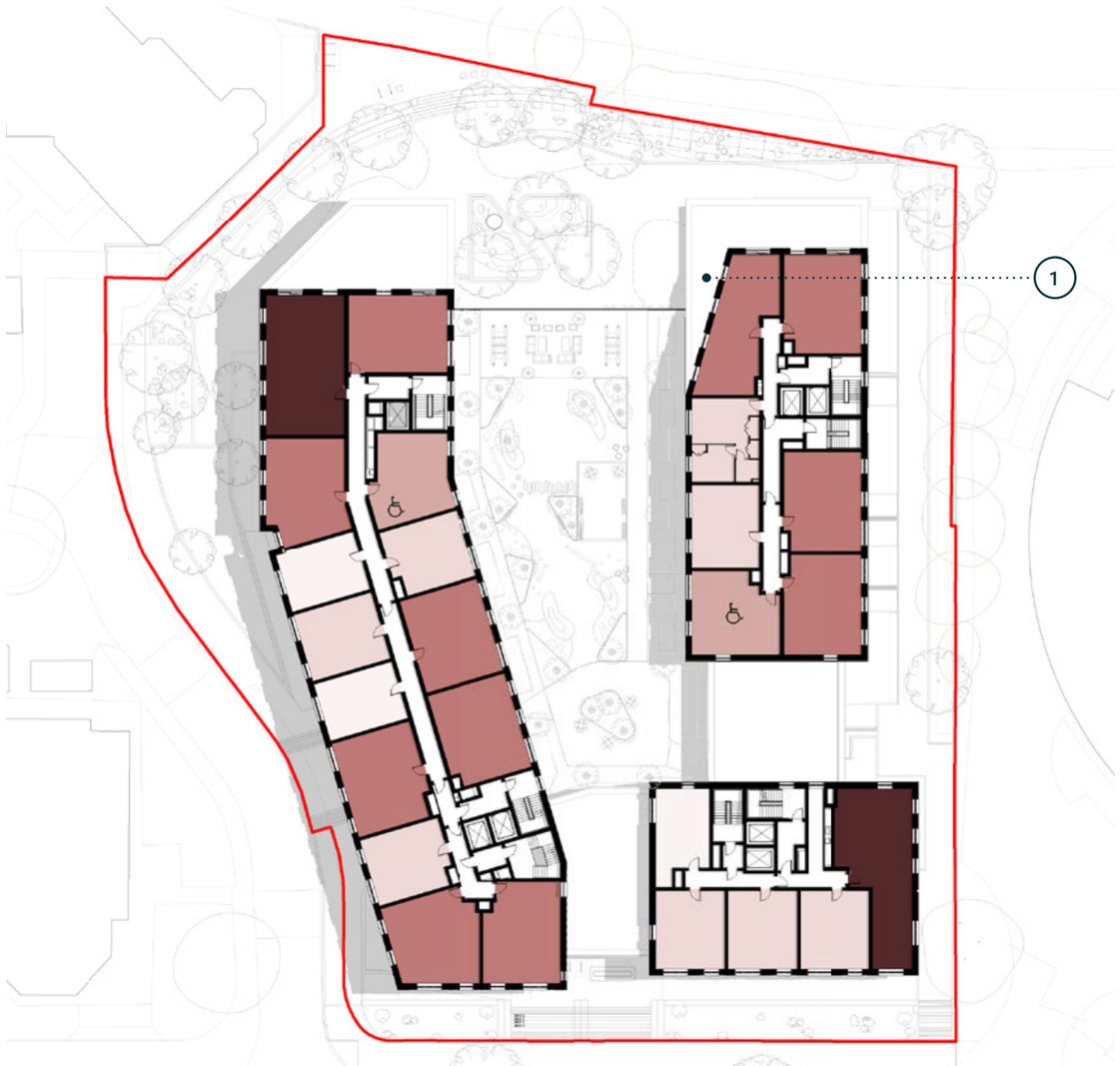
Key

- Commercial Space
- Amenity Space
- Entrance Lobby
- Plant/ancillary
- Studio apartment
- 1 Bed apartment
- 2 Bed apartment
- 3 Bed apartment

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



3.3.4 Eighth floor

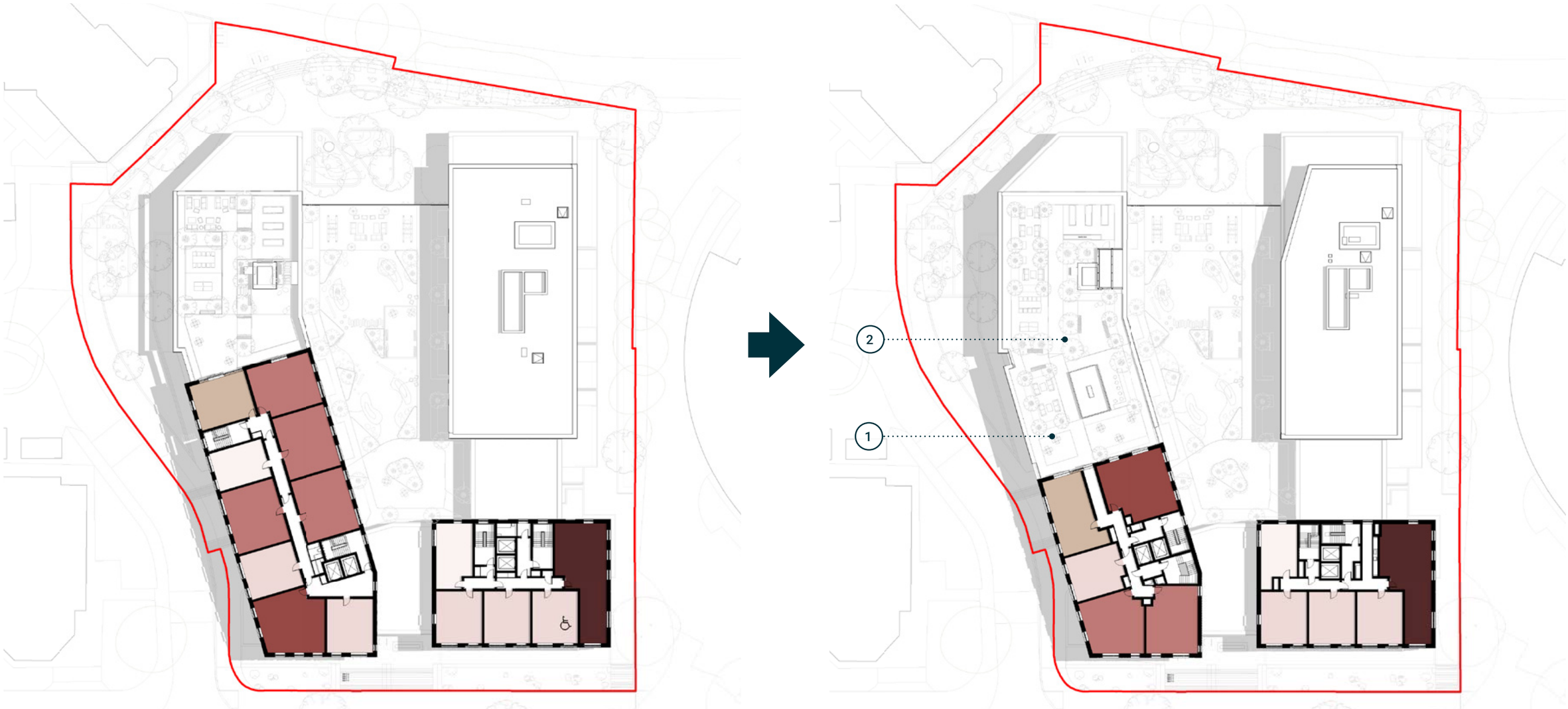
1. Building B1floorplate reduced in length at upper floors
2. Area of accessible roof terrace increased
3. Mix of homes updated
4. Cores redesigned to reflect latest fire regulations

Key

- Commercial Space
- Amenity Space
- Entrance Lobby
- Plant/ancillary
- Studio apartment
- 1 Bed apartment
- 2 Bed apartment
- 3 Bed apartment

Original proposed development

Amended proposed development



3.4 Elevation changes

The changes to the layout and massing have resulted in changes to the appearance of the buildings, including:

1. Amendments to the brick colours where the design has changed
2. The introduction of brick pattern details between the windows
3. Changes to the scale of the fluting to the green concrete panels on building B1

These changes are set out over the following pages.

3.4.1 Norman Place (West elevation)

1. Area of dark grey brick increased
2. Patterned brick detailing between windows
3. Size of fluting pattern in concrete panels amended to have larger scale at lower levels, smaller scale at upper floors
4. Brick parapets replaced with railing
5. Cantilever introduced to increase width of Norman Place
6. Window pattern updated to reflect changes to layout

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



3.4.2 Vastern Road (South elevation)

1. Size of fluting pattern in concrete panels amended to have larger scale at lower levels, smaller scale at upper floors
2. Cantilever introduced to increase width of Norman Place
3. Window pattern updated to reflect changes to layout

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



3.4.3 Vastern Road (South elevation)

1. Size of fluting pattern in concrete panels amended to have larger scale at lower levels, smaller scale at upper floors
2. Chamfer added to building A1 to reduce width of building
3. Patterned brick detailing between windows
4. Brick parapets replaced with railing
5. Northern part of block A1 reduced in height by 1 storey
6. Window pattern updated to reflect changes to layout

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



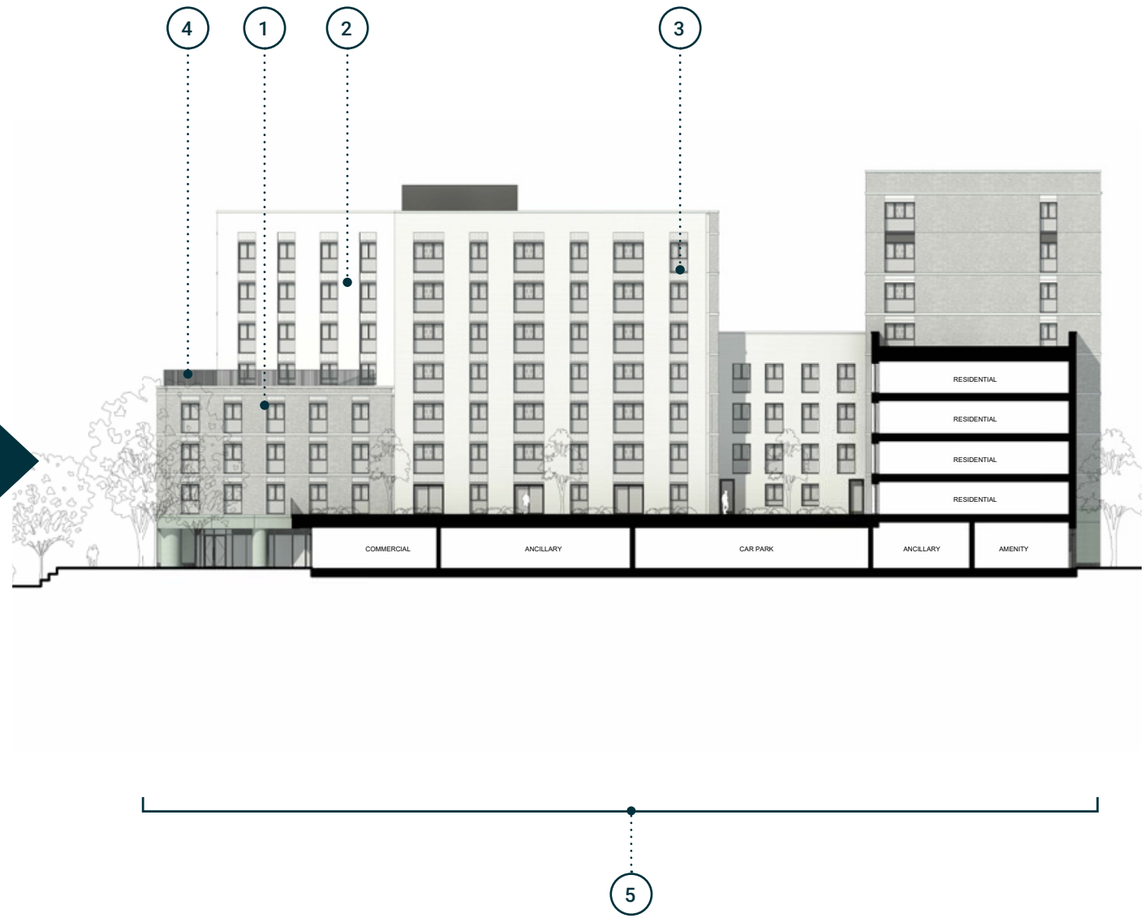
3.4.4 Courtyard Elevation (A1 West elevation)

1. Northern part of block A1 reduced in height by 1 storey
2. Chamfer added to building A1 to reduce width of building
3. Patterned brick detailing between windows
4. Brick parapets replaced with railing
5. Window pattern updated to reflect changes to layout

Original proposed development



Amended proposed development



3.5 Materials

The material palette remains the same as the original proposed development Materials have been chosen using the following principles:

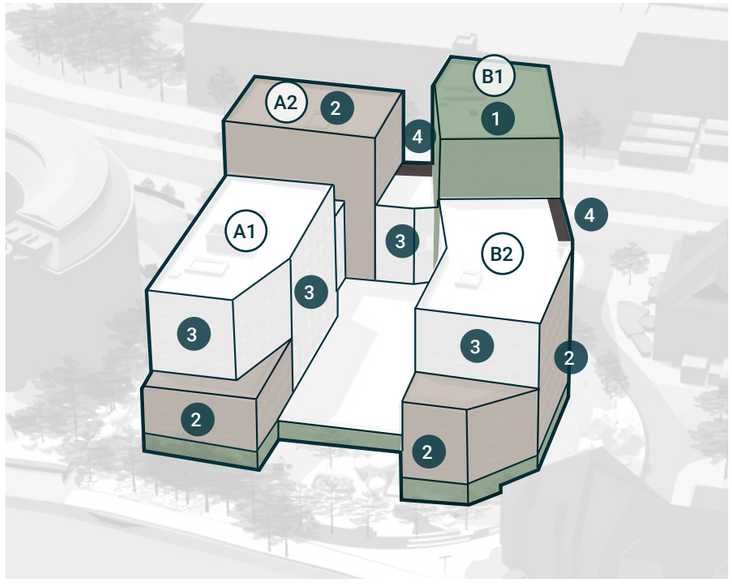
- Materials and details that reflect the character of the area
- Predominantly brick facade in complimentary tones
- Tactile materials and details at locations with human interaction
- Robust, high quality and hard wearing materials that will stand the test of time

Although the materials are the same as previously proposed, the distribution of tones has been amended to reflect the changes in massing and to help break down the blocks.

The diagram below shows how materials are distributed across site. The outer faces of blocks A1 and B2 are clad in a light grey brick, which wraps around the lower portions of each block facing the river. The podium faces are clad in white brick, creating a sense of lightness across the podium.

Dark brick is used in the link blocks, which separate the brick facades from the concrete facades of block B1.

The green coloured concrete that clads Block B1 and the plinth unifies the blocks and extends the softer greener riverine landscape of the northern edge of the site, south towards Vastern Road. The use of this distinct material also helps to create a Marker on the corner of Vastern Road and Norman Place, helping to clearly identify the national cycle route and pedestrian route that links Vastern Road to the river.



Aerial massing view showing the distribution if material colours across the site



Key

1. Green concrete
2. Grey brick
3. White brick
4. Dark grey/brown brick
5. Dark grey metal

Photos showing examples of the proposed material palette

3.6 Appearance

The buildings have been divided into two typologies:

The corner building: block B1, which is the taller element of the proposal and is situated on the key intersection of Norman Place and Vastern Road.

Edge buildings: the remaining buildings that edge the site.

3.7 The corner building

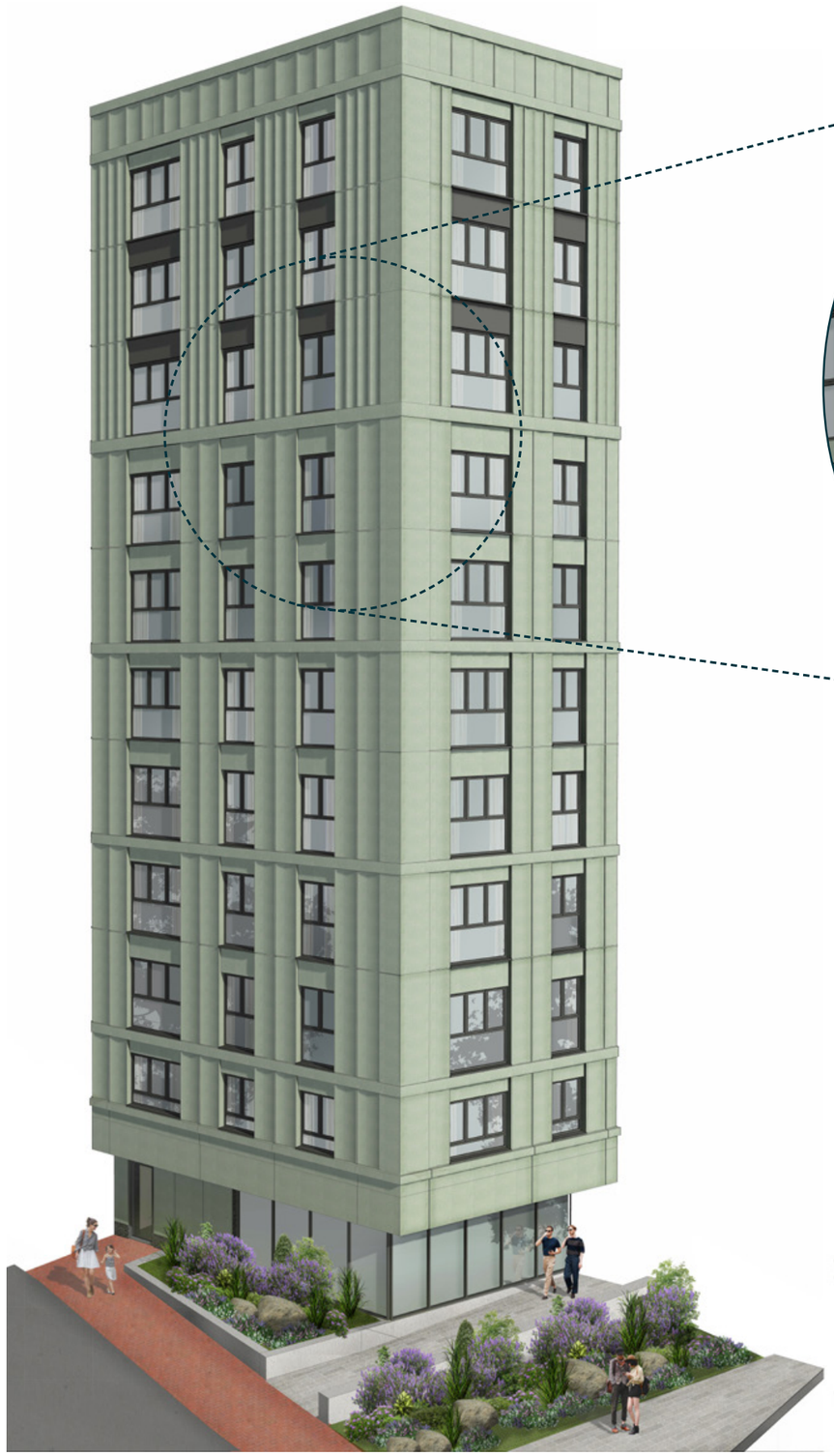
The corner building is the tallest and most visible point of the proposals and its articulation has been carefully considered to create a refined and ordered facade with a clear rhythm of windows and banding across every second floor to help define the scale and proportion of the building.

Articulation is provided through the use of fluted concrete panels at two different scales, which reference the gentle ripples of the river and create a richness and depth to the façades and helping to create a distinctive marker at the corner of the site.

The building has a clear hierarchy, with a distinct base, middle and top. The base is defined through large glazed openings, with a flat concrete band defining the cantilever of the building above.

The middle, or body of the building has double fluted piers, with a slender band defining every second floor and flat concrete panel linking the intermediate window, giving building a vertical emphasis.

The top three floors, which crown the building, have a change in scale of the fluted piers, with each pier comprising 4 fluted sections, rather than the two shown on the floors below. The creates a clear distinction to the upper part of the facades, which is further defined through the use of dark metal panels that link the windows vertically.





Excerpt of the facade showing the change in scale of the fluted piers, where the body of the building meets the crown





Precedent studies showing examples of green profiled concrete and grey bricks

3D view of the corner of Vastern Road and Norman Place



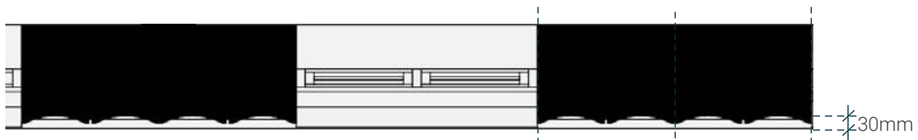
Key: Block B1/2 West Facade

3.7.1 The corner building in detail

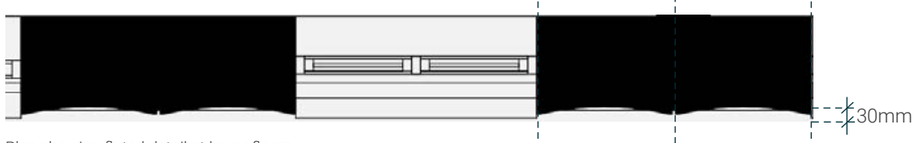
30mm deep fluted sections within the panels that change in scale across the building create depth and interest to the facade. The graduated scale of fluted panels reinforces rhythm and hierarchy across the façade.

Horizontal banding groups floors together and enhances the play of light and shadow on the fluted panels and a fluted crown detail provides a distinctive, elegant termination to the building

Dark grey metalwork to the windows and railings creates a cohesive architectural language, visually tying the development together.



Plan showing fluted detail at upper floors



Plan showing fluted detail at lower floors



Corner building elevation

3.8 The Edge buildings

The edge buildings are clad in grey brick as a reference to one of the predominant materials in Reading and a distinctive ‘checkerboard’ pattern spans between the windows, drawing on the pattern formed by the use of flemish bond brickwork in the facades of houses in the local area.

The courtyard facing elevations , and part of each facade facing the river are clad in paler white brick that will help to reflect natural light, brightening the courtyard as well as creating distinction between the buildings across the site.

The Edge buildings have a calm and ordered rhythm of piers, bands and openings. At the base, green concrete creates a visually contrasting grounding with a tactile finish that ties the Edge and Corner buildings together.



Example of brick checkerboard pattern, De Montfort Rd.



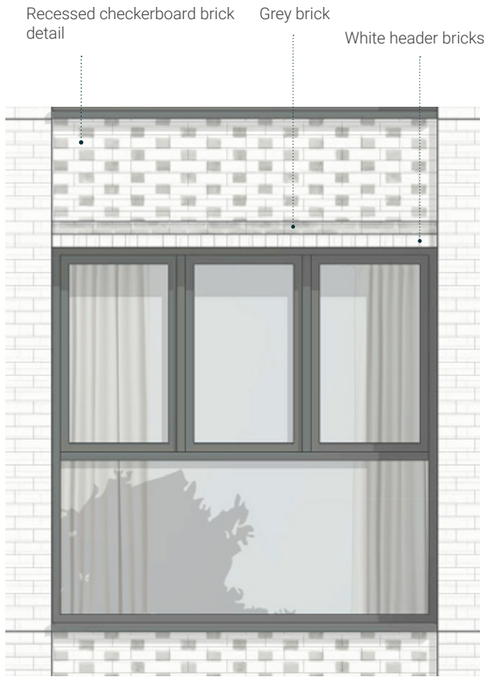
3D view of the north west corner of block A1 showing the overlapping of the grey and white brick buildings

Key: Block A1 West Facade

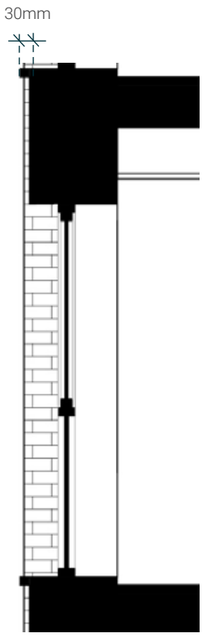
3.8.1 The corner building in detail

A brick panel, recessed from the predominant facade line by 30mm, links the windows vertically. This panel incorporates a ‘checkerboard’ flemish bond detail for subtle tonal changes and references to the local architecture.

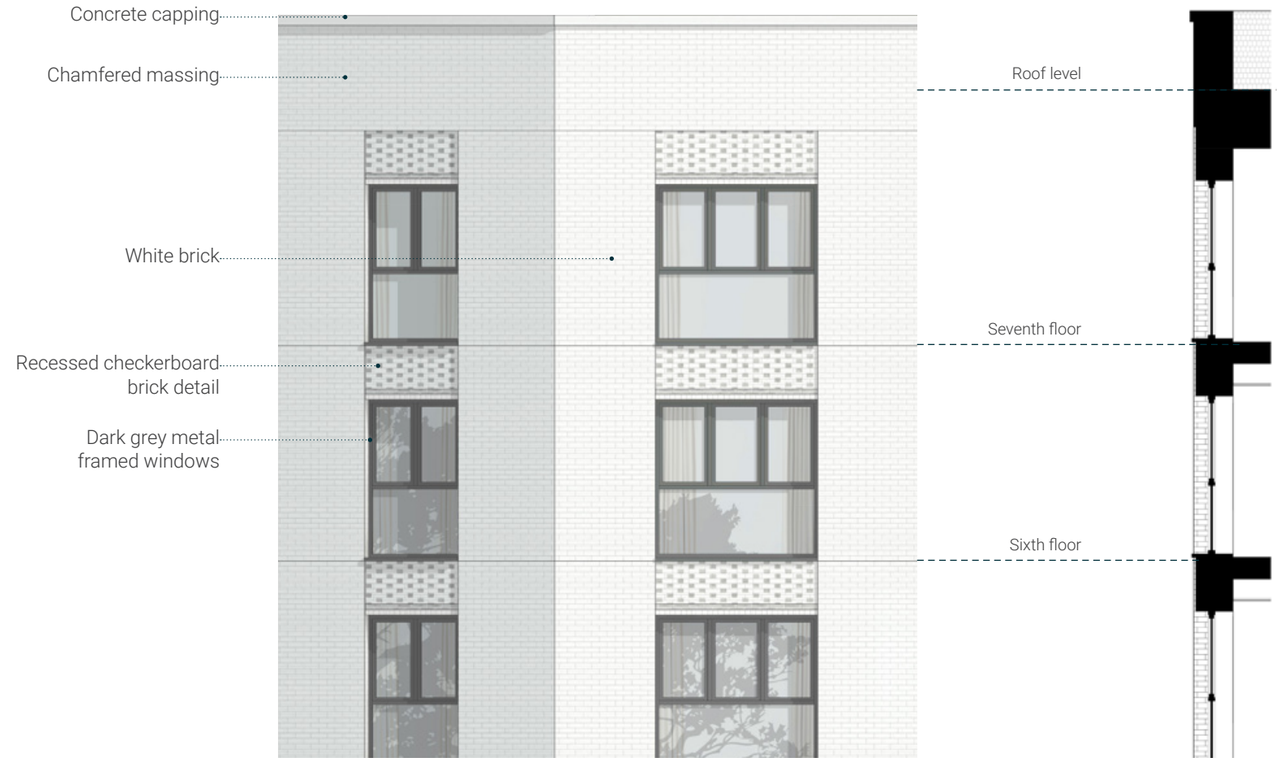
The brick pattern is formed through the use of alternating white and grey bricks that appear as a tonally darker panel on the white brick clad facades or a tonally lighter panel on the grey brick facades, increasing the contrast between detailed panels and the predominant facade finish and providing depth and visual interest.



Close up elevation of window detail



Section through window



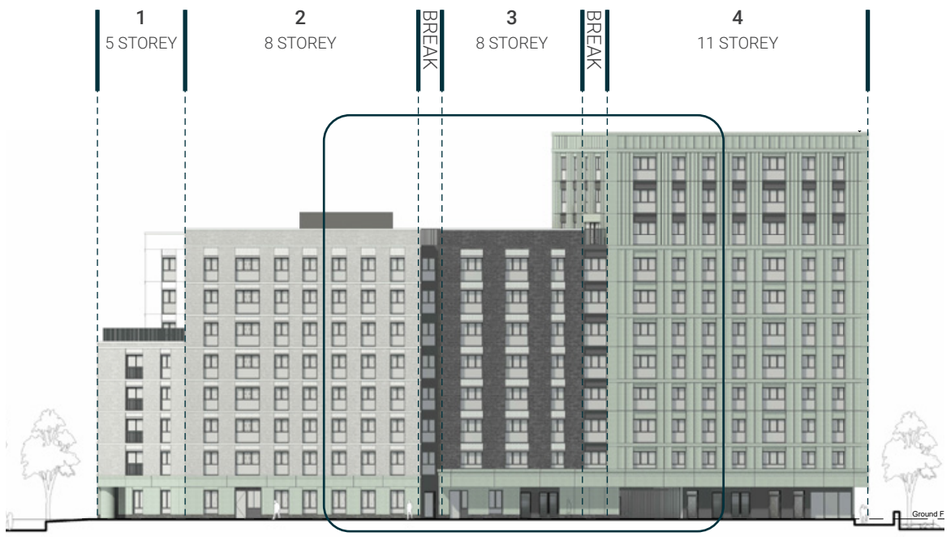


A1 elevation

3.9 Norman Place elevation

Norman Place presents the most varied facade, with a collection of interlinked buildings with varied tones and heights lining the street. A consistent green coloured concrete plinth ties all the buildings together and expressed breaks formed through the use of metal cladding and a recess from the predominant facade line create distinction between forms.

Where Edge buildings meet the Corner building, a darker grey brick is used on the block either side of the Corner building to further emphasis the change.



Key: Block B1/2 West Facade



3D view of the Norman Place facade

3.10 Visualisations

3.10.1 Vastern Road

Original proposed development



3.10.2 Vastern Road

Amended proposed development



3.10.3 View across the Thames

Original proposed development



3.10.4 View across the Thames

Amended proposed development



3.10.5 Waterfront Square

Original proposed development



3.10.6 Waterfront Square

Amended proposed development



3.10.7 Aerial view, looking into the Waterfront Square

Original proposed development



3.10.8 Aerial view, looking into the Waterfront Square

Amended proposed development



3.10.9 Aerial view, looking south

Original proposed development



3.10.10 Aerial view, looking south

Amended proposed development



3.10.11 View looking north from the podium garden



Introduction
Design process
Design response
4.0 Landscape
Conclusion

4.1 Existing trees - Survey summary

An arboricultural tree survey was undertaken by Cheshire Woodlands in December 2023 to inform the proposed development at Norman Place, Reading.

A total of 23 individual trees (T1–T23) and 4 tree groups (G1–G4) were recorded within or adjacent to the site boundary.

This summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed tree survey report that accompanies this application.

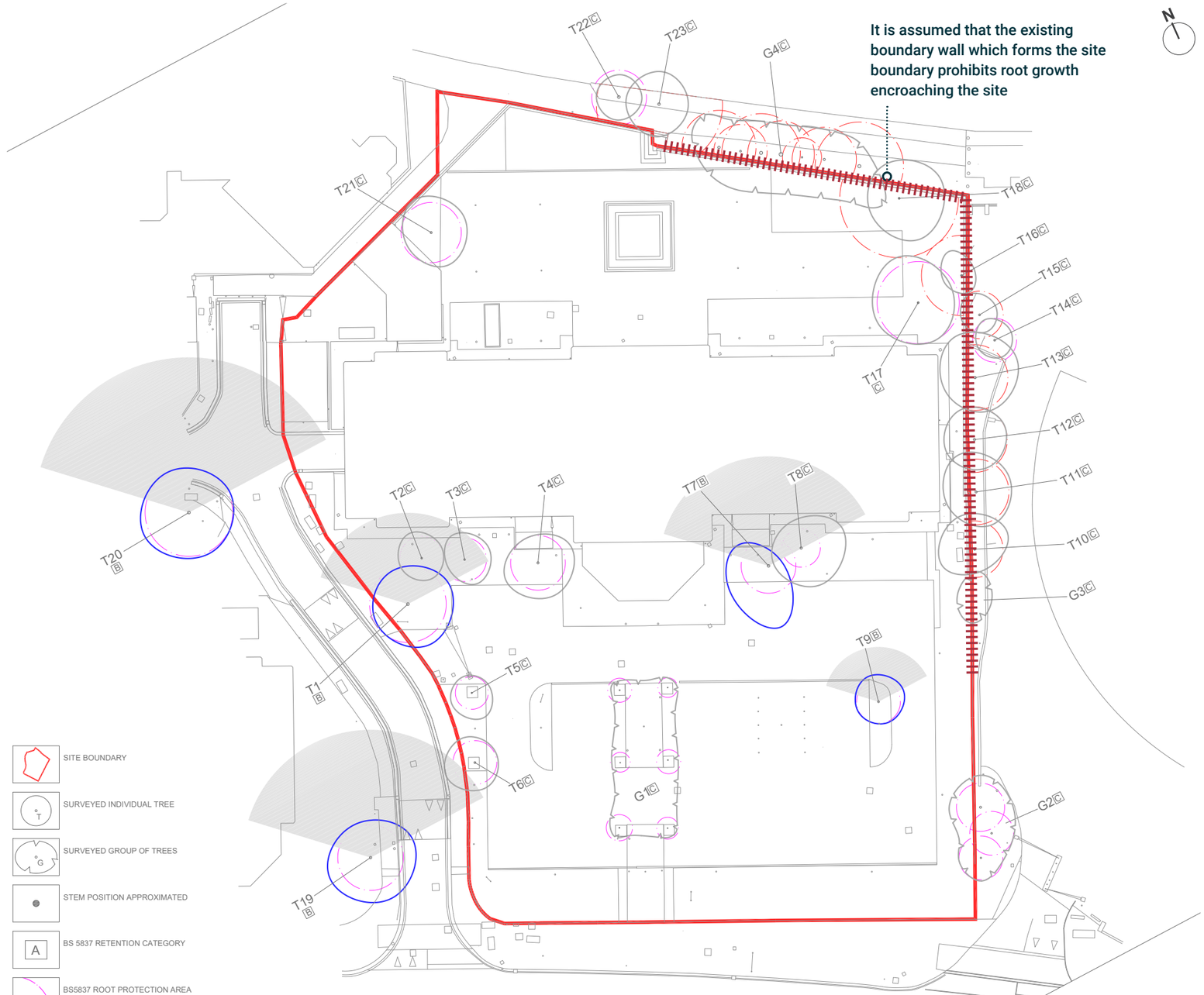
Category	Description	Retention Guidance
A	High quality and value	None recorded
B	Moderate quality and value	Retention desirable
C	Low quality and value	Limited retention value
U	Unsuitable for retention	None recorded

Summary of survey

- Of the trees surveyed, the majority are Category C, reflecting low-quality specimens or those with limited life expectancy.
- Three trees (Category B) within the site boundary are of moderate quality; their retention or integration into the design should be prioritised where feasible.
- No Category A trees of high quality or long-term value were identified.
- Category C trees and groups are generally of low quality and should not constrain development, although their short-term retention could offer limited amenity or screening benefits.
- Root Protection Areas (RPAs) are shown on the accompanying plan; along the northern and eastern boundaries, RPAs have been adjusted to reflect the presence of boundary walls that are likely to restrict root growth onto the site.

Design considerations

- Retain and protect Category B trees wherever possible through sensitive site design. Where the loss of Category B trees is unavoidable, provide like-for-like or enhanced replacement planting that delivers comparable or greater canopy cover at maturity. Replacement should favour native or climate-resilient species suited to the Thames Valley character (e.g. oak, lime, hornbeam, field maple).
- Category C trees may be removed or replaced with new, higher-quality planting as part of the overall landscape strategy. A tree replacement strategy should also be implemented along the site boundaries, particularly to replace the Category C Ash trees on the northern boundary, to ensure new trees are planted when existing specimens die or become significantly weakened. This approach will maintain the boundary's screening function and preserve the long-term continuity of the Thames tree corridor.
- Use semi-mature or heavy-standard specimens (12–16 cm girth minimum) to provide immediate visual and ecological benefit, and aim to achieve no net loss of canopy cover across the site in line with Reading's biodiversity objectives.
- Protective fencing and Root Protection Areas (RPAs) should be established prior to any construction activity for all trees identified for retention.
- A five-year establishment and maintenance plan should be implemented to ensure successful establishment and long-term canopy continuity, in accordance with Reading Borough Council's Tree Strategy and Policy EN14.



4.2 Tree removal, retention & proposed tree planting

This submission is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), Tree Protection Plan (TPP) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) prepared by Cheshire Woodlands. The adjacent diagram and summary below provide an overview of the key findings and recommendations from this assessment.

To facilitate the proposed development, the removal of 18 trees and low-quality shrub vegetation along Vastern Road is required. Of these, 15 are Category C trees and 3 are Category B trees, as defined under BS 5837:2012.

To mitigate these losses and comply with biodiversity trading rules for habitat value, the proposed landscape scheme delivers a significant net gain in tree cover, canopy area, and species diversity across the site. The new planting palette introduces a wide range of native and climate-resilient species, substantially enhancing the ecological connectivity and visual quality of the Thames tree corridor.

All works to existing trees will be carried out in accordance with BS 5837:2012 – Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

New tree planting will follow the recommendations of BS 8545:2014 – Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape, and Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery.

Species selection will be subject to availability and Defra guidance and regulations relating to pests and diseases to ensure the long-term health and resilience of the planting scheme.

4.2.1 Bio-security & climate resilience

Biosecurity and climate change are increasingly recognised as key factors influencing long-term ecosystem health and resilience. New regulations and guidance continue to evolve in response to emerging threats from pests, pathogens, and changing climatic conditions.

While native species remain a fundamental component of landscape and biodiversity policy, many are now exposed to hotter, drier summers and more prolonged periods of rainfall, creating additional stress and increasing vulnerability to decline.

In response, the proposed landscape strategy adopts a climate-adaptive approach to species selection. The planting palette broadens to include resilient native trees complemented by carefully selected non-invasive species from continental Europe or similar climatic regions. This balanced approach will strengthen canopy resilience, enhance biodiversity, and ensure the landscape remains robust and adaptable in line with Reading Borough Council's sustainability objectives and national climate adaptation guidance.



Diagram illustrating the tree retention and removal strategy

4.3 Proposed tree strategy

A total of 20 new trees are proposed within the public realm, the majority of which will be located in soft landscape areas.

The proposed tree palette includes a diverse mix of native and non-native species, carefully selected to enhance character, seasonal interest, and ecological value. The following criteria have informed species selection for both the public realm and podium gardens:

- Aspect and microclimate
- Suitability of scale and location
- Character and aesthetic quality
- Seasonal variation and visual interest
- Biodiversity and habitat contribution
- Climate resilience and adaptability
- Plant biosecurity
- Scent, flower, form, structure, colour, and edibility
- Size, weight, and structural loading considerations

Section 278 tree proposal

Two trees are proposed within hardstanding areas, both located along Vastern Road outside the main application boundary. These will be delivered as part of the Section 278 highway works and secured through a legal agreement with the highway authority. All trees will be planted within engineered tree pits, incorporating appropriate soil volumes, aeration, irrigation, and root management systems to promote healthy establishment and long-term growth.

Ground floor tree species

Botanical	Common	Native	Aspect	Specification	Soil volumes m3	Soil volumes in connected pits m3 (20% reduction)
Acer rubrum	Red Maple (Multi-stem)	N		Multi stem 200-250 cm (Height)	30	24
Acer campestre	Field Maple	Y		16-18 cm (Girth) 400-45 cm (Height)	47	37.6
Alnus x spaethii	Field Maple Elegant	N		16-18 cm (Girth) 400-450 cm (Height)	47	36.76
Alnus glutinosa 'Imperialis'	Alder 'imperialis'	N		16-18 cm (Girth) 425-600 cm (Height)	71	56.8
Betula pendula	Common Silver Birch	Y		16-18 cm (Girth) 425-600 cm (Height)	47	37.6
Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'	Hornbeam 'Frans Fontaine'	N		16-18 cm (Girth) 400 - 450 cm (Height)	7.5	6.0
Platanus x hispanica	London Plane			40-45 cm (Girth) 700-900 cm (Height)	21.5	17.2
Pinus sylvestris	Scots Pine	Y		45 - 50 cm (Girth) 600 - 700 cm (Height)	47	37.6
Populus alba	White Poplar	Y		8-10 cm (Girth) 250-300 cm (Height)	80	64
Sorbus aucuparia	Mountain Ash	Y		14-16 cm (Girth) 400-450 cm (Height)	23	18.4
Sorbus torminalis	Wild Service Tree	Y		14-16 cm (Girth) 400-450 cm (Height)	68	54.4



Key plan illustrating the location of proposed trees by species

4.3.1 Tree schedule - proposed species



Acer rubrum / Red Maple (Multi-stem)



Acer campestre ‘Elegant’/ Field Maple ‘Elegant”



Alnus x spaethii / Alder



Alnus glutinosa ‘Imperialis’ / Alder ‘imperialis’



Betula pendula / Silver birch



Carpinus betulus ‘Frans Fontaine’



Platanus x hispanica - London Plane



Pinus sylvestris / Scotts Pine



Populus alba / White poplar



Sorbus aucuparia / Mountain Ash

Tree specimens are subject to availability at time of order and subject to current legislation regarding plant bio-security.

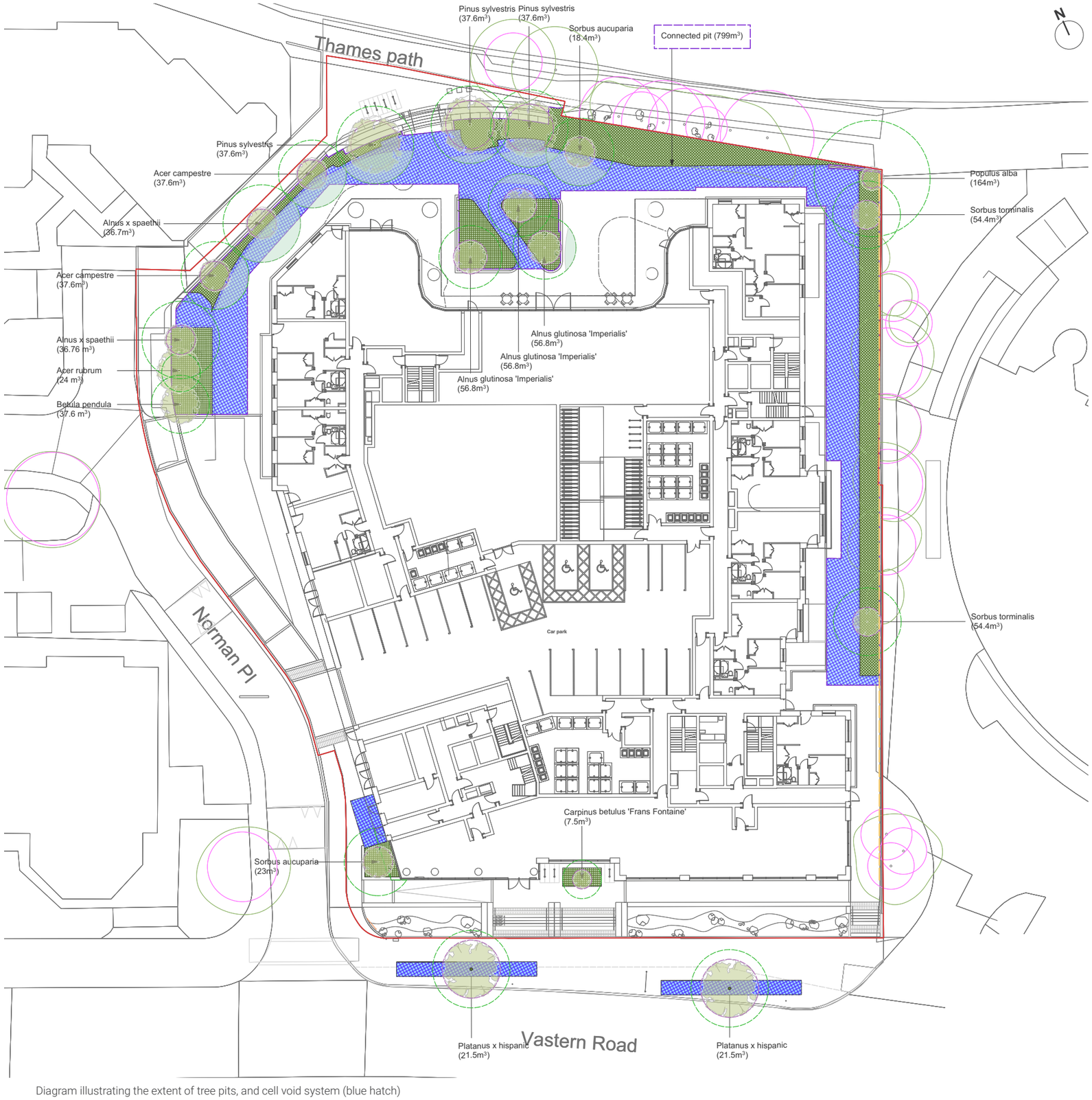
4.4 Connected tree pits

To support healthy tree growth in constrained urban areas, trees along streets and public spaces will be planted within connected tree pits using cell-void (structural soil cell) systems beneath hard surfaces. These systems provide uncompacted soil for root development while maintaining the structural integrity of the paving above.

By linking adjacent pits to create a continuous shared rooting zone, soil can be used more efficiently and the required volume per tree reduced by up to approximately 20%. The design maintains aeration, drainage and root connectivity, while avoiding conflict with below-ground services.

This approach enhances canopy development, tree longevity and sustainable drainage performance within hard landscape areas. It follows best practice set out in TDAG's Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery (2014) and accords with Reading Local Plan Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019), ensuring adequate soil provision and climate-resilient urban greening.

A typical tree pit detail incorporating the cell system is illustrated on the following page, with a scaled technical drawing provided to support this addendum submission. Please refer to drawing A4012E-ASA-XX-00-DR-L-0202-P3. The tree cell voids have been fully coordinated with the SuDS and drainage design to ensure there are no conflicts with existing or proposed underground services, including attenuation tanks.



KEY

SITE

- Application boundary
- +00.00 Existing levels
- +00.00 Proposed levels

HARDSCAPE

- Tree pits in soft planting (Assume soil depth of 1m)
- Engineered tree pits with cell voids in hard landscaping (Assume soil depth of 1m)
- Proposed tree
- Mature canopy spread
- Canopy (At planting)
- Root protection area (existing trees)
- Existing trees retained
- Existing boundary wall

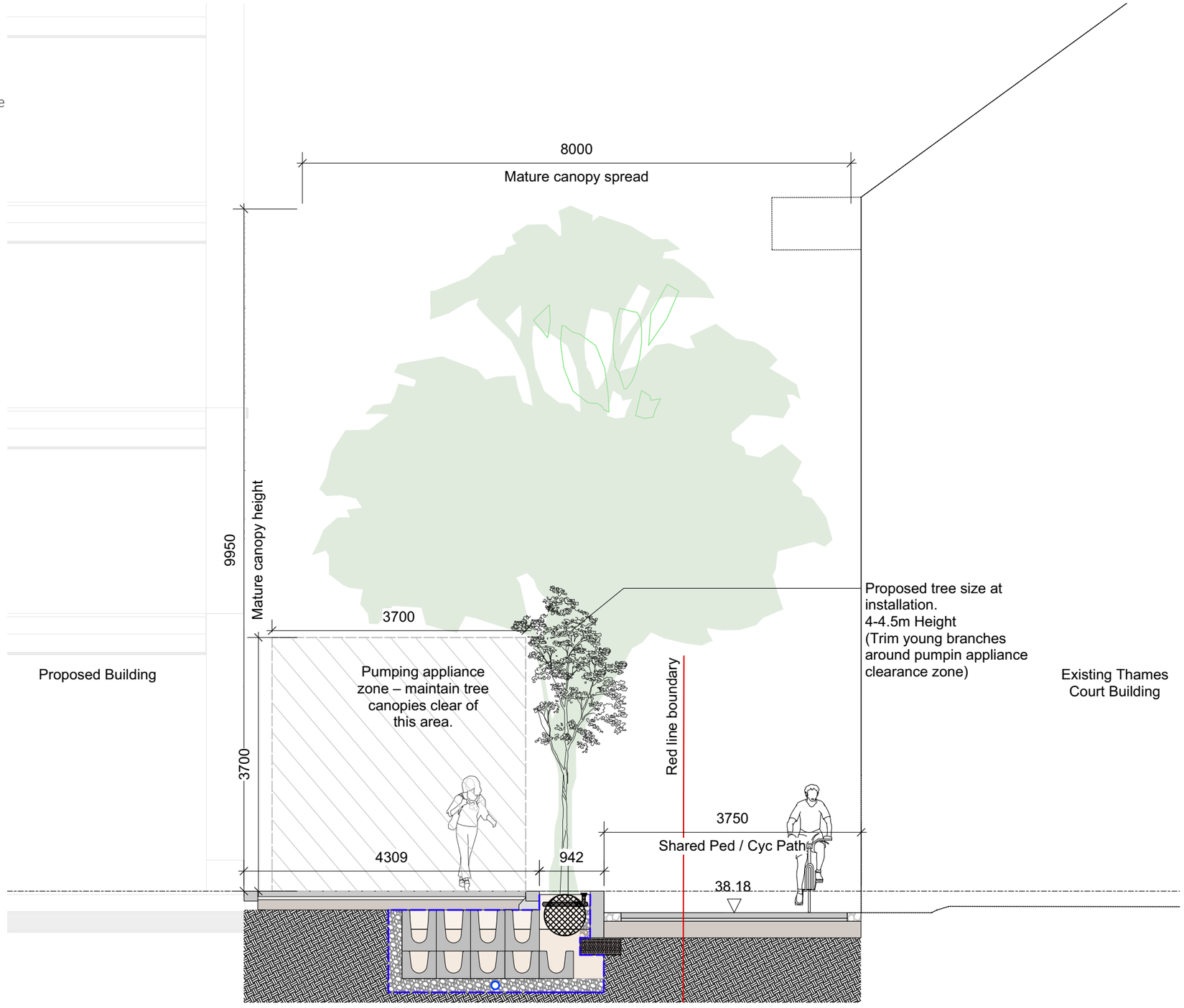
Diagram illustrating the extent of tree pits, and cell void system (blue hatch)

4.5 Proposed trees and pumping appliance access

To maintain clear access for the pumping appliance vehicle along the northern elevation of the building, selected trees will require periodic crown lifting to provide a minimum canopy clearance of 3.7 metres above ground level. This clearance should be maintained through annual inspections and pruning as required.

Tree maintenance should be undertaken by a qualified arboriculturalist in accordance with BS 3998:2010 – Tree Work: Recommendations and the establishment and aftercare guidance set out in BS 8545:2014 – Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape.

An annual inspection is recommended until the trees reach maturity, with targeted pruning visits scheduled as needed to sustain the required clearance and ensure healthy crown development.



Typical section indicating pumping appliance clearance zone, and crown lifitng of proposed trees

4.6 Proposed trees (River edge) - Successional strategy

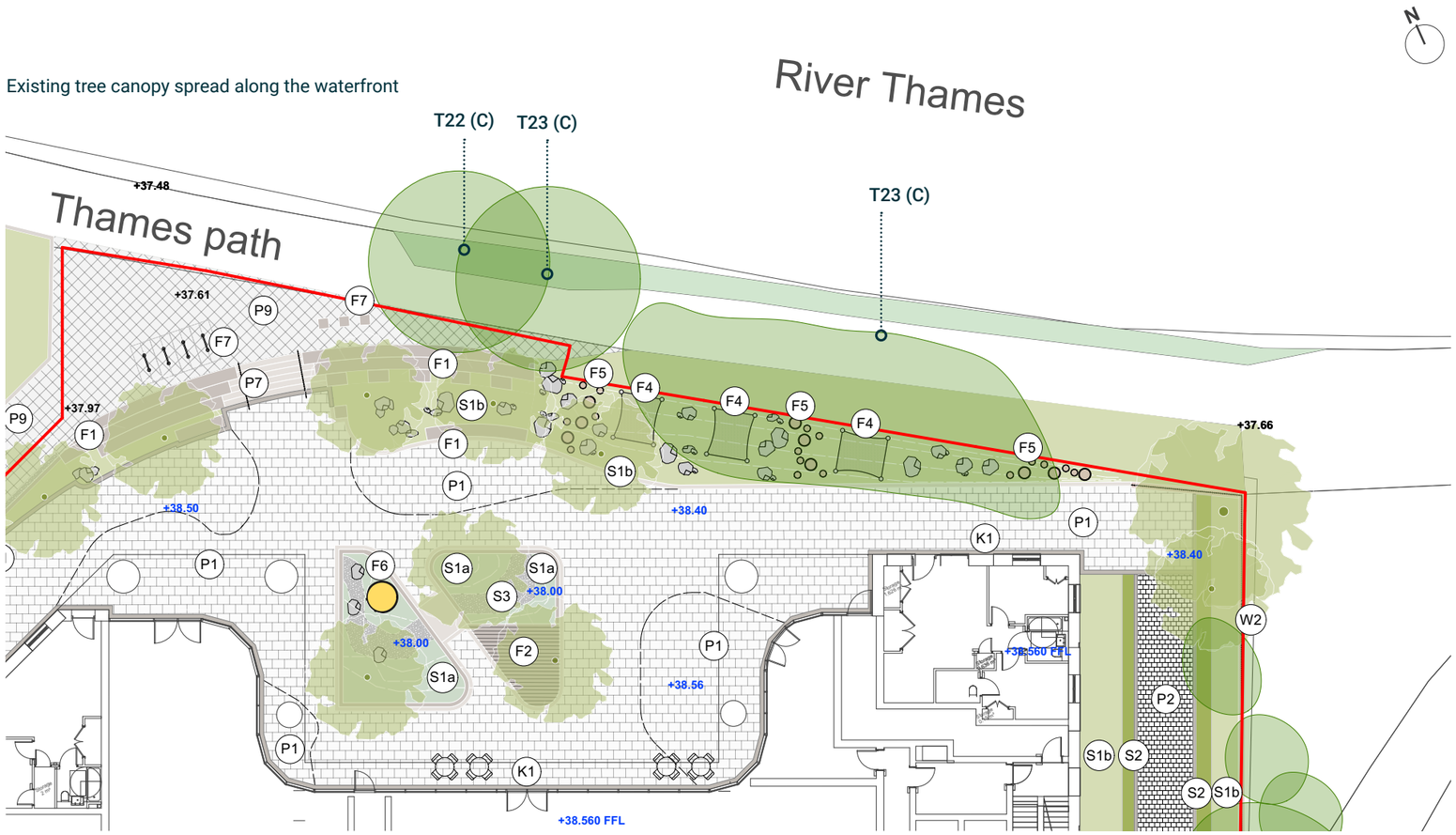
The Arboricultural Statement identifies that the existing Ash trees along the river edge (T22, T23 and Group G4) have a low likelihood of long-term survival due to their age and susceptibility to Ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus). Their declining condition means they cannot be relied upon to provide sustained canopy cover, structural value, or long-term landscape character within the site. A successional planting strategy will therefore ensure continuity of canopy cover as these Ash trees decline.

The adjacent plan illustrates the location of these trees. Although categorised as Category C under BS 5837:2012, they play an important role within the Thames Tree Corridor, contributing to visual amenity, screening of existing buildings, and the ecological connectivity of the wider river-edge habitat.

The replacement of the declining Ash trees (T22, T23 and G4) is proposed to maintain canopy cover and ensure long-term landscape continuity along the Thames corridor. This approach accords with Reading Borough Local Plan Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) and the Reading Tree Strategy (2018–2030), which seek to protect and enhance the Borough's tree cover. Replacing these trees with suitable native species will sustain their visual and ecological functions, support biodiversity net gain in line with Policy EN12, and contribute to a resilient, climate-adaptive tree structure consistent with the Council's green infrastructure objectives.

The trees are situated beyond the site boundary, and replacement planting will be delivered through a Section 106 contribution, managed under a Legal Agreement since the land falls outside the applicant's ownership.

Existing tree canopy spread along the waterfront



Existing trees (Winter)



Image: Existing Ash trees along the Thames Path, with the boundary wall to the left of photo

Existing trees (Spring)



Image: View looking south towards the stie from Chrstchurch Meadows

Existing trees (Spring)



Image: View looking east towards the site from Reading Bridge

4.7 Proposed trees (River edge) - Successional strategy

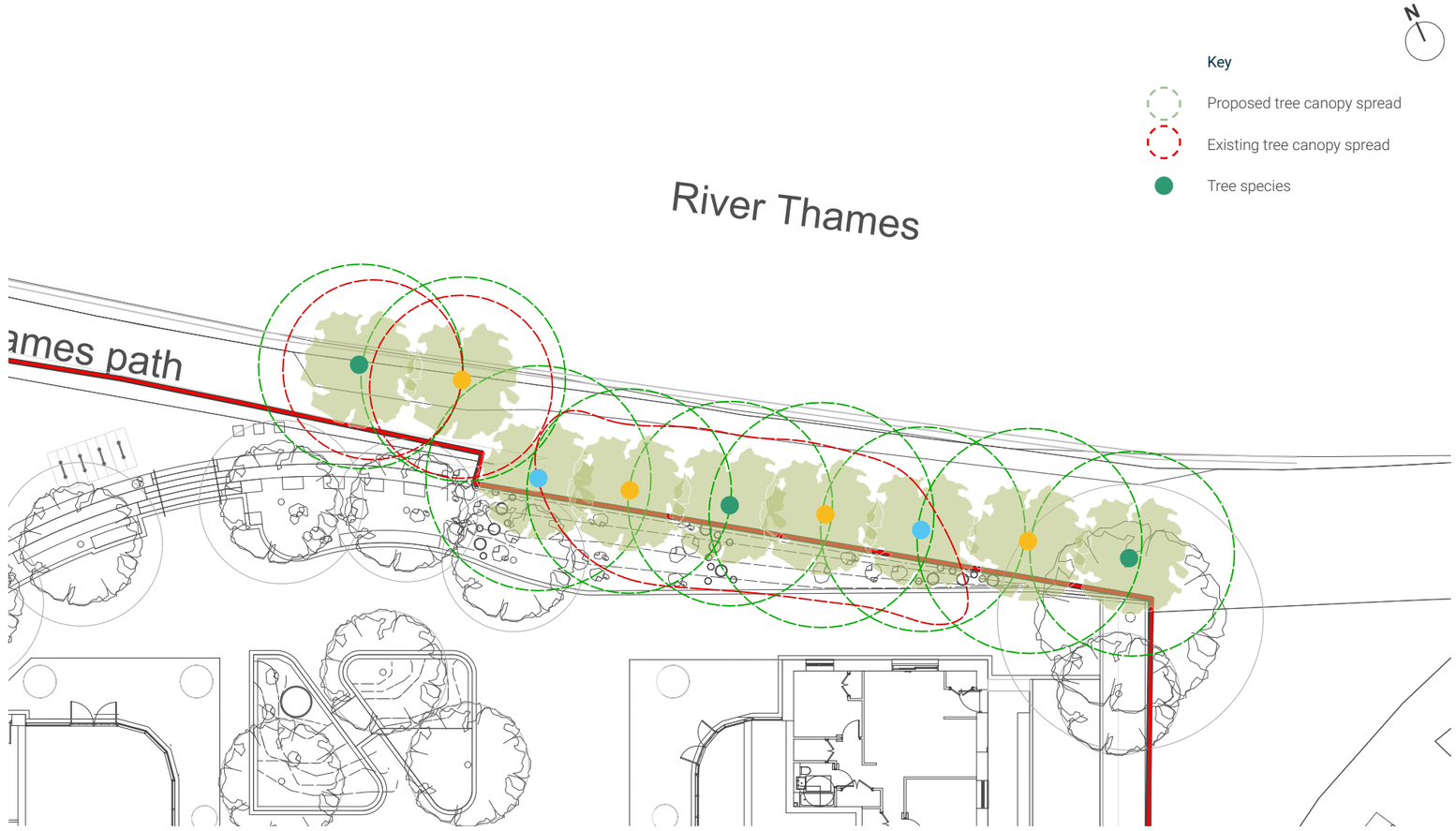
The Arboricultural Statement identifies that the existing Ash trees along the river edge (T22, T23 and Group G4) have a low likelihood of long-term survival due to their age and susceptibility to Ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus). Their declining condition means they cannot be relied upon to provide sustained canopy cover, structural value, or long-term landscape character within the site.continuity of canopy cover as the Ash trees decline.

To address this, a successional planting strategy is proposed. This will ensure that suitable native species are introduced to replace these Ash trees as they reach the end of their natural life or become structurally unsound, maintaining continuous canopy cover and boundary screening in line with the wider landscape strategy.

The replacement planting will include a diverse mix of native trees, such as Field Maple (Acer campestre), Alder (Alnus glutinosa), and Birch (Betula pendula). These species are well-suited to the river-edge environment, being tolerant of periodic flooding and variable soil moisture conditions, and will establish a resilient, ecologically rich framework that complements the character and continuity of the Thames corridor.

As the existing Ash trees are located outside of the applicant's site ownership, it is considered appropriate to secure a financial contribution via Legal Agreement to enable the Council to undertake replanting works at the appropriate time.

It is proposed that the protection of these trees is controlled via planning condition, with details submitted as part of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan for the site.



Replacement trees (Riverfront)				
	Botanical	Common name	Native	Specification
●	Acer campestre	Field Maple	Y	3x; Extra Heavy Standard; clear stem minimum 200cm; 5 breaks
●	Alnus glutinosa	Alder	Y	3x; Extra Heavy Standard; clear stem minimum 200cm
●	Betula pendula	Birch	Y	3x; Extra Heavy Standard; clear stem minimum 200cm

Proposed trees



Acer cempestre (Field Maple)



Alnus glutinosa (Alder)



Betula pendula (Silver birch)

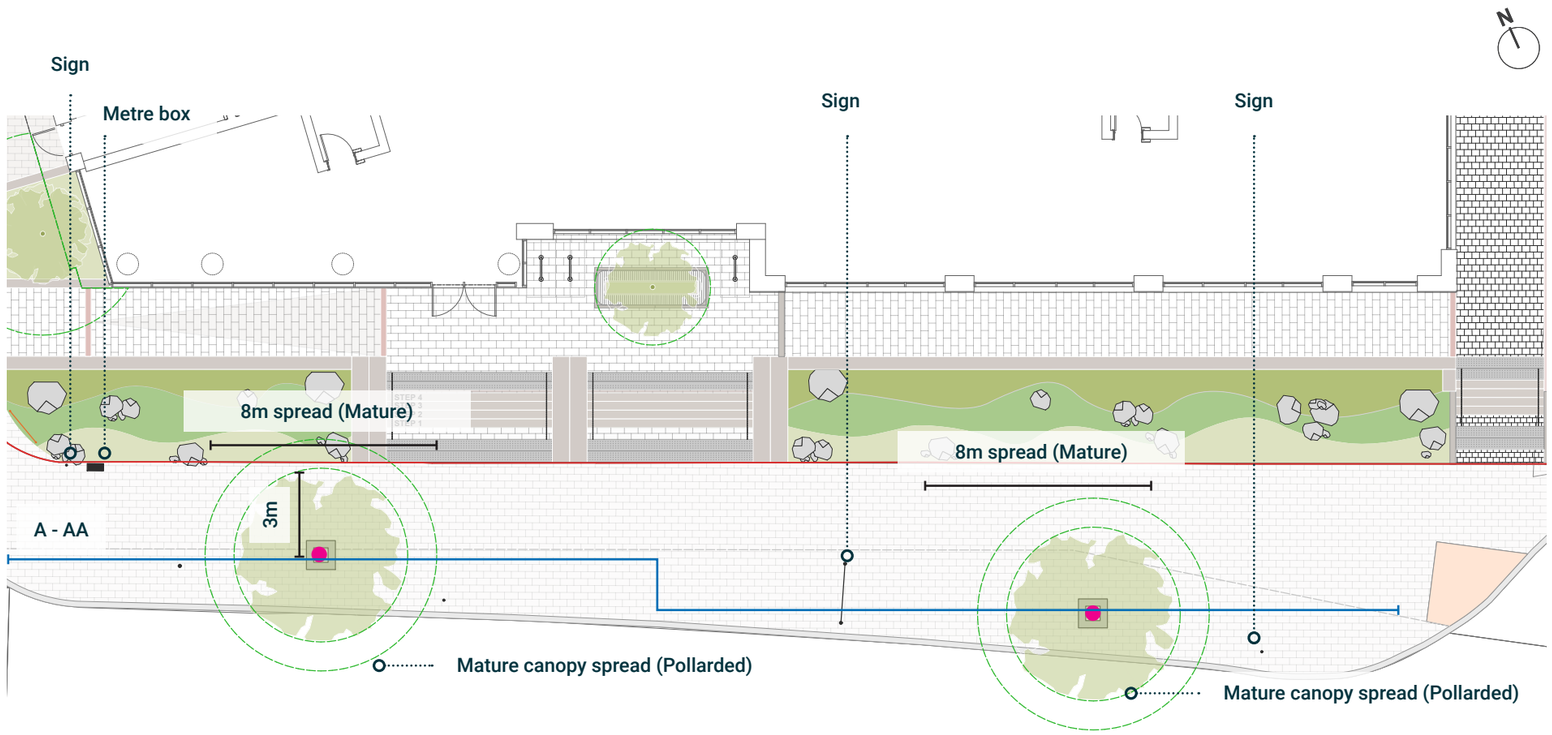
4.8 Proposed trees (Vastern Road)

Two new trees are proposed along Vastern Road to continue the existing line of pollarded London Plane trees and reinforce the established streetscape character. The existing trees are spaced at approximately 10 metre intervals, reaching an average height of around 10 metres, with a maintained crown spread of approximately 8 metres.

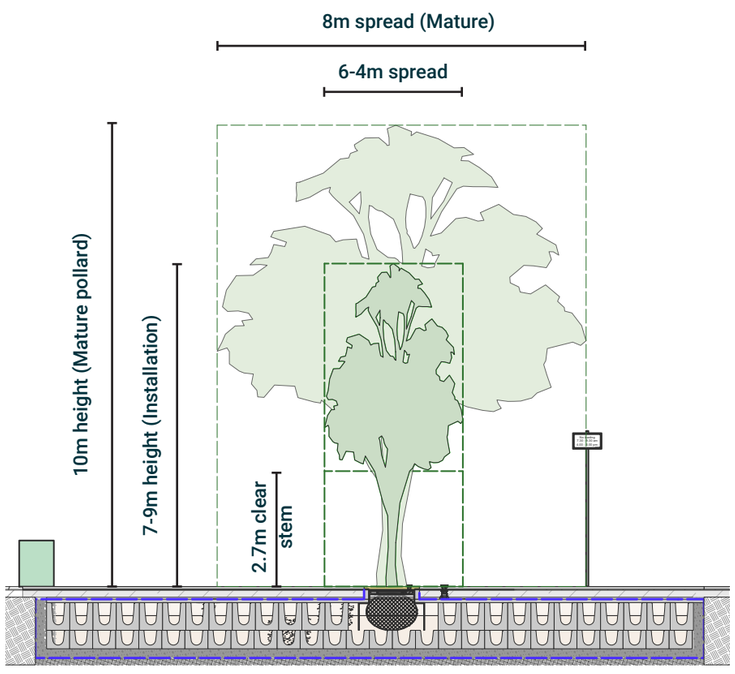
The proposed trees are proposed to be delivered as part of a Section 278 (S278) highway agreement in coordination with the Highways Authority, ensuring consistency in planting specification, location, and management with the existing avenue.

At installation, the new specimens will be semi-mature London Plane trees (Platanus × hispanica), supplied or installed with a minimum clear stem height of 2.7 metres and a canopy spread of 3 - 4 metres. Each tree will be planted in a structural tree pit designed to provide approximately 21.5 m³ of soil volume, with integrated aeration, irrigation, and root management systems to support long-term establishment and growth.
The location and species of the proposed trees has also been coordinated with the transport consultant to ensure visibility splays are maintained. Further detail is provided within the transport consultants addendum.

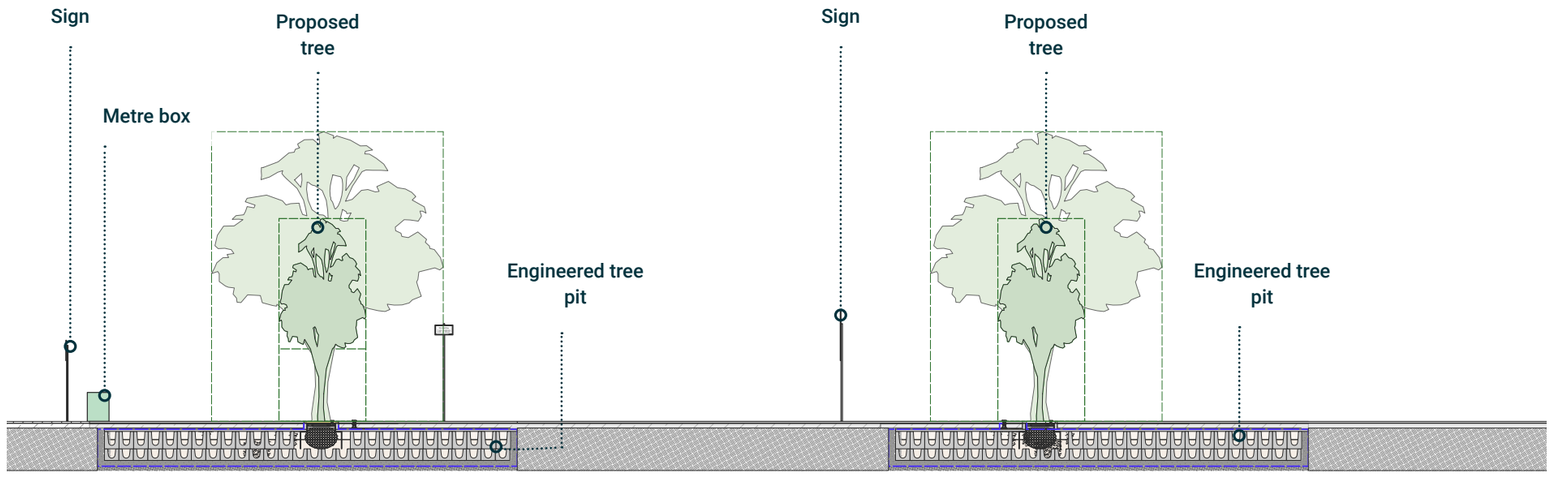
	Botanical	Common name	Native	Specification
Replacement trees (Riverfront)				
●	Platanus x hispanica	London Plane	N	5x; Semi-mature; 300-400cm spread; clear stem minimum 250cm



Plan: Illustrating location of the two London Plane trees along Vastern Road



Section: Illustrating key dimensions for installation and maintained mature height of proposed trees



Elevation A - AA: Proposed pollord London Plane trees along Vastern Road, indicating both installation and maintained mature height

4.9 Proposed trees (Vastern Road) - Tree pit and utility coordination

The two trees proposed in the public highway will be planted in engineered tree pits designed to maintain access and protect existing underground services. Two known utilities - a traffic signal cable and a Thames Water main - run adjacent to the proposed locations. Based on desktop review, it is considered feasible to accommodate the tree pits while maintaining safe access to these services. Root barriers and deflectors will be incorporated to safeguard utility assets and direct root growth away from service corridors, as illustrated in the diagrams on this page.

At the next design stage, the detailed tree pit design will be developed in collaboration with specialist suppliers (e.g. GreenBlue Urban) and through ongoing coordination with the Highways Authority and Thames Water to confirm clearances and specifications.

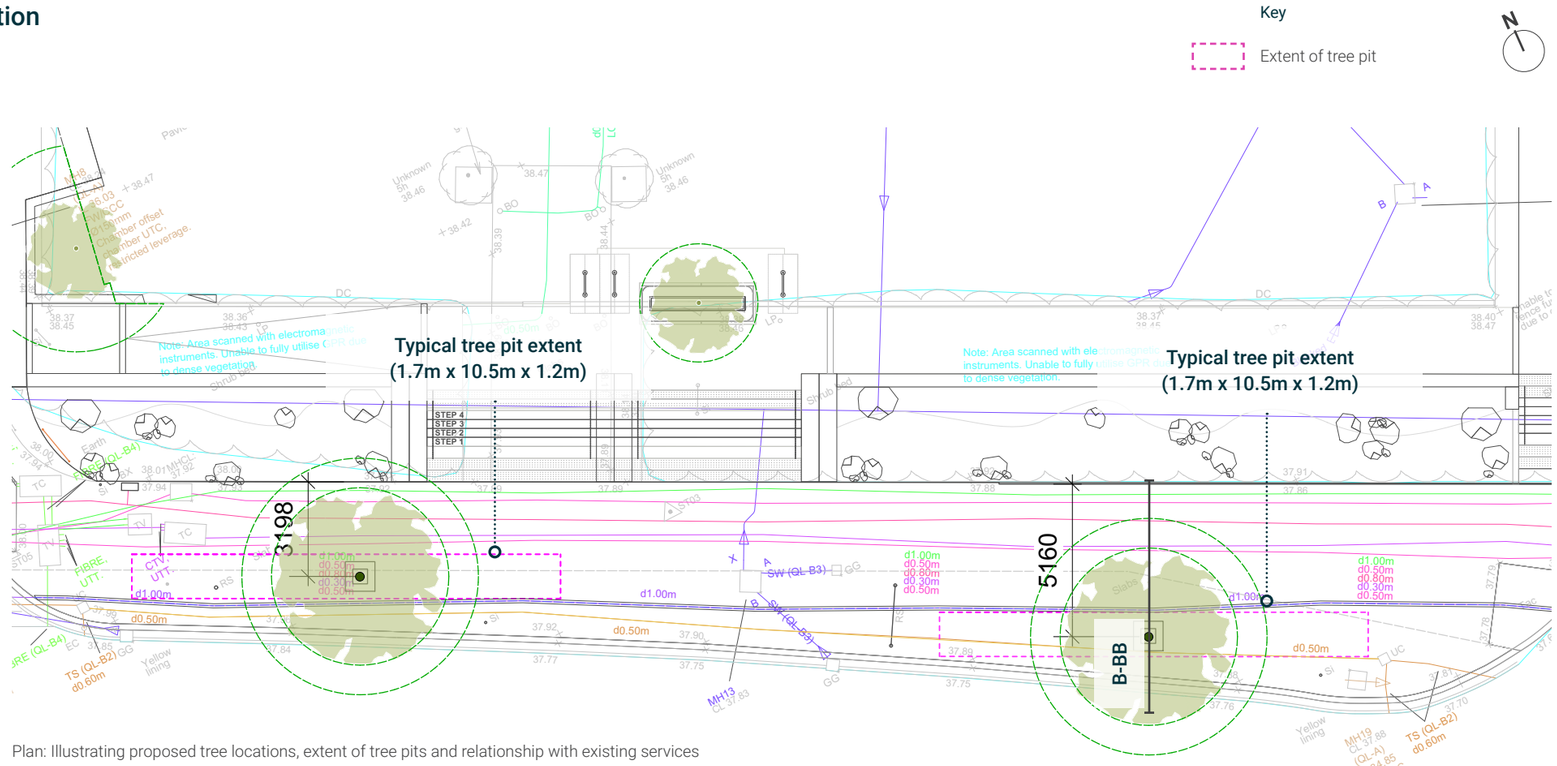
Key principles

- Tree pits proposed adjacent to existing underground utilities will be designed to maintain full access for service providers and ensure the long-term health of both trees and infrastructure.
- Required soil volume per tree: approx. 21 m³ (based on an 8 m maintained crown spread)
- Typical tree pit dimensions: 1.7 m (width) × 10.5 m (length) × 1.2 m (depth), providing an approximate soil volume of 21.5 m³.
- Tree pits should be designed to achieve this target soil volume, with layouts adapted on site as necessary to accommodate existing utilities and underground constraints while maintaining sufficient rooting space and soil continuity.
- Where utilities are present within proximity to the proposed pits, the design will ensure a minimum 300 mm horizontal clearance and 150 mm vertical separation, consistent with NJUG Volume 1 positioning guidelines.
- At the next design stage, the proposals will be coordinated with statutory undertakers (e.g. Thames Water,) through utility surveys and trial pits to confirm exact locations and depths.

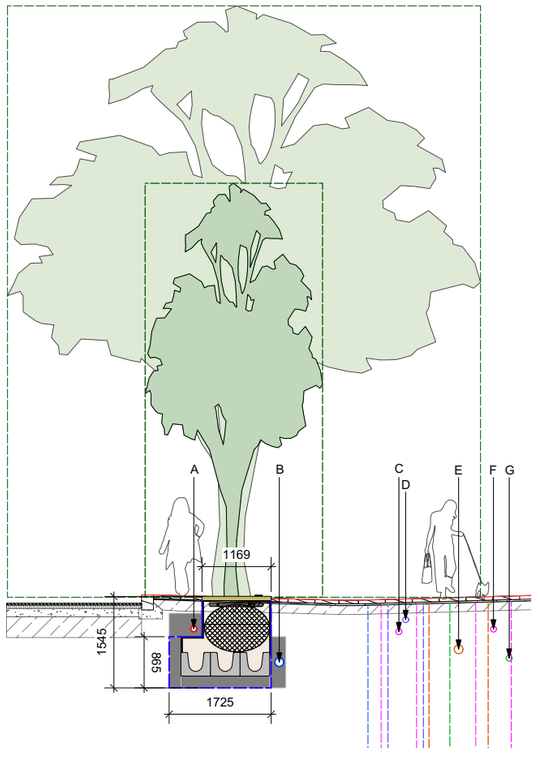
Technical references

- NJUG Volume 4 – Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees,
- BS 8545:2014 – Trees: From Nursery to Independence in the Landscape,
- Trees in Hard Landscapes (TDAG, 2014), and
- Reading Borough Council's Highways and Public Realm Design Standards.

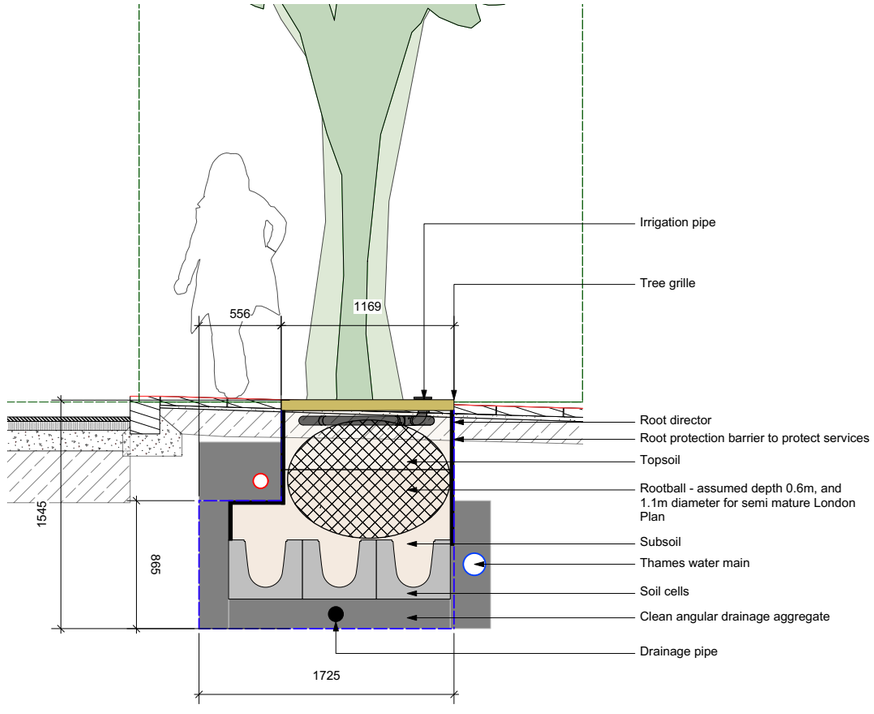
Item	Service	Depth (mm)	Recommended easement zones
A	Traffic signal	500	0.3m either side of cable
B	Thames watern main	1000	3.0 m total (1.5 m either side of pipe centreline)
C	BT Cable route	500	0.3 m either side of duct or cable
D	TV Cable route	300	0.3 m either side
E	Electric cable	800	0.5 m either side (total 1.0 m)
F	BT Cable route	500	0.3 m either side of duct or cable
G	Unidentified trace	1000	1.0 m exclusion/ investigation



Plan: Illustrating proposed tree locations, extent of tree pits and relationship with existing services



Section B - BB: Capturing proposed tree relationship with existing services



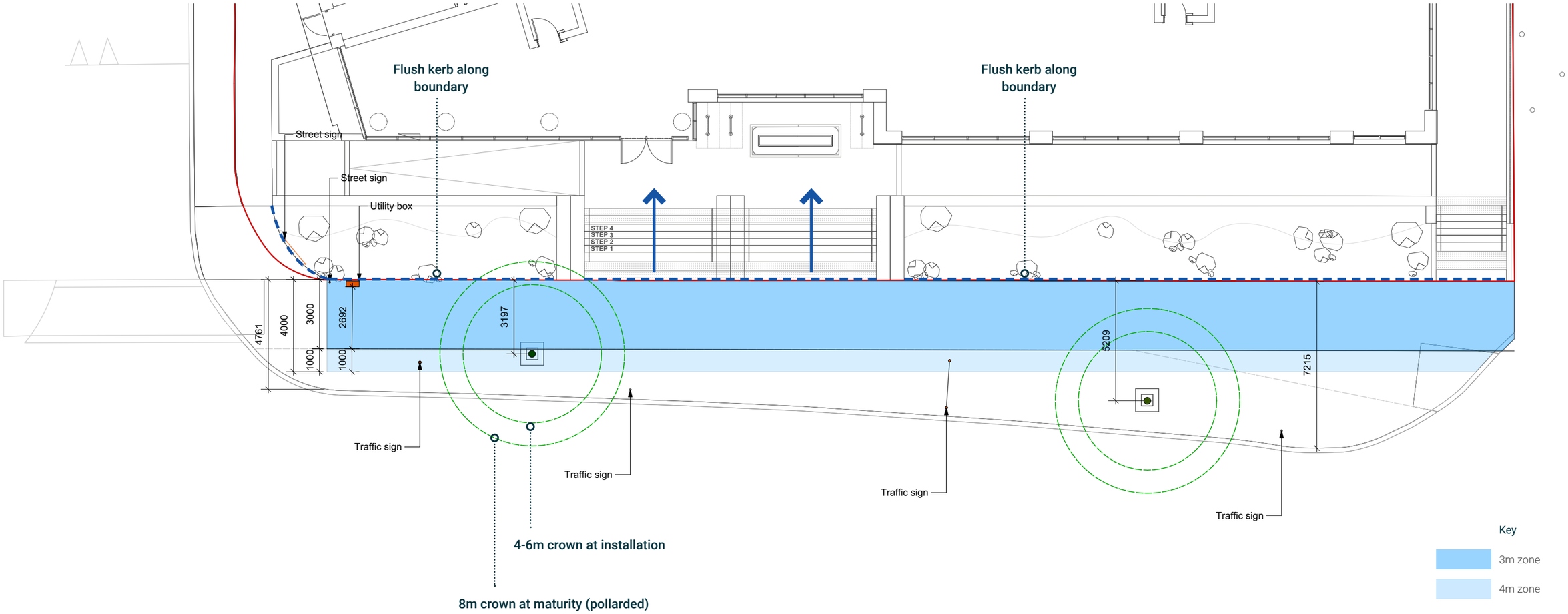
Typical tree pit cross section

4.10 Proposed trees (Vastern Road) - Footpath and clearance zones

The shared pedestrian and cycle path along Vastern Road varies in width from approximately 4.76 metres at its narrowest point to 7.21 metres at its widest. In its existing condition, a 3-metre-wide clear zone is generally maintained, with minor encroachments from existing street signage and a utility box over a short distance.

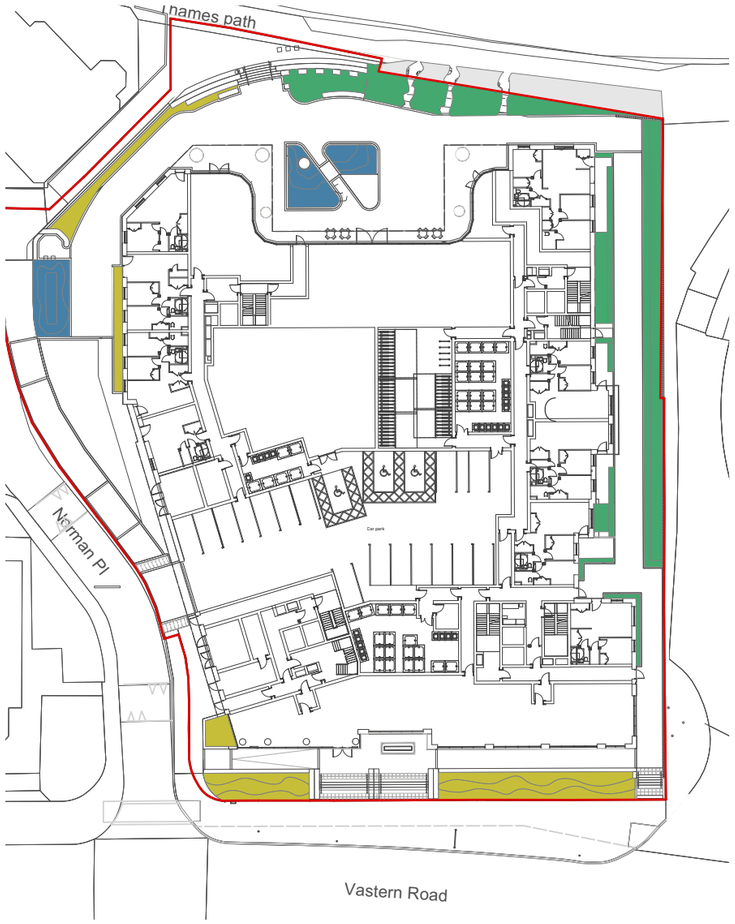
The proposed trees are positioned outside the 3 metre clear zone, as illustrated below. A minimum 3 metre wide footpath is therefore maintained along Vastern Road. The tree located furthest to the west sits approximately 3.2 metres from the edge of the clear zone. Along most of the street, 4m+.

Tree positions are carefully located following coordination with existing utilities.



4.11 Softscape strategy

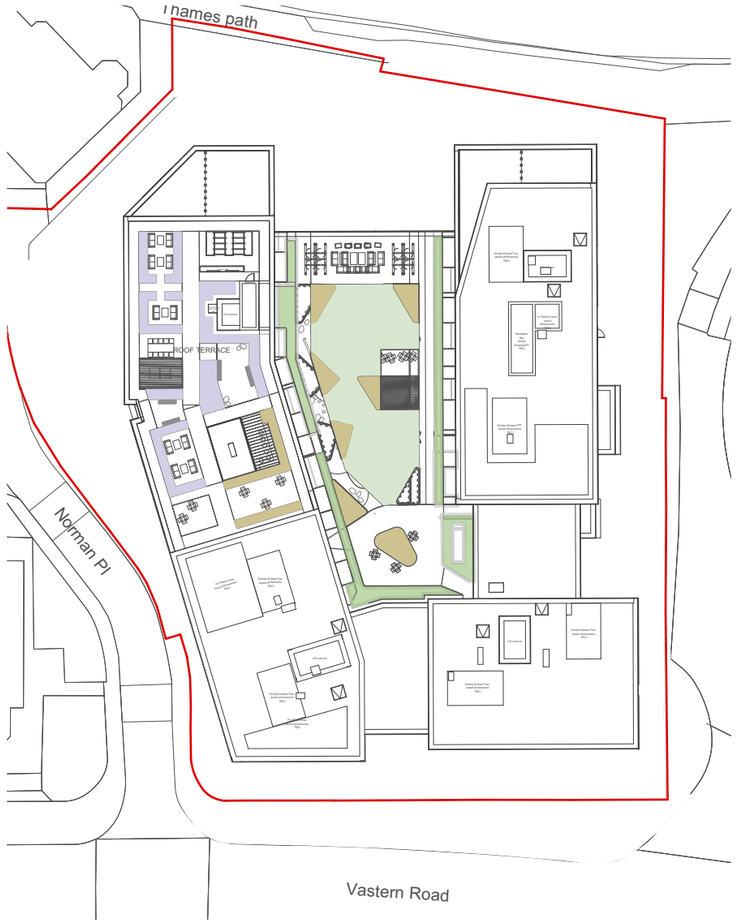
Ground floor planting



Key:

- Shade tolerant planting (252 sq m)
- Ground level planting (163 sq m)
- Rain garden planting (82 sq m)
- Shade tolerant planting (71 sq m - Outside application boundary)

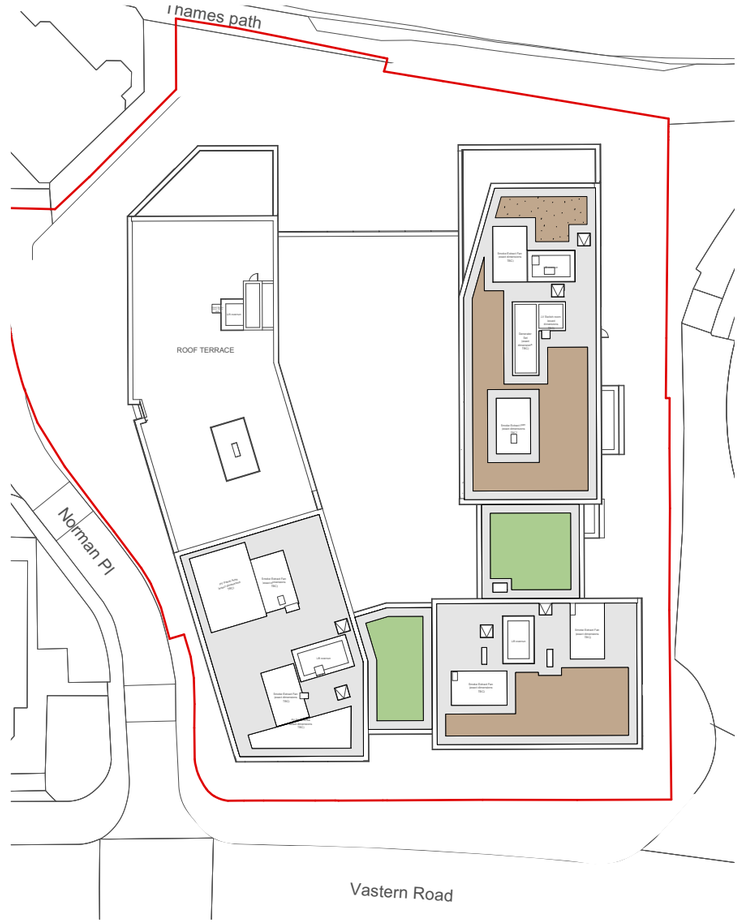
Accessible terraces - Amentiy terraces



Key:

- Amenity lawn (238 sq m)
- Hedge planting (103 sq m)
- Shade aspect planting (81 sq m)
- Sun aspect planting (86 sq m)

Non accessible roofs - Green and brown roofs



Key:

- Biodiverse green roof (149 sq m)
- Brown roof (336 sq m)
- Maitenance zone (758 sq m)

Shade tolerant planting (Shrub, perennial, fern and woodland ground cover)

	Botanical name	Common name	Native	Aspect
1	Tiarella cordifolia	Foam Flower	N	
2	Astilbe ‘Deutschland’	False Goatsbeard	N	
3	Helleborus argutifolius	Holly-Leaved Hellebore	N	
4	Allium ursinum	Wild Garlic	Y	
5	Teucrium scorodonia	Wood Sage	Y	
6	Ruscus aculeatus	Butcher’s Broom	Y	
7	Anemone x Hybrida	Japanese Anemone	Y	
8	Osmunda regalis	Male Fern	Y	
9	Sarcococca confusa	Sweet Box	N	
10	Polystichum setiferum	Soft Shield Fern	Y	
11	Asplenium scolopendrium	Hart’s Tongue Fern	Y	
12	Liriope muscari ‘Mon. White’	Lilyturf ‘Monroe White’	N	
13	Melica uniflora	Wood Melick	Y	
14	Carex pendula	Pendulous Sedge	Y	

Podium and terrace - Shade tolerant mix

	Botanical name	Common name	Native	Aspect
1	Actaea dahurica	Actaea dahurica	N	
2	Anemone x hybrida	Japanese Anemone	N	
3	Brunnera macrophylla	Siberian bugloss	N	
4	Carex petriei	Petrie’s Brown Sedge	N	
5	Geranium ‘Mavis Simpson’	Cranesbill	N	
6	Epimedium species			
7	Heuchera species			
8	Liriope muscari ‘Monroe White’	Lilyturf ‘Monroe White’	N	
9	Liriope muscari	Big Blue Lilyturf	N	
10	Osmunda regalis	Male Fern	Y	
11	Polystichum setiferum	Soft Shield Fern	Y	
12	Hosta species			
13	Fatsia japonica	Japanese Aralia	N	
14	Hydrangea paniculata ‘Grandiflora’	Hydrangea	N	
15	Pachysandra terminalis	Japanese Spurge	N	
16	Hedera helix	Common Ivy	Y	
17	Euonymous	Japanese Spindle	N	

Ground floor (Shrub, perennial, ferns, grasses and herbaceous mix)

	Botanical name	Common name	Native	Aspect
1	Tiarella cordifolia	Foam Flower	N	
2	Astilbe ‘Deutschland’	False Goatsbeard	N	
3	Ruscus aculeatus	Butcher’s Broom	Y	
4	Osmunda regalis	Royal Fern	Y	
5	Polystichum setiferum	Soft Shield Fern	Y	
6	Liriope muscari ‘Mon. White’	Lilyturf ‘Monroe White’	N	
7	Pinus mugo ‘Mops’	Dwarf Mountain Pine	N	
8	Carex pendula	Pendulous Sedge	Y	
9	Athyrium filix-femina	Lady Fern	Y	
10	Anemone x hybrida	Japanese Anemone	Y	
11	Deschampsia cespitosa ‘Goldtau’	Tufted Hair Grass	N	
12	Euonymous europaeus	Spindle	Y	
13	Kniphofia ‘Bees’ Lemon’	Red Hot Poker	N	
14	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary	N	
15	Verbena bonariensis	Purple Top Verbena	N	
16	Brachyglottis ‘Sunshine’	Shrub Ragwort	N	
17	Stipa tenuissima	Mexican Feather Grass	N	
18	Sarcococca confusa	Sweet Box	N	
19	Spiraea japonica ‘Candlelight’	Japanese Spirea	N	

Hedge Planting

	Botanical name	Common name	Native	Aspect
1	Sarcococca confusa	Sweet Box	N	
2	Taxus baccata	Yew	Y	
3	Pittosporum ‘Garnettii’	Kohuhu ‘Garnettii’	N	

Rain garden planting (Moisture tolerant species)

	w name	Common name	Native	Aspect
1	Althaea officinalis	Marsh Mallow	Y	
2	Campanula glomerata	Clustered Bellflower	Y	
3	Carex paniculata	Greater Tussock ‘Sedge’	Y	
4	Carex pendula	Pendulous ‘Sedge’	Y	
5	Dryopteris filix-mas	Male Fern	Y	
6	Juncus effusus	Soft Rush	Y	
7	Osmunda regalis	Royal Fern	Y	
8	Astilbe ‘Deutschland’	False ‘Goatsbeard’	N	
9	Iris pseudacorus	Yellow Flag Iris	Y	
10	Penstemon digitalis	Foxglove Beard Tongue	N	
11	Lythrum salicaria	Purple Loosestrife	Y	

Podium and terrace - Sunny / partial shade mix

	Botanical name	Common name	Native	Aspect
1	Origanum vulgare	Oregano	Y	
2	Salvia nemorosa ‘Caradonna’	Balkan clary	N	
3	Lavandula angustifolia	English Lavender	Y	
4	Liriope muscari	Big Blue Lilyturf	N	
5	Packysandra terminalis	Japanese Spurge	N	
6	Kniphofia ‘Bees’ Lemon’	Red Hot Poker	N	
7	Anemone x hybrida	Japanese Anemone	N	
8	Deschampsia cespitosa ‘Goldtau	Tufted Hair Grass	N	
9	Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary	N	
10	Verbena bonariensis	Purple Top Verbena	N	
11	Agapanthus	African Lily	N	
12	Stipa tenuissima	Mexican Feather Grass	N	
13	Fatsia japonica	Japanese Aralia	N	
14	Hydrangea paniculata ‘Grandiflora’	Hydrangea	N	
15	Euonymous	Japanese Spindle	N	
16	Hedera helix	Common Ivy	Y	

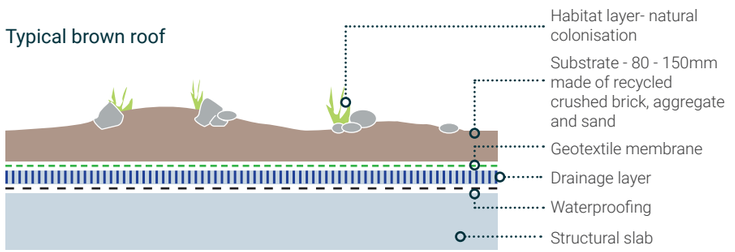
4.12 Green and brown roof strategy

A combination of green and brown (biodiverse) roofs is proposed across the development to deliver ecological, environmental, and visual benefits. These roof types create valuable habitats for invertebrates, birds, and pollinators, contributing directly to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through species-rich planting or natural colonisation using locally sourced substrates. Collectively, they form ecological "stepping stones" that enhance connectivity along the River Thames green infrastructure corridor.

Vegetated roofs also play an important role in surface water management, absorbing and slowing stormwater runoff, filtering pollutants, and supporting sustainable drainage strategies in accordance local and national requirements.

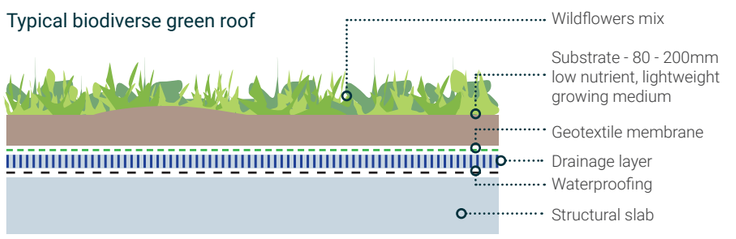
In addition to their biodiversity and drainage benefits, green and brown roofs improve building performance and environmental comfort, providing insulation, reducing urban heat gain, improving air quality, and sequestering carbon. Visually, they soften the building's appearance, enhance views from above, and integrate the development within its riverside landscape context.

Typical brown roof





Typical biodiverse green roof





Green roof precedent images



Plan: Illustrating the location of green and brown roofs

Introduction

Design process

Design response

Landscape

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

The amended proposed development responds to the feedback received from both RBC and the D:SE. The building has been made narrower, the massing has been reduced and the facade treatment has been refined.

The resultant proposals will provide a new destination on the River Thames frontage, bringing much-needed activity and animation to the locality.

Importantly, the proposal provides much needed new homes as well as other public benefits, including the provision of a new public square, enhanced cycle and pedestrian connection between Vastern Road and the river, active frontage to all boundaries, as well as an enhanced river frontage.







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