



# Astec House, Reading

187-189 Kings Road

## Design and Access Statement

April 2026  
2486-MP-PG-B001-P06

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Revisions

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| Revisions |          |          |                                         |
|-----------|----------|----------|-----------------------------------------|
| Rev       | Date     | Initials | Description                             |
| P01       | 06/03/25 | SB       | WIP preliminary issue                   |
| P02       | 11/03/25 | SB       | Issued for comment                      |
| P03       | 16/04/25 | SB       | Comments from GJHP                      |
| P04       | 30/04/25 | AR       | Issued for pre-application consultation |
| P05       | 19/02/26 | AR       | final draft for comment                 |
| P06       | 15/04/26 | AR       | Issued for planning                     |
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# 01 Introduction

# 01 Introduction

## Background

### Scope and Purpose of the Document

Mountford Pigott LLP has been appointed as architects, by the Bagri Foundation, to prepare designs for the redevelopment of Astec House, Kings Road, Reading.

The proposal is for a change of use and conversion of the existing Grade II listed building.

Mountford Pigott has extensive national experience in a wide range of development sectors, including a variety of forms of residential development.

The purpose of this document is to accompany a planning application and a listed building application for the redevelopment of the site.

Relevant planning policy is presented and interpreted in relation to the proposed development. This is followed by an analysis of the site and the character of the surrounding area culminating in an opportunities and constraints analysis. The proposed development principles are illustrated to demonstrate how they respond to the opportunities and constraints analysis and how they will integrate with the surroundings and wider settlement. The final section of the statement includes an access statement outlining the key features of movement and access into and around the site.

### Guidance & Reference

The proposal for the application site is being developed with reference to the National Planning Policy Framework 2024.

The design is being developed to achieve the objectives set out in the National Design Guide published by the (then) Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. Consideration has been given to the topics and features which contribute to a well-designed place in the proposal for the site. The National Design Guide has been used to help structure this Pre-Application Document.

The design principles for the pre-application scheme are established in accordance with the detailed standards and requirements set out in documents including Manual for Streets 2010, the Urban Design Compendium 2000, The London Plan and the Building Regulations. Although some aspects of this level of detail are beyond the scope of the current design it is essential that the approach is robust so that all parties can be assured that in due course the design can be turned into a viable, compliant and deliverable scheme while retaining all of those features that characterise a well-designed place.

### Consultant Team

The scheme has been designed and coordinated by a team of specialist consultants:

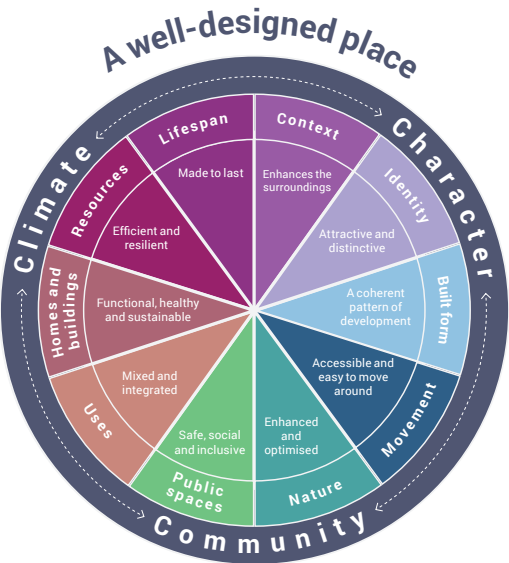
|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Architecture           | Mountford Plgott LLP   |
| Planning Consultancy   | HGH                    |
| Heritage Consultancy   | GHJP                   |
| Air Quality            | Ecolytik               |
| Amenity Daylighting    | Ecolytik               |
| Arboriculture          | Keen Consultants       |
| BREEAM                 | Ecolytik               |
| BNG                    | Arb Tech               |
| Contamination          | Subatra                |
| Ecology                | Arb Tech               |
| Structural Consultancy | The Morton Partnership |
| Sustainability         | Ecolytic               |
| Transport              | Markides Associates    |

### National Design Guide

Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government



The ten characteristics of well-designed places

# 01 Introduction

## The Applicant

The Bagri Foundation, the owner of Astec House, is a UK registered charity [1000219].

The charity was established in 1980 by the late Lord Bagri CBE. Initially, he wanted to focus on relief work and education initiatives around the world. Today, the Bagri Foundation encompasses four generations of the family. As the charity has expanded so have its ambitions. Today, the Bagri Foundation also support the arts and aims to cultivate a meaningful space for art and culture to thrive. It has worked with leading institutions including the Science Museum, the British Museum, Sadler’s Wells, Artes Mundi, Brighton Festival and Trinity Laban Conservatoire. Finally, the Foundation is an active supporter of education and health related projects. Themes include women and children’s health.

All future income generated from a re-developed Astec House will contribute towards our ongoing charitable endeavours.

The Bagri Foundation also owns and operates 191 Kings Road Student Living, a purpose-built student accommodation block, containing 75 units, that is located next to Astec House. The Foundation has owned the building since 2014. During this period, the Bagri Foundation has made significant improvements to the building, renovating it extensively, to provide the residents with a safe, secure, and modern facility. The Foundation has maintained an excellent track record in achieving 100% occupancy rates.

Similarly, the income generated by 191 Kings Road is used to further the Foundation’s charitable aims.

[www.bagrifoundation.org](http://www.bagrifoundation.org)



# 01 Introduction

## Overview and History of the Site

The site is located on the northern side of Kings Road, Reading. It comprises nos. 187-189 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 4EX. The site is located in Thames ward within Reading Borough Council’s (“RBC’s”) administrative area.

The site is located to the southeast of Reading Town Centre with Reading train station located a 17-minute walk (1.2km) northwest of the site.

Nos. 187-189 Kings Road is a grade II listed building, three storeys in height with a basement and attics which was built after 1832 as part of Waterloo Place. The building is constructed of Bath stone with a slate roof, a rusticated ground floor with a moulded cill string, dentil cornice entablature and blocking course. The building is formed from a symmetrical pair of houses. A full description of the existing building is given in section 3 of this statement.

Astec House has been vacant since 2014. Its last lawful use was as office space.

## Overview of the Development Brief Aims and Objectives

The Development Brief Aims and Objections are as follows:

- To bring a disused listed building back into meaningful use
- To conserve and retain the historic building fabric
- To repair existing external features (windows and doors)
- To sensitively replace external features where necessary (such as the missing front door at no. 189)
- The creation of circa 30 new student accommodation units (29 units achieved)
- The development of a scheme with high quality design
- To redesign the existing car park with a modern and efficient layout
- To provide communal amenity space
- To improve landscaping on the site



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## 02 Context

# 02 Context

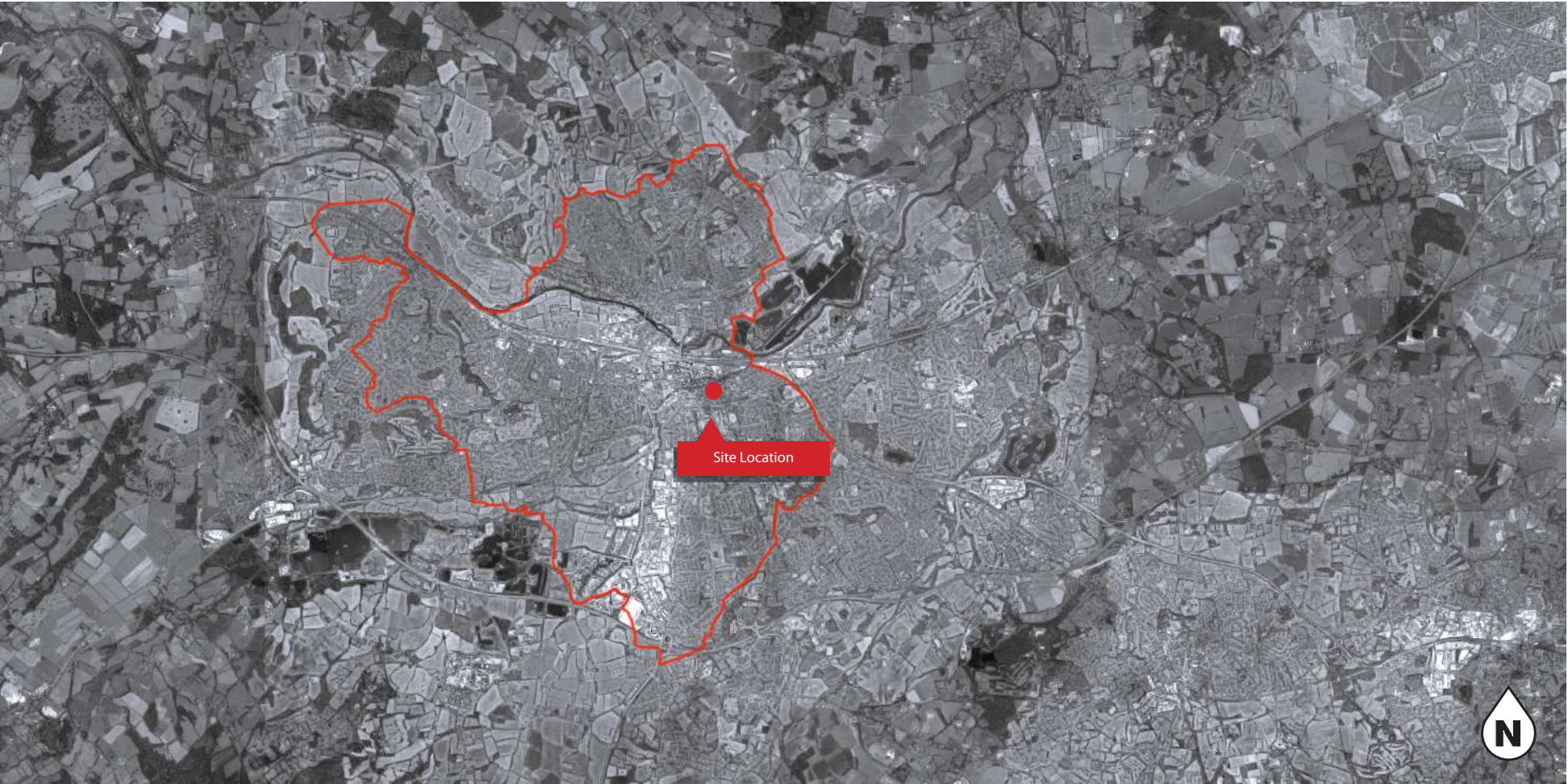
## Location

### Site location

Reading is a town in Berkshire, England, located in the Thames Valley. Reading is 40 miles east of Swindon, 25 miles south of Oxford, 40 miles west of London and 16 miles north of Basingstoke. Reading is a major commercial centre, especially for information technology and insurance. It is also a regional retail centre, serving a large area of the Thames Valley with its shopping centres, including the Oracle, the Broad Street Mall, and the pedestrianised area around Broad Street. It is home to the University of Reading and Reading College. Every year it hosts the Reading Festival, one of England’s biggest music festivals. Reading is at the confluence of the Rivers Thames and Kennet.

A town with origins in the 6th century, Reading developed rapidly during the medieval period, and has benefited from its location on major historic land routes, the proximity of the two rivers. Further important development boosts have been the development of the canals by 1810 and the construction of the Great Western Railway in 1840.

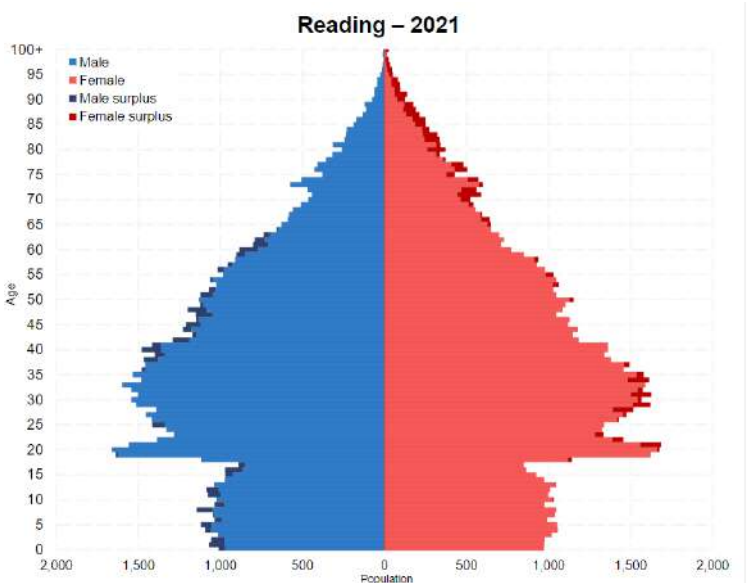
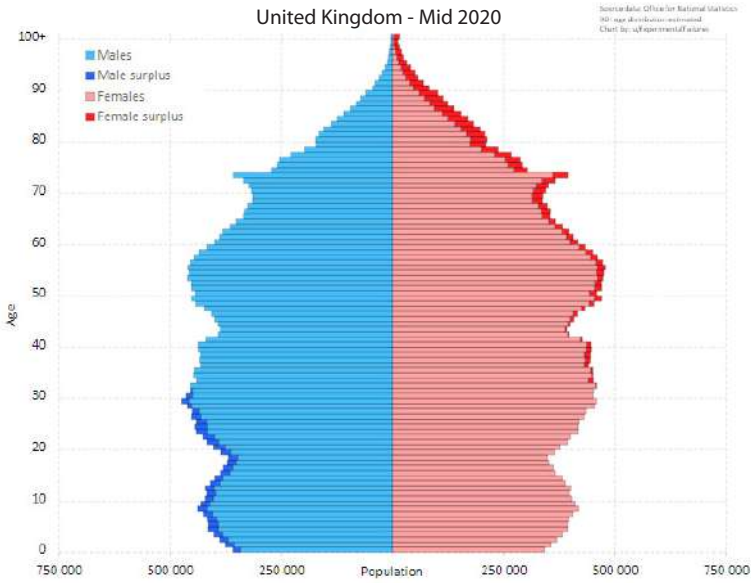
187-189 Kings Road is part of a row of grand 19th century dwellings on the north side of Kings Road, within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. It is adjacent to Reading College and a 20 minute walk from the University of Reading.



Wider context map

### Demographics

In mid-2018, the area covered by the Borough of Reading had 173,170 inhabitants and a population density of 4,288 per square kilometre (11,106/sq mi) with an estimated population of 337,000. Reading has an atypical age distribution within its population with unusually high proportion of 18-30 year-olds. The peak 18-21 year-olds can be explained by the student population but there is also a very high proportion of 25-30 year-olds. (source: ONS)



# 02 Context

## Land Use

The surrounding area is predominately residential with the exception of Reading College and some businesses on the south side of Kings Road. Reading's shopping core is located approximately 1 mile to the west of the site.



- Subject building
- Residential
- Retail F&B Office & Commercial
- Student accommodation
- Education / cultural / religious



# 02 Context

## Services & Amenities

The surrounding area is mainly residential, however, there are a number of convenience shops, bars and pubs within a 5 minute walk of the site.

Reading's key retail area is within a 15 minute walk west of the site, centred around the Oracle shopping centre.

There are a number of parks and open spaces including the King George V Memorial Gardens to the south of the site. The River Kennet is within a 5 minute walk, and the Thames Path, the National Trail, runs along the south bank of the River Thames.



# 02 Context

## Designations

### Site Designations

The site is within the following designations:

- The Boundary of Reading Central Area policy CR1-10
- Air Quality Management Area, policy EN12
- Eldon Square Conservation area, polices EN1, EN3
- Allocated Development site CR11-14 SR1-4 WR 1-3 CA1 ER1 (policy CR14I)

The existing building is Grade II listed.

#### PROPOSALS MAP KEY

- 

Reading Borough boundary

Conservation area\* (see policies EN1, EN3)

Boundary of Article 4 Direction\* (see policies EN1, H7)

Scheduled Ancient Monument\* (see policy EN1)

Historic Park or Garden\* (see policy EN1)

Area of archaeological potential (policy EN2)

Local Green Space and Public Open Space (policy EN7)

Area of identified biodiversity interest\* 1 (see policy EN12)

Existing or proposed Green Link (policy EN12)

Major Landscape Feature (policy EN13)

Boundary of Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty\* (see policy EN13)

Ancient Woodland\* (see policy EN14)

Air Quality Management Area\* (see policy EN15)

Core Employment Area (policy EM2)

Major Transport Project2 (policy TR2)

Area safeguarded for Crossrail\* (see policy TR2)

M4 Smart Motorway project\* (see policy TR2)

Classified Highway Network\* (see policy TR3)

Cycle Routes\* (see policy TR4)
- 

Boundary of identified centre3 (policy RL1) (also shows boundaries of inset maps)

Key frontage in district and local centres (policy RL3)

Major Hazard Sites\* (see policy OU2)

Primary Shopping Area (policy CR1)

Office Core (policy CR1)

Central Core (policy CR1)

Designated primary frontage in Central Reading (existing) (policy CR7)

Designated primary frontage in Central Reading (proposed) (policy CR7)

Terraced housing in Central Reading (policy CR9)

Tall buildings cluster (policy CR10)

Major Opportunity Area boundary (policies CR11-13 and SR1-3)

Site identified for development or change (policies CR11-14, SR1-4, WR1-3, CA1, ER1)

Abbey Quarter (policy CR15)

North of Friar Street and East of Station Road (policy CR16)

Leisure and recreation use of the Kennetside areas (policy SR5)

Caversham Park (policy CA2)

Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading (policy ER2)

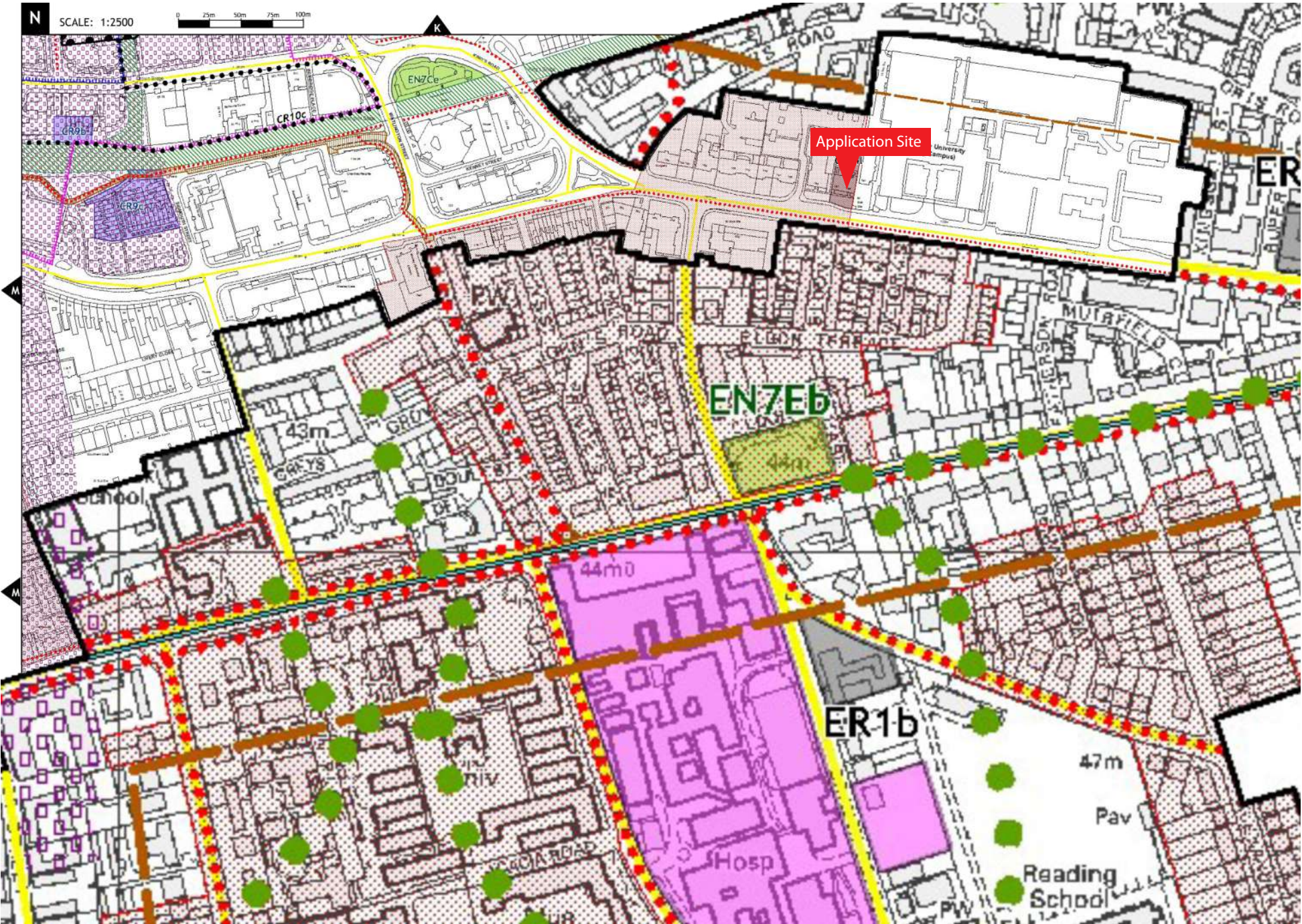
Royal Berkshire Hospital (policy ER3)

\* Denotes a contextual designation, i.e. a designation that the Local Plan does not control.

1 Includes Local Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, protected and priority species and their habitats, Priority and Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, the River Thames and its tributaries (including the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal)

2 Shows only those Major Transport Projects that are at a stage where they can be shown on the Proposals Map—please see policy TR2 for a full list

3 Where the boundary of Reading Centre is shown, this is the boundary within which the Central Reading policies (CR1-16) will apply



Combined proposal plans from Reading Borough Council Local Plan Proposals Map, November 2019  
Note that the plans for Reading Centre (containing the application site) and the adjacent area were produced at different scales, therefore elements described in the key opposite will appear at different scales also

source: Reading Borough Council Local Plan Proposals Map, November 2019

## 02 Context

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### Designations

## Site Designations

As shown in the plan from the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, the application site is on the edge of the conservation area and amongst a row of listed buildings.



Plan from Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal



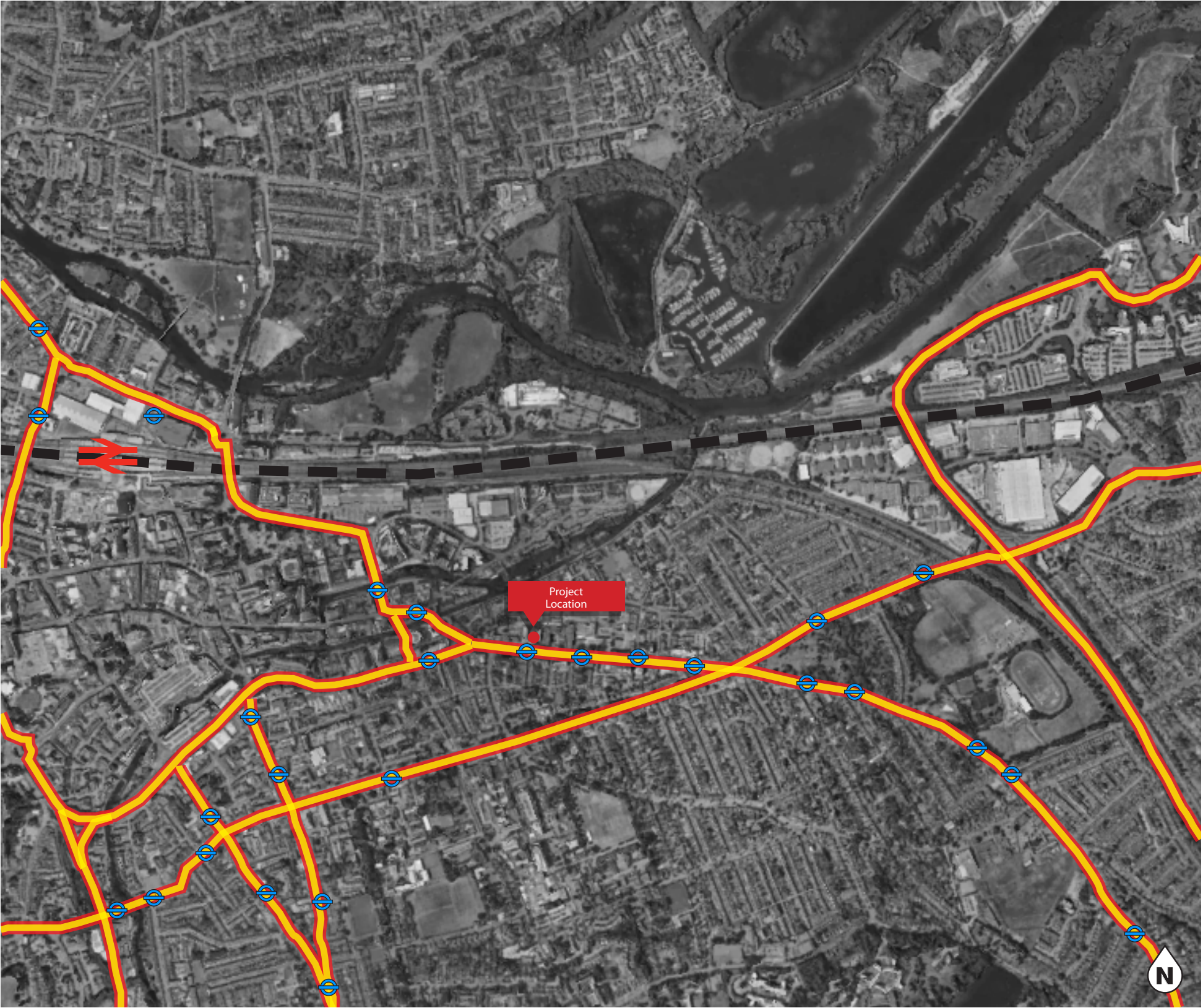
# 02 Context

## Movement

### Transport

The application site is on Kings Road (A329), a major east-west route through Reading. Reading Train Station is a 15-20 minute walk from the application site and is a major interchange station 36 miles west of London Paddington, served by four train operating companies: Great Western Railway, CrossCountry, South Western Railway and the Elizabeth Line.

- Application site
- A Road
- Railway
- Railway station
- Bus stops near to site

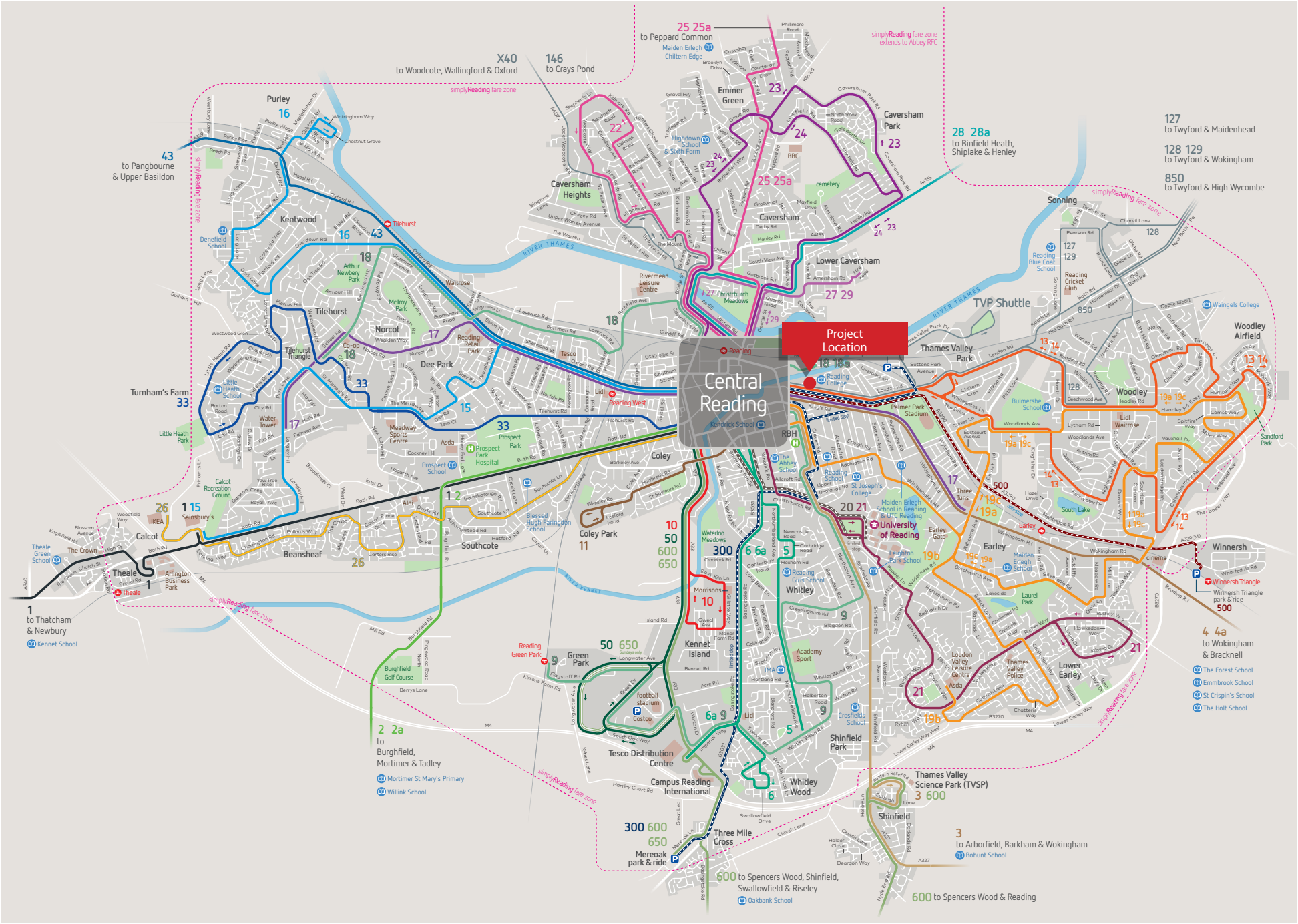


# 02 Context

## Movement

### Transport

Reading Buses, Reading’s main operator, run many bus routes which pass along Kings Road, connecting the application site to the wider Reading area.



Reading Buses Network Map  
source: <https://www.reading-buses.co.uk/services>



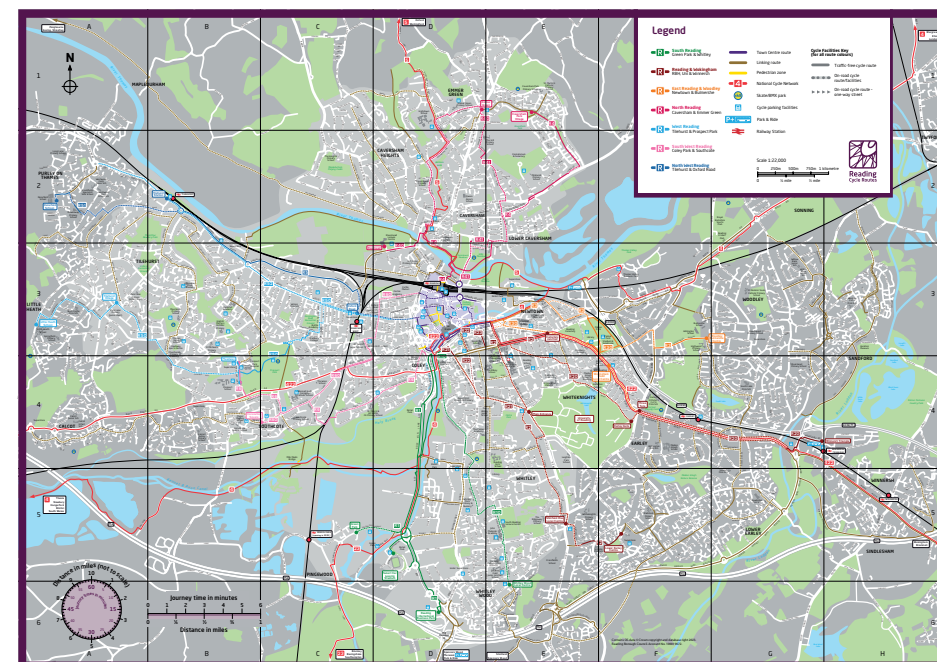
## 02 Context

### Movement

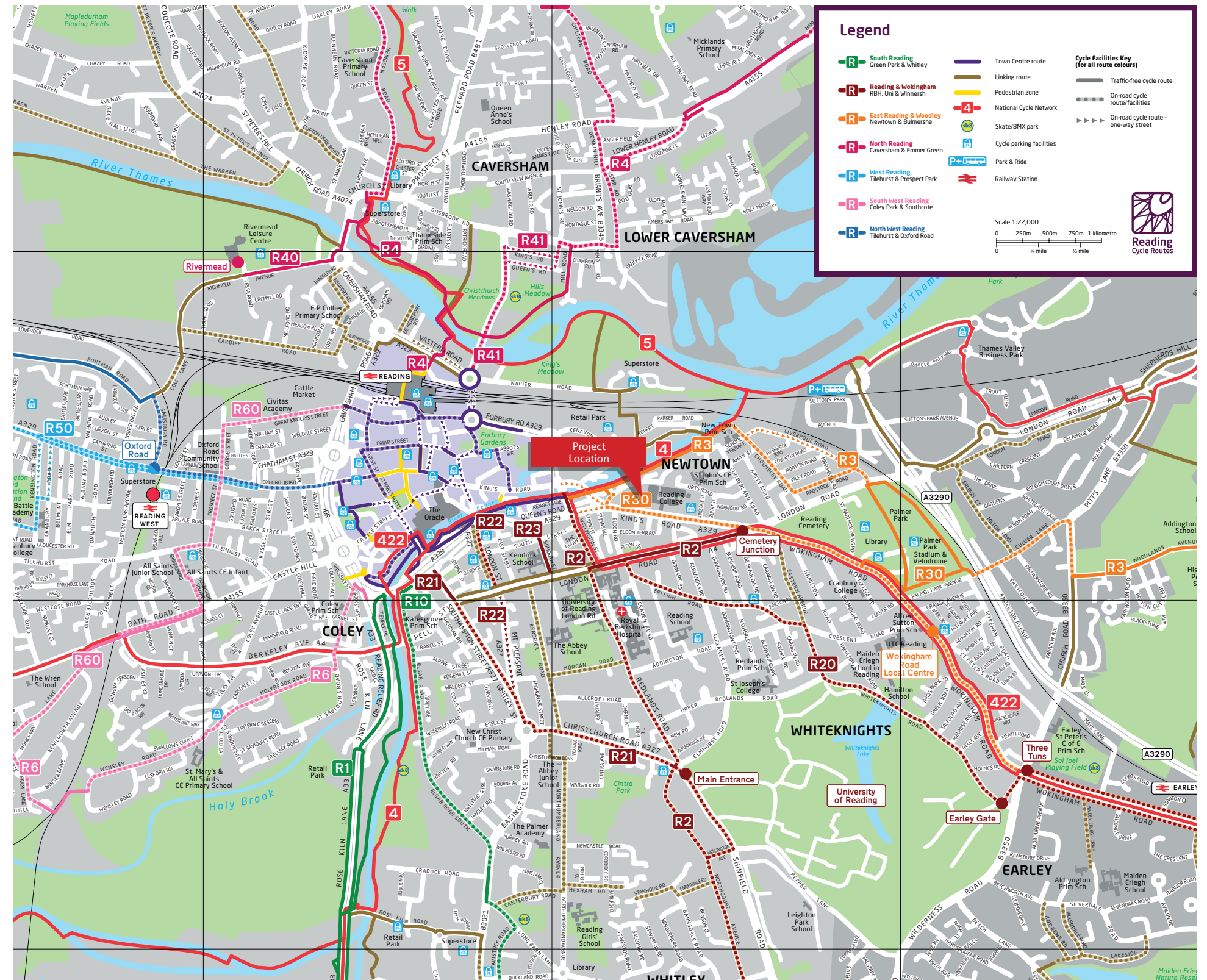
Reading Borough Council has available walking and cycling maps showing designated cycling routes, including an interactive map, available for residents and visitors as part of a wider range of initiatives to encourage sustainable local travel options.

Kings Road, where the application site is located, is part of the East Reading & Woodley Newtown & Bulmershe cycling route, connecting the site to both central Reading areas and national cycling routes.

The National Cycling Routes that go through Reading 5, 4,422 and 23 offer quiet and pleasant alternatives for cyclists wishing to travel to and from Reading – Red  
South Reading – Green Park & Whitley (R1, R10) – Green  
Reading & Wokingham RBH, Uni & Winnersh (R2, R20, R21, R22) – Brown  
East Reading -& Woodley Newtown & Bulmershe (R3) – Orange  
North Reading Caversham & Emmer Green (R4, R40, R41) – Dark Pink  
North-West Reading – Oxford Road & Tilehurst (R5, R51, R52) – Blue  
South-West Reading – Coley Park & Southcote (R6, R60) – Light pink  
West Reading – Tilehurst & Prospect Park – (R50) – Light blue



Reading Borough Council Cycling Map  
source: <https://images.reading.gov.uk/2023/03/RBC-Cycling-Map.pdf>



Reading Borough Council Cycling Map of site locale  
source: <https://images.reading.gov.uk/2023/03/RBC-Cycling-Map.pdf>

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# 03

## Site Analysis

02

Context

Planning Policy

Planning Policy Context

This planning application is accompanied by a planning statement prepared by HGH Consulting which sets out the relevant planning considerations for the proposal.

The key planning policy considerations are considered to be :

National Planning Policy Framework

- Chapter 16

Reading Borough Local Plan

- Reading Borough Local Plan policy CR14I
- Reading Borough Local Plan policy H12
- Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN1
- Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN3
- Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN6

Reading Housing And Economic Land Availability Assessment (November 2024)

Planning Practice Guidance (November 2024)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal

Planning Policy History

Greater detail of the site’s and its immediate context’s planning history is given in the supporting letter for this pre-application consultation. A summary is given below:

| Reference | Address                  | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Decision                     |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 161206    | 187-189 & 191 Kings Road | Internal and external alterations associated with change of use of 187-189 Kings Rd from office (Class B1) to 26 student units (Sui Generis) and associated works.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Refused - 10 November 2016   |
| 161205    | 187-189 & 191 Kings Road | Change of use of 187-189 Kings Rd from office (Class B1) to 26 student units (Sui Generis); Erection of 5-storey building to rear of 187-189 to create 35 student units (involving the reduction from 20 to 1 on site parking space); Erection of single storey roof extension and 2- storey front extension at 191 Kings Rd to increase number of student units from 72 to 89, along with associated external alterations and landscaping (total increase of 78 student units from 72 to 150). | Refused - 10 November 2016   |
| 950327    | 187-189 Kings Road       | Internal alterations to listed building (removal of plinth, removal of partition and erection of new partition).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Approved – 21 September 1995 |
| 930757    | 187-189 Kings Road       | Internal demountable partitioning; lower ceiling on ground floor; change existing windows to third floor; front elevation with UPVC to match existing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Approved - 25 June 1993      |

# 02 Context

## Townscape

### Townscape Character

Kings Road is a major east-west route through Reading. The application site is part of a row of 19th century grand houses on the north side of Kings Road, which is part of the Eldon Square Conservation Area. Reading College, to the east of this row, is a brick and masonry building dating from 1955. The south side of Kings Road consists of a combination of modern 6-7 storey office conversions and 3-4 storey residential development.

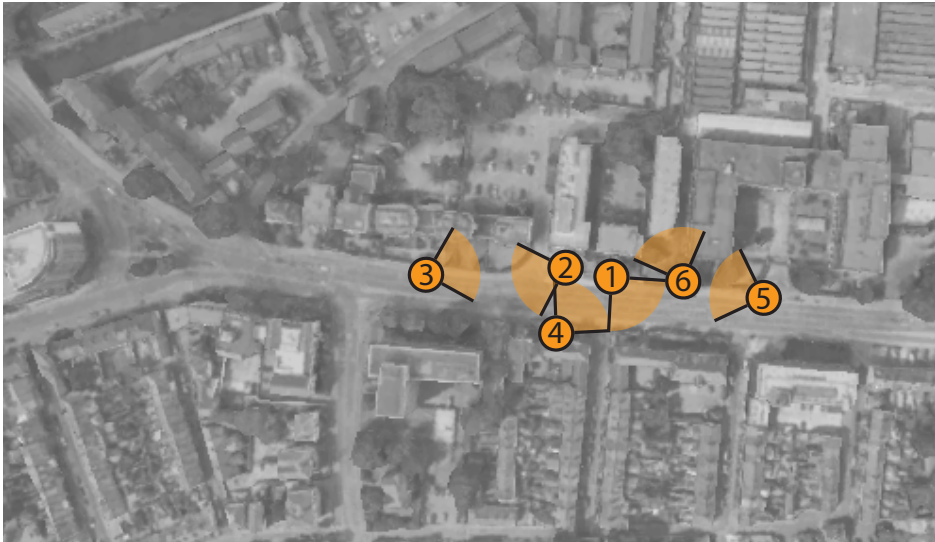
Extracts from the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal are included below:

#### Area 1: Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square

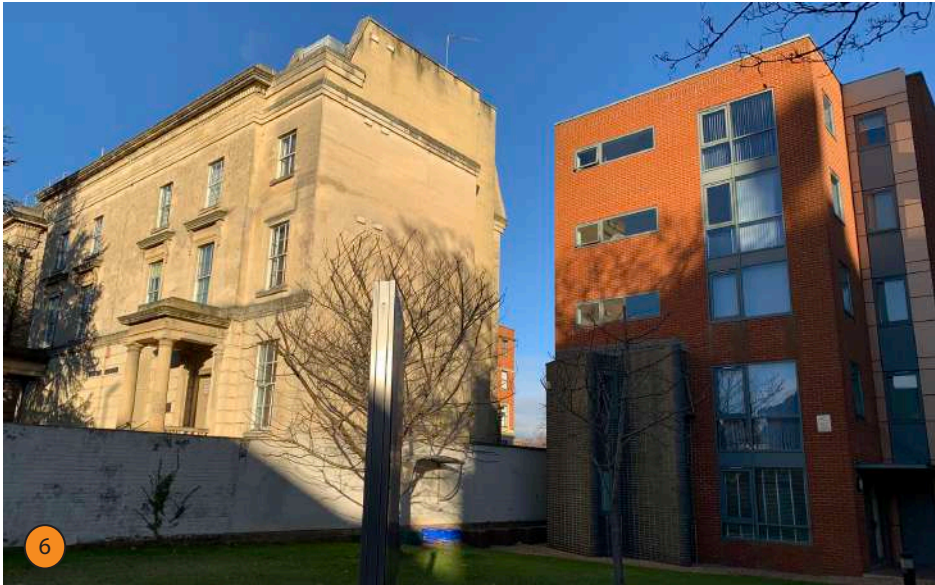
*This area contains the majority of the conservation area's listed buildings and is characterised by tall detached or semi-detached residences faced with Bath stone and set back from the highway with long rear gardens. Many of these former houses have been converted to flats, offices or professional uses. Nos. 163 to 189 Kings Road form an almost continuous row of buildings of architectural interest enriched by large stone porticos, rusticated ground floors and pairs of full height bows. They rise to three storeys with basement and are approached up a flight of stone steps.*

*The Eldon Square Conservation Area contains, for the most part, 19th century housing built during a 40 year period between c1835-1875. Apart from individual building such as the two churches, Watlington House and The Oval, there are two distinctively different architectural styles within the conservation area: large detached and semi-detached stone houses for those working in the professions e.g. medical professionals working in the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and narrow-frontage brick terraced houses for those working in local factories, most likely Huntley and Palmers.*

*The large houses in Kings Road, Eldon Road and Eldon Square mostly date from the 1830s and 1840s and are built in the Classical style favoured in the first half of the 19th century.*



Key Plan



03

Site Analysis

The Application Site

Site Description as existing

The site is located on the north side of Kings Road, west of Reading College and north of the University of Reading. The building extends 3 storeys above ground floor with a lower ground floor level, featuring lightwells on the Kings Road elevation and the rear elevation.

The building is accessed from Kings Road via stepped access to the ground floor level, and from the rear car park via stepped access to the lower ground floor level and upper ground floor level.

The neighbouring building to the east along Kings Road (191 Kings Road) is an existing student accommodation building also under ownership of the applicant. This is a modern, red brick, four-storey block which is set back from, and lower than, Nos. 187-189. The roadside front of No.191 is defined by utilitarian steel railings and a large electrical transformer, only partly disguised by an incongruous brick wall, which detracts from the setting of the listed building. In addition, permission for a further single storey roof extension to No. 191 Kings Road was granted in 2012.

The site is reasonably level with the rear of the site currently laid out as a 31-space car park. However, the bay size and vehicle manoeuvring space are sub-standard.

The northern site boundary is demarcated by the vehicle access control to the car park.

The eastern site boundary is demarcated by a low masonry wall both in front and behind. The flank wall of the subject building abuts the boundary.

The southern site boundary is demarcated by a low masonry wall with a gateway to the footpath.

The western site boundary is demarcated by a low cast iron fence at the rear of the site, and a low masonry wall with a gateway to the footpath at the front. The flank wall of the subject building abuts the western boundary. To the west of the principal elevation of Nos.187-189 is No. 185 Kings Road (known as Kings Court). This is another grade II listed building, which is architecturally similar to Nos. 187-189 Kings Road and has a group value with it. A large multi-storey red brick and reconstituted stone extension has been built to the rear of this building (as granted in 1980), the attics have been converted to additional space and a further storey added above the roof line; these alterations and extensions visually detract from the setting of the listed buildings. Both the rear extensions of No. 185 and No. 191 are considered to dominate and detract from the setting of the rear of Nos. 187-189. There is presently a 28m gap between the east elevation of No. 185 and the west elevation of No. 191.

The listed building at Nos. 187-189 and TPO tree is located within Eldon Square Conservation Area. No. 191 is outside the conservation area, with the boundary being the brick wall between the two buildings. The Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (ESCAA) describes the buildings as being of architectural interest as grand 19th century villas in Bath stone and having historic interest as examples of the polite architecture built as part of the urban development of Reading. The buildings also have considerable group value with the other surviving houses of Waterloo Place. The designation covers the villas on King's Road including Nos. 187–189 and the car-park to the rear.

- 1

Existing building
- 2

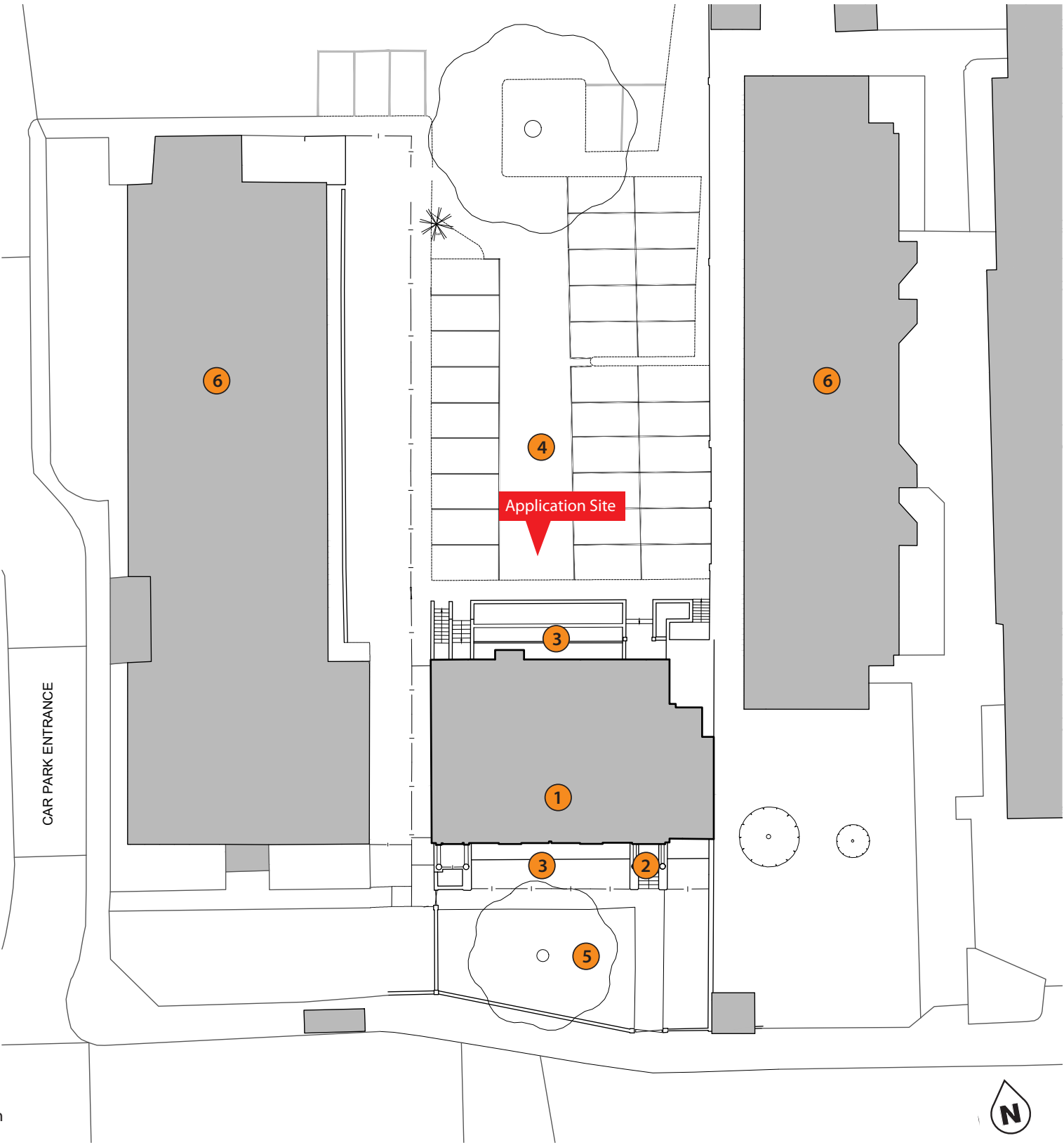
Existing entrance
- 3

Existing lightwell
- 4

Existing car park
- 5

Existing tree
- 6

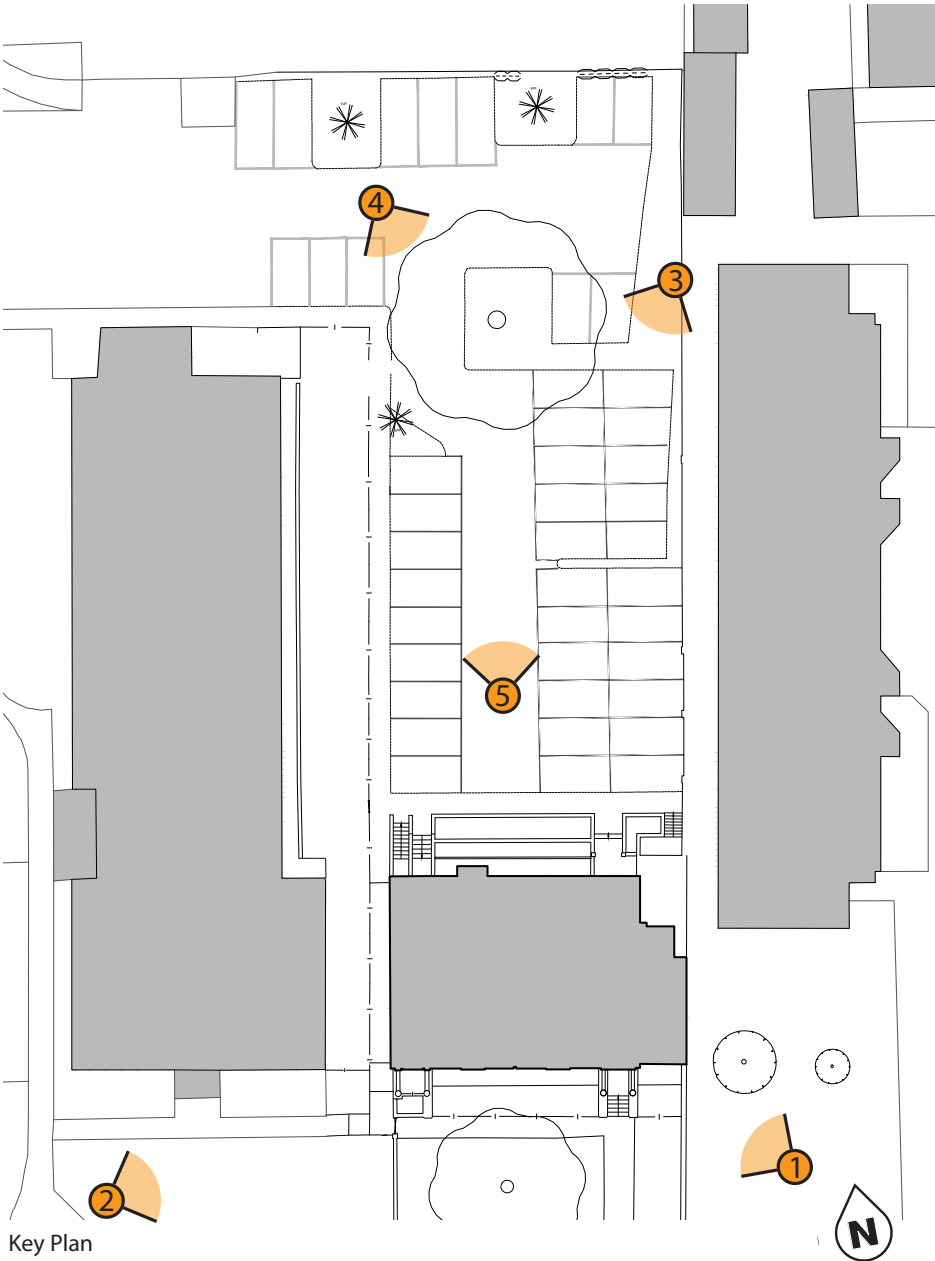
Adjacent student accommodation



03

Site Analysis

The Application Site



# 03 Building Analysis

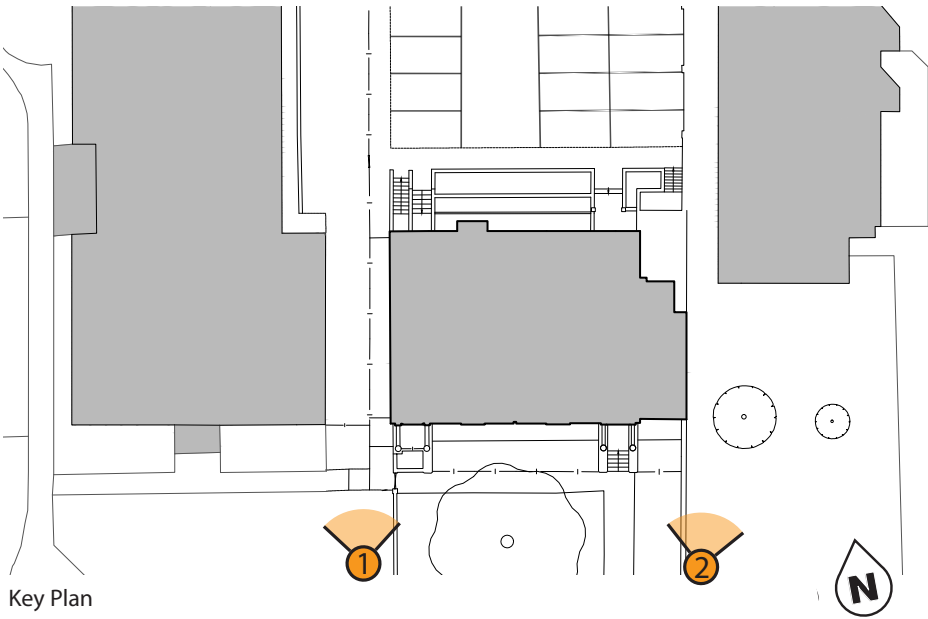
## The Application Building

### Visual Assessment

The existing building is Georgian and finished in Bath stone ashlar. The front elevation is broadly symmetrical with two front entrances with steps and porches at either side of the block. The left-hand side entrance has subsequently been abandoned and the porch and steps have been retained but are now redundant. The door has been replaced with a window within the existing masonry opening.

The front elevation has decorative carved stone porches with doric columns and rustication at ground floor level. There are decorative carved window surrounds at first floor level as well as a decorative stone cornice which forms part of the parapet to the front mansard gutter. The building forms one of a pair and the front elevations broadly match. However, close examination of the front elevations reveal that there are differences in alignment and detail of the stonework. It is not known the extent to which these small differences have arisen through different programmes of repair work however it appears that some of these are original to the building fabric.

The right-hand side of the building is set back from the main frontage and the upper storeys appear to have been altered and extended. The pattern of fenestration and the stonework are simpler in detail than the main frontage.



Key Plan



1 Front elevation with lefthand side stone porch, now redundant as an entrance.



2 Front elevation with righthand side stone porch and main entrance. The righthand side is set back and simpler in detail from the main frontage.

# 03 Building Analysis

## The Application Building

### Visual Assessment

The following building description was given as part of the 2016 planning application (ref. 161205/FUL) committee report:

*“Nos. 187-189 Kings Road is a grade II listed building, three storeys in height with a basement and attics which was built after 1832 as part of Waterloo Place. The building is constructed of Bath stone with a slate roof, a rusticated ground floor with a moulded cill string, dentil cornice entablature and blocking course. The building is formed from a symmetrical pair of houses.*

*The windows to the bays, ground and first floors retain most glazing bar sashes. Two windows on ground floor have contemporary balconies and cast-iron balustrades (honey-suckle pattern). The first floor windows have architrave surrounds and moulded cornices on console brackets. There are six panel doors (part glazed) to sides under Doric porches, approached by steps and a two storey extension to the right of No. 189 with one window. The contemporary Orts Road 'service' houses were demolished in 1977. The roof has been converted to attics with a raised roof line, dormer windows and a raised parapet to disguise the additional fenestration.*

*As part of the conversion to offices Nos. 187-189 were joined together and their interiors largely removed and altered, apart from the stairs. An internal steel frame with six vertical members and modern lift shafts were inserted at the same time. Although there are some surviving sash windows many have been replaced with inferior modern copies.*

*The rear elevation of Nos. 187-189 Kings Road retains a simple architectural form with sash windows, dormer windows and a portico to the left. The setting to the rear of the listed building is dominated, and partly enclosed by, the adjacent modern building to the left (No. 191) and the modern extension to the right (No. 185). To the rear of Nos. 187-189 Kings Road the site is currently an area of hardstanding which is used for car parking; whilst this use does not enhance the setting of the listed building or the conservation area, it does preserve the open views towards the listed buildings rear elevation and preserve the open aspect of the original gardens, thereby maintaining the buildings legibility.*

*To the rear of Nos. 187-189 Kings Road is a limestone ashlar and brick wall which forms the former garden boundary wall between the listed building and the relatively recent development at No. 191. The wall is affixed to the listed building and located within its curtilage building; as such the wall is considered to be treated as part of the building for the purposes of listed building control under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. “*

Along Kings Road other buildings constructed at a similar time have a number of common features and are identified as having group value within the Conservation Area.

One of the broadly common features is the treatment of the parapet wall and the relationship between parapet and the mansards behind. However, there is variation in the proportions and detail of the cornice and entablature. It is open to interpretation how to establish the proportions of the entablature since these are not fully classical facades and there are no columns or pilasters below the entablature at Nos 187-189. Similarly, the blocking course does not form part of the classical order and its proportions are not prescribed.



A review of the other buildings in the group reveals the following variants:

- Nos 165-167 Kings Road - no entablature.
- Nos 169-181 Kinga Road - projecting bays with pilasters.
- Dentils and cornice projection varies from nos 183-185 & 187-189.
- Nos 183-185 Kings Road - alignment of mansard roof is different to nos 185-187.

# 03 Building Analysis

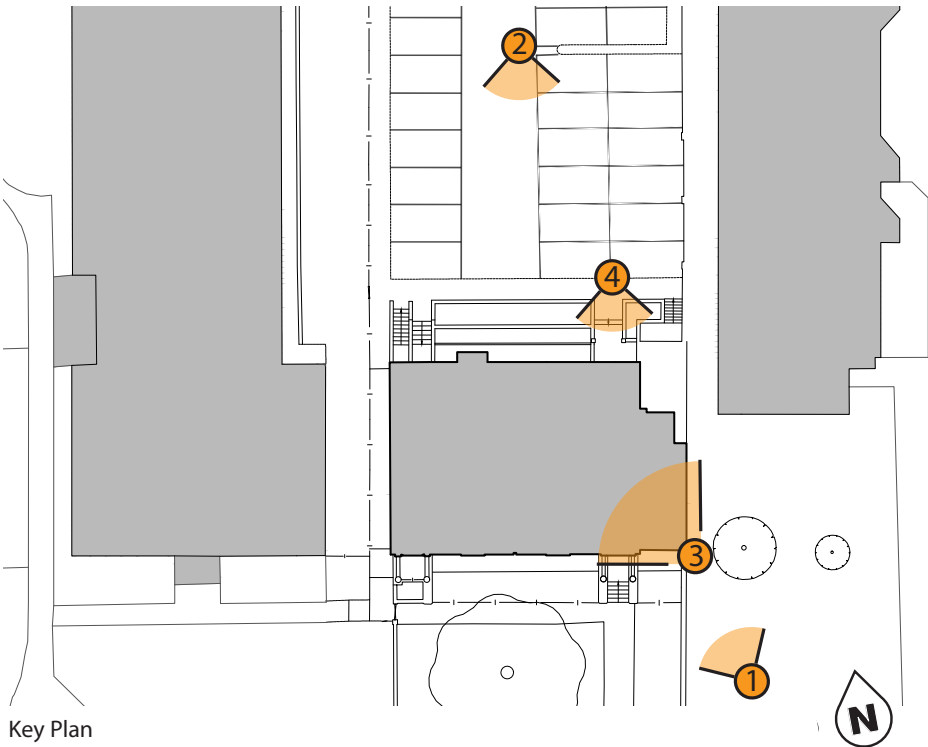
## The Application Building

### Visual Assessment

The flank and rear elevations are more severe without the decorative stone features of the front although these too are finished in Bath stone ashlar. There are simple projecting string courses and the detailing of the window openings and porches is simpler.

Externally, the masonry facades of the lower storeys of the existing building are presumed to be largely original. However, there are visible alterations to the high level stonework, particularly at the rear of the building which are likely to have been part of the works to build, or rebuild the current mansard. There is some visible repair work at lower level to the rear elevation stonework over the porch on the left-hand side. Additionally, the external stonework will have been altered to create the lift shaft. There are references in the listing details to other alterations and a range of buildings which have been demolished. It would appear that the right-hand side of the front elevation has also been extended and enlarged.

Abutments and copings are dressed with traditional lead flashings. The front mansard gutter is lead-lined. The flat roof finish is not known, but from ground level observation and aerial photography it is not lead and is therefore likely to be a modern membrane or asphalt.



Key Plan



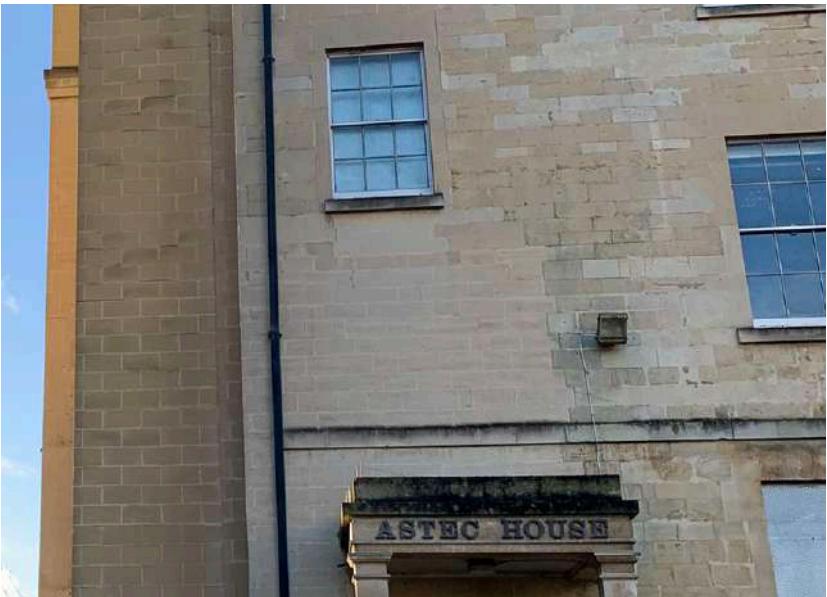
1 The flank elevation is more severe than the front elevation. The righthand side appears to be an extension to the original building.



2 The rear elevation is more severe than the front elevation. There are visible alterations to the high level stonework and alterations to create the lift shaft are apparent to the lefthand set back portion.



4 Google Earth view of the flat roof. The extension to the righthand side can be seen along with alterations for the lift shaft.



5 Area of visible repair to the existing stonework

# 03 Building Analysis

## The Application Building

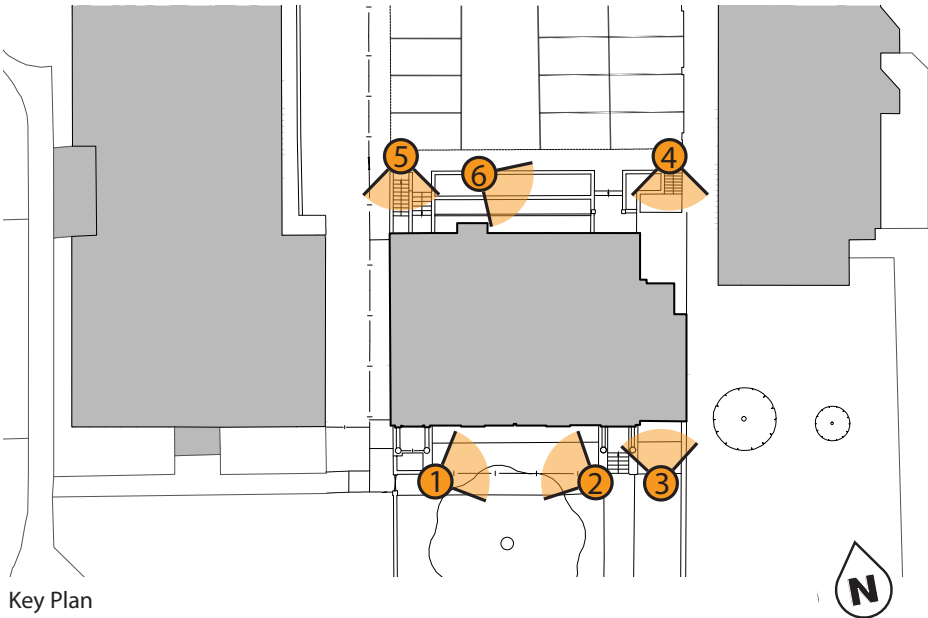
### Visual Assessment

Windows are six-on-six traditional painted timber sliding sashes for the ground, first and second floors. The sliding sashes within the third floor dormers are contemporary. Some ground floor and basement openings are currently covered with anti-vandalism protection.

The condition of the external masonry is fair. There is some evidence of minor movement and joints between the stone blocks opening around window and door heads.

Extract from the Historic England official list entry:  
*'After 1832, part of Waterloo Place. 3 storeys and basement. Bath stone. Slate roof. Rusticated ground floor, moulded let floor cill string. Dentil cornice entablature and blocking course. A symmetrical pair of houses. Bays, ground and let floors retain most glazing bar sashes. 1st floor windows have architrave surround and moulded cornice on console brackets. 2 windows on ground floor with contemporary balconies and cast-iron balustrades (honey-suckle pattern). 6 panel doors (part glazed) at sides under Doric porches, approached by steps. 2 storey extension to right of No 189 with 1 window. The contemporary Orts Road 'service' houses have recently (1977) been demolished.'*

source:<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1321921?section=official-list-entry>



1 Lightwell at front elevation



2 Lightwell at front elevation



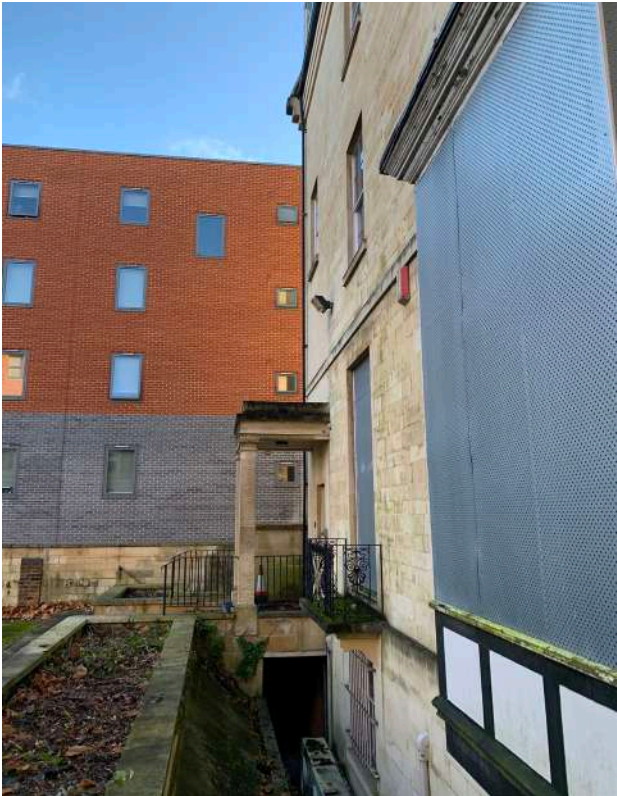
3 Traditional painted timber sliding sash window



4 Stair to lower ground entrance to the plant room



5 Stair to lower ground entrance at the rear frontage



6 Lightwell at the rear frontage

# 03 Building Analysis

## The Application Building

### Assessment

The existing internal layout has lightweight partitions splitting the floor plates into offices. There are two vertical circulation cores, with an existing lift at the eastern core. Toilets are located at each level on the southeast corner of the building.

The internal structure of the building has been replaced with a steel frame. The steel frame supports new timber floors and the mansard extension. It appears that the stone exterior was raised up at the time of the mansard construction. The mansard parapet and front gutter have been formed to align approximately with the neighbouring building, however this has led to a less than ideal arrangement to the third floor where the dormers look primarily into the mansard gutter.

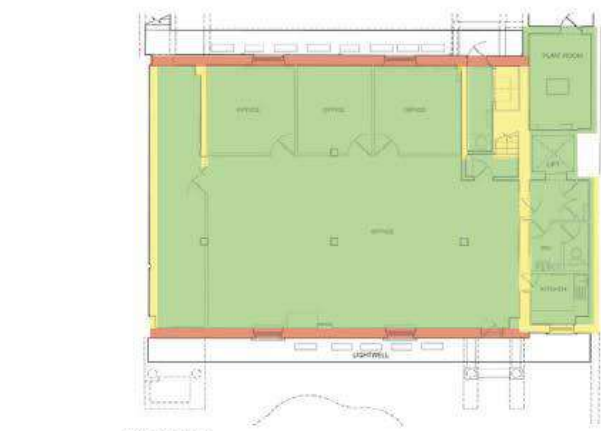
The Heritage Assessment by GHJP which accompanies the application identifies the historic significance of different elements of the building fabric. This is shown in the plan diagrams (right).

The building has also been subject to a structural assessment by CARE accredited engineers The Morton Partnership and their report accompanies the planning application. The report explains the existing steel structure and confirms that it is essential to the integrity of the existing building. It also identifies that the existing roof is a contemporary metal deck and that the existing steel structure is only partially fire protected.

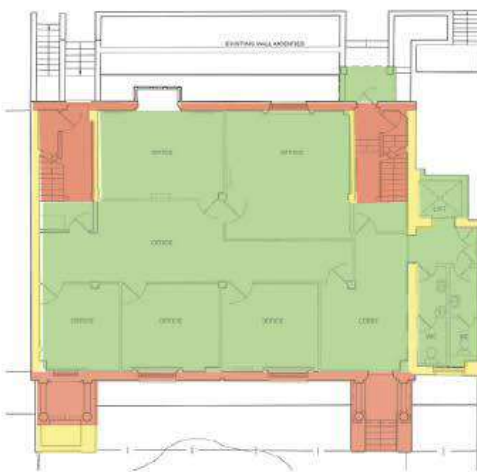
Externally, the Morton Partnership report identifies a number of minor stone repair requirements and sets out the required repairs which should be undertaken.



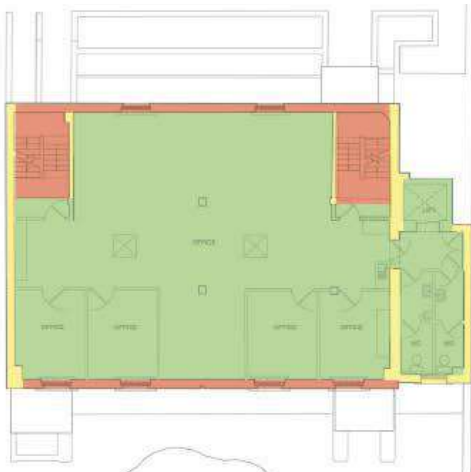
Site photos of the existing mansard extension with dormer windows



Lower Ground Floor Plan As Existing

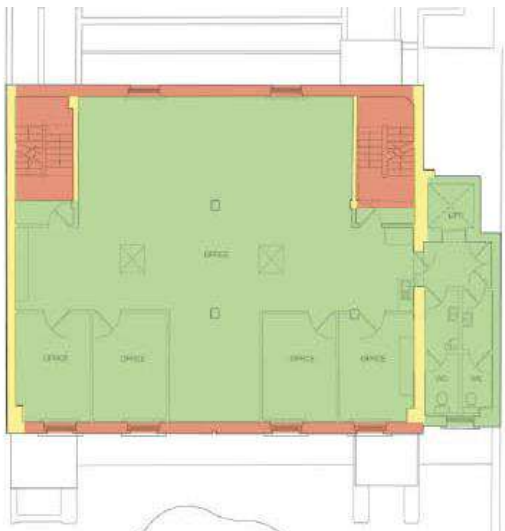


Ground Floor Plan As Existing

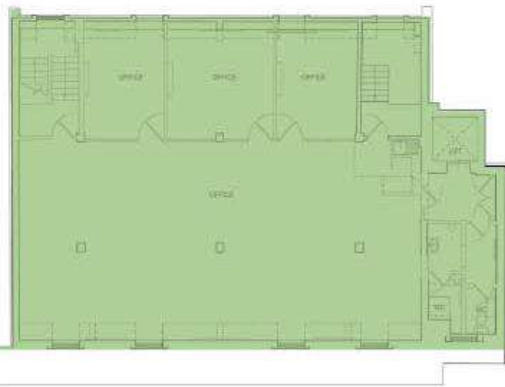


First Floor Plan As Existing

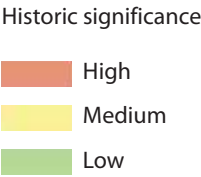
Historic significance diagrams from the Heritage Assessment by GJHP



Second Floor Plan As Existing



Third Floor Plan As Existing



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## 04 Evaluation

# 04 Evaluation

## Opportunities and Constraints

The existing building has been analysed to establish the opportunities and constraints present, in order to inform design options.

- Opportunity to bring meaningful use to an existing disused historic building.
- Opportunity for sustainable development utilising previously developed land and an existing building.
- Opportunity to make thermal upgrades to the building and improve the performance of the external envelope.
- Opportunity to sensitively reinstate external features such as the missing front door to no. 189.
- Opportunity to reuse the steel frame internal structure of the building.
- Opportunity to upgrade the fire protection to existing structure for the protection of future occupants of the building.
- Opportunity to provide student accommodation, an identified demographic in Reading, on a site in close proximity to Reading's higher education institutions.
- Opportunity to accommodate and facilitate sustainable transport options.
- Opportunity to retain the existing vehicular access.
- Opportunity to adjust the site layout to improve the sub-standard car park.
- Opportunity to increase the amount of green space on the site.
- The design is constrained by the existing dimensions of the building and existing fenestration layout.
- The design needs to be sensitive to the listed status of the building.
- The existing entry level is not accessible and existing external door openings are neither wide enough nor level to accommodate wheelchair access.
- The existing lift shaft may not accommodate a wheelchair accessible lift.



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## 05 Development Proposal

# 05 Development Proposal

## Use and Amount

Use

The proposed use of the site is student accommodation with ancillary landscaping and parking.

The proposal would **not** be classed as a Higher Risk Building under the Building Safety Act.

Amount

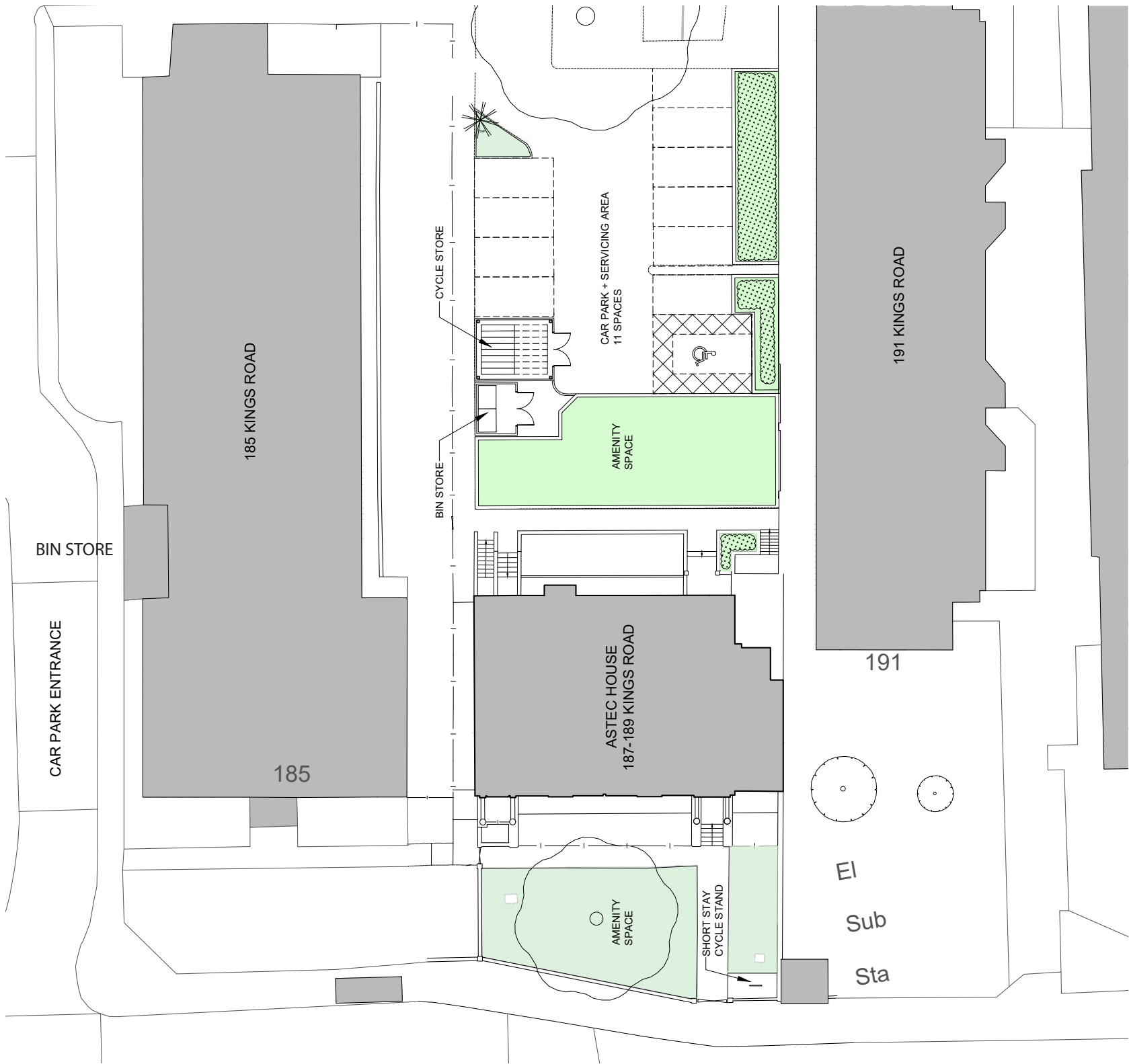
Summary of accommodation proposed:

- 29 new student rooms
- Communal space at third floor including study room
- Ancillary spaces including laundry and storage areas
- Ground floor office
- 11 car parking spaces including 1 disabled space
- Cycle Storage
- Bin storage

There will be no change to the quantum of floor area in the building. There are no extensions proposed nor is there any proposed demolition that would result in a loss of floor area.

| FLOOR        | ROOM TYPE |     | ROOM AREA<br>RANGE / MSQ | TOTAL ROOM<br>AREA / | COMMUNAL<br>AREA / MSQ | ANCILLIARY<br>AREA */<br>MSQ | OFFICE<br>AREA /<br>MSQ |
|--------------|-----------|-----|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
|              | SGL       | DBL |                          |                      |                        |                              |                         |
| LOWER GROUND | 1         | 4   | 20.7 - 24.4              | 113.0                |                        | 20.8                         |                         |
| GROUND       | 3         | 2   | 15.8 - 24.4              | 94.6                 |                        | 2                            | 15.5                    |
| FIRST        | 5         | 2   | 13.8 - 22.4              | 124.3                |                        | 1.6                          |                         |
| SECOND       | 5         | 2   | 13.9 - 21.8              | 120.8                |                        | 1.6                          |                         |
| THIRD        | 5         | 0   | 17.9 - 19.1              | 92.6                 | 30.4                   | 0.8                          |                         |
| TOTAL        | 19        | 10  |                          | 545.3                | 30.4                   | 26.8                         | 15.5                    |
| TOTAL ROOMS  |           | 29  |                          |                      |                        |                              |                         |

\*Includes laundry and storage



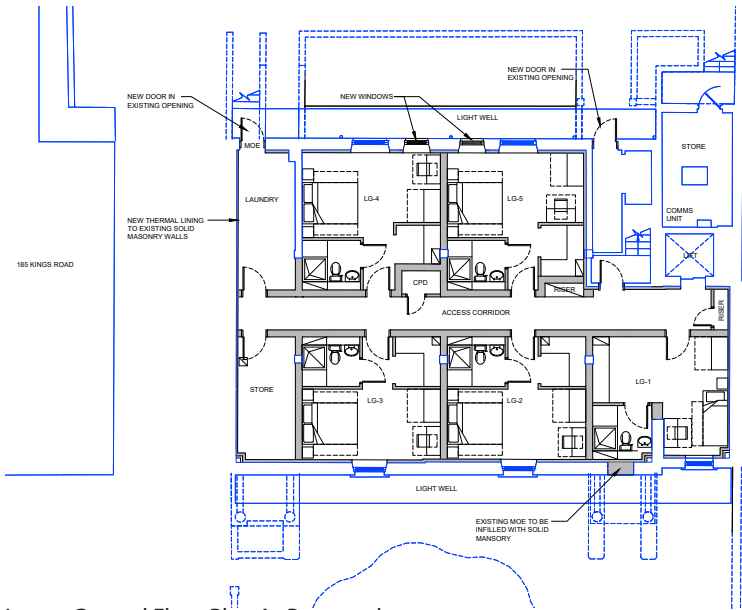
Site Plan As Proposed

# 05 Development Proposal

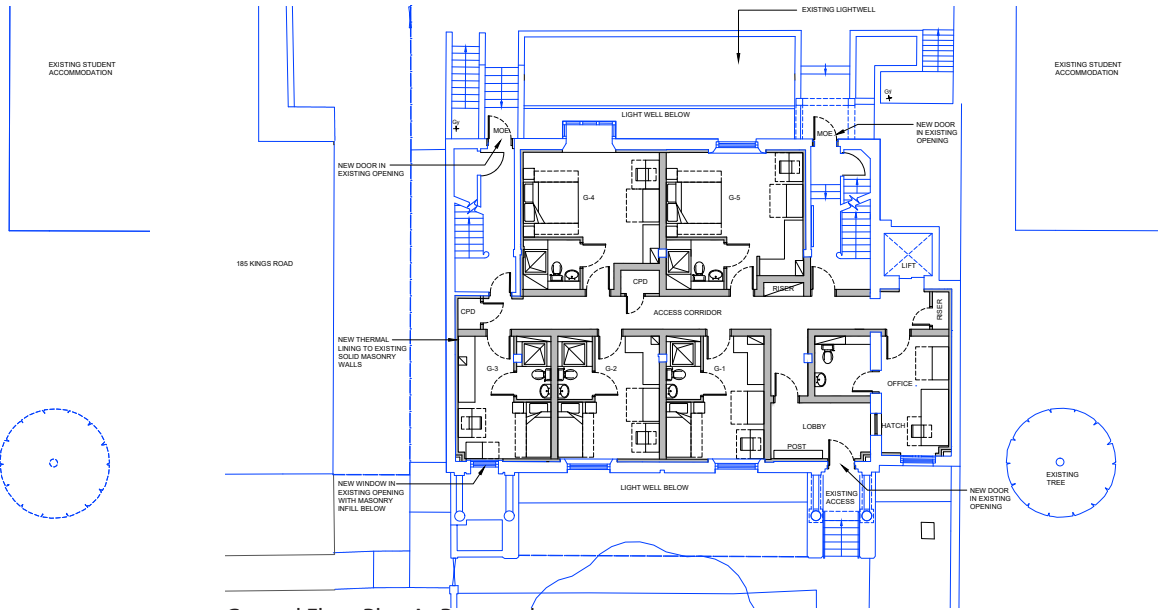
## Floor Plans

The proposal features the following:

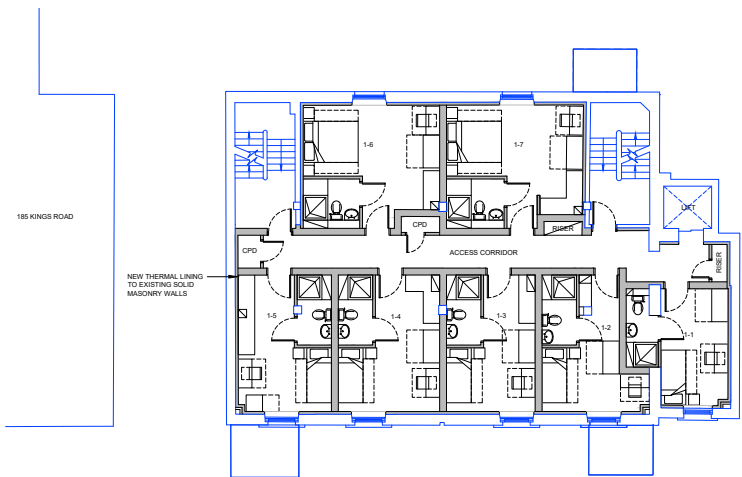
- Retention and repair of the existing historic building fabric (external envelope).
- Removal of the existing disused office fit out.
- Incorporation of breathable thermal performance improvements to the external envelope.
- Reuse of the existing steel frame structure
- Essential fire protection to the existing structure (steel and timber floors)
- Utilise the two existing vertical circulation cores and high historic value features.
- Addition of skylights at the third floor to allow for improved daylighting in the rooms and communal areas.
- An improved car parking layout providing 11 spaces.
- A ventilation strategy utilising a central riser discharging to the roof to avoid requirement to create vents in the historic masonry fabric.
- Removal of unsightly, redundant, externally mounted plant equipment
- Removal of unsightly externally mounted security bars from lower ground floor windows.



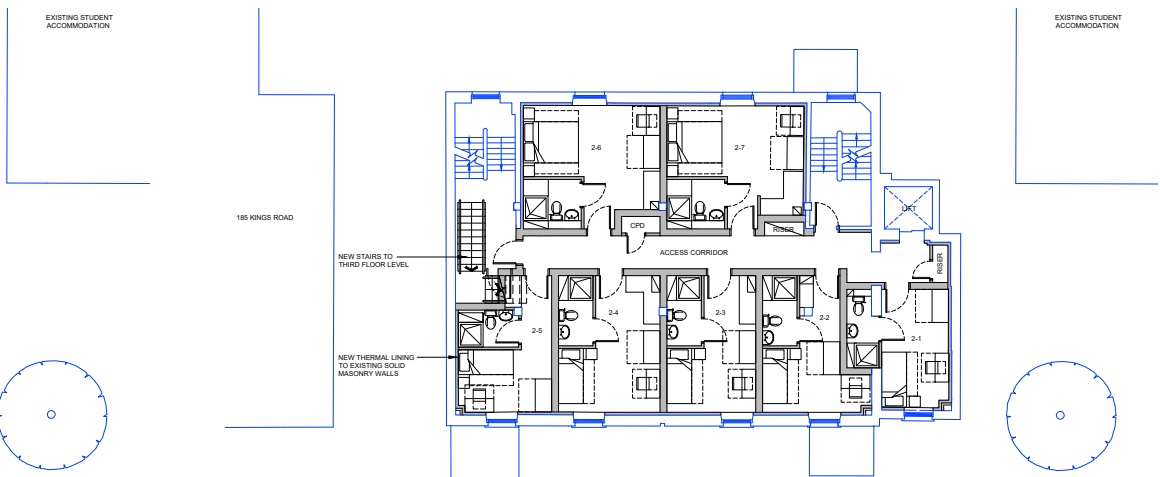
Lower Ground Floor Plan As Proposed



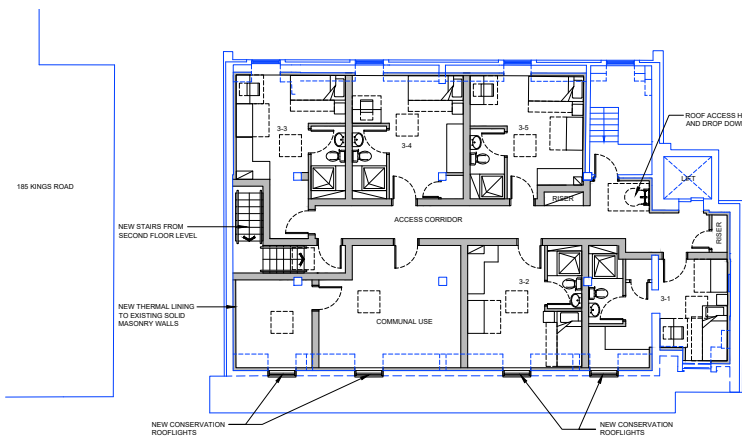
Ground Floor Plan As Proposed



First Floor Plan As Proposed



Second Floor Plan As Proposed



Third Floor Plan As Proposed



# 05 Development Proposal

## Elevation

Issues with the existing front elevation:

- The front door at no. 189 is missing.
- Redundant former entrance to no. 187 is currently boarded up.
- The relationship between the dormer windows and mansard gutter is not ideal since the height of the parapet obscures most of the outlook.
- Existing windows in disrepair with the ground floor windows boarded up (with existing sliding sash windows retained behind).
- Unsightly and disused plant equipment in the lightwell.
- Cracking in existing stonework



South elevation as existing  
(existing sliding sash windows currently concealed by security panels shown in blue)

Proposed improvements:

- Reinstatement of front door to no 189 with an appropriate design which is sensitive to the historic context.
- Replacement of window at former entrance to no. 187 with solid panel at the lower part to distinguish it more from the original window positions.
- Modification of existing 20th Century dormers to substitute conservation rooflights
- Addition of skylights in the 20th Century flat roof to provide great natural light to the spaces without impact on the existing historic building fabric.
- Remove existing plant equipment from the lightwell
- Stonework repairs in accordance with The Morton Partnerships recommendations



South elevation as proposed  
(existing retained fabric shown in blue)

# 05 Development Proposal

## Elevation

Issues with the existing rear elevation:

- The doors at no. 187 and 189 are contemporary steel faced security doors.
- Existing windows in disrepair with the ground floor windows boarded up (with existing sliding sash windows retained behind).
- Unsightly and disused plant equipment in the lightwell.
- Cracking in existing stonework
- Unsightly external security grilles have been fixed to the lower ground floor windows



South elevation as existing



South elevation as proposed

Proposed improvements:

- Reinstatement of entry doors to nos 187 & 189 with an appropriate design which is sensitive to the historic context.
- Addition of skylights in the 20th Century flat roof to provide great natural light to the spaces without impact on the existing historic building fabric.
- Remove existing plant equipment from the lightwell
- Stonework repairs in accordance with The Morton Partnership's recommendations
- Formation of 2 x new window openings in the lightwell fully obscured from view

# 05 Development Proposal

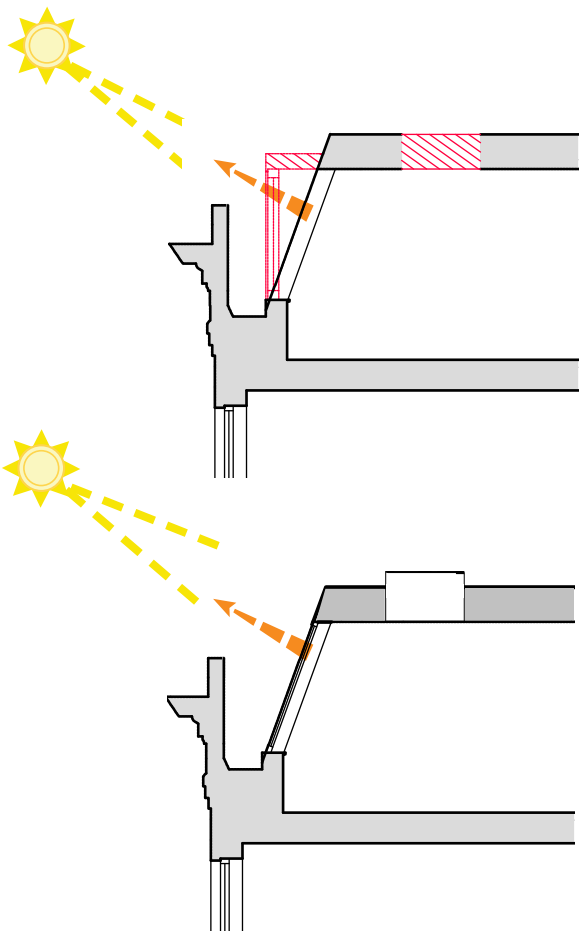
## Third floor & roof design

The existing third floor mansard extension was created as part of the former office conversion, supported by a new steel frame with a trapeziodal profiled deck. The relationship between the dormer windows and mansard gutter is not ideal since the height of the parapet obscures most of the viewpoint.

In order to make meaningful use of the third floor and improve longevity, thermal performance, fire safety and daylighting levels, several adaptations are proposed:

- 1. Replacement of the existing dormer windows with conservation rooflights to allow increased daylighting.
- 2. Addition of skylights into the existing 20th Century flat roof.
- 3. Fire protection to steel structure
- 4. Strip the modern membrane roof (flat roof only), retrofit thermal insulation and recover the roof
- 5. Provide a new maintenance access point in the existing

The suggested alterations to the building will have no impact on the historic masonry building fabric. The proposed alterations all sit within the late 20th Century extension



Section showing existing arrangement and proposed demolition

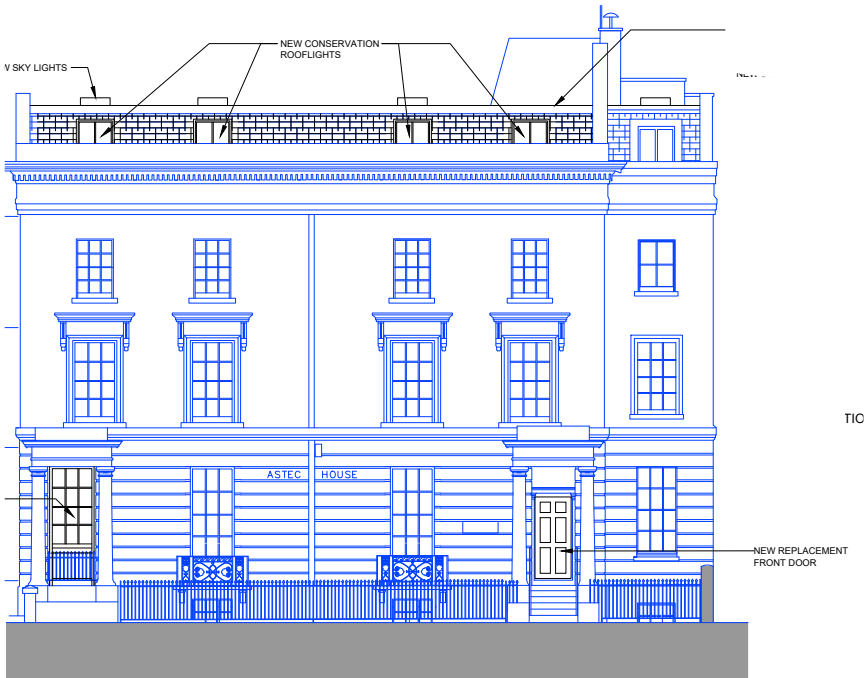
Sketch showing proposed skylight and conservation rooflight



Example of a conservation rooflight



South elevation as existing - showing suggested demolition in red (the windows shown in blue are existing but currently concealed)



South elevation as proposed --showing existing fabric in blue and proposed alternations in black

# 05 Development Proposal

## Sustainability

### Sustainability & Energy



The application is accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Statement prepared by specialist consultants Ecolytik. The report outlines the energy and sustainability strategies for the development which are summarised as follows:

*“The energy strategy for the project has been developed in line with Climate Change (‘CC’) policies of RBC’s Local Plan and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD. The CO2 emissions for the development have been assessed using the Simplified Building Energy Model (SBEM) method.*

*Proposed energy measures for the development include:  
Step 1 – Use less energy: Improvement to building fabric thermal performance, where deemed feasible and appropriate for the Grade II Listed building. Implementation of high efficiency lighting throughout the building.*

*Step 2 – Supply energy efficiently: No existing or proposed district heating/ energy networks are available in proximity to the application site. It is proposed to replace the existing building’s services systems with new, more efficient equipment.*

*Step 3 – Use Low and Zero Carbon (‘LZC’) technology: New, more efficient Air Source - Heat Pumps (‘ASHP’) will supply space heating (a portion) and cooling to the building. Heating (majority) and hot water is proposed to be supplied by new, more efficient gas boilers with low emissions.”*

*“Broader sustainability considerations for the scheme include the effective use of existing buildings and land, climate resilience, low embodied carbon, appropriate material selection, health and wellbeing, sustainable transport and waste management among others.*

*The design of the proposed development attains significant operational carbon reductions for a scheme of this nature and improves the sustainability credentials of the site, which demonstrates the client and design team’s aspirations to meet and exceed RBC’s planning policy requirements as far as possible.*

*The proposed refurbishment and conversion scheme will also target BREEAM ‘Very Good’ under the Refurbishment and Fit-Out 2014 scheme in line with RBC’s policy CC2 for minor non-residential developments of less than 1,000m2 of floor space. ”*

Sustainability has been considered from the outset and there are a number of features which are fundamentally sustainable and establish the foundation for a sustainable development:

- Repurpose an unused existing building
- Densify use of an existing building in a town centre location.
- Reduce the amount of surface parking on site to be appropriate to the development.
- Provide a thermal upgrade to the existing envelope to improve thermal performance to minimise energy required for heating and cooling.
- Undertake essential fire protection work to the existing structure
- Provide enhanced soft landscaping.
- Provide cycle storage for residents.
- Material selection predicated on traditional breathable materials suitable for the historic building fabric.
- Target BREEAM “very good”

**Be Lean:** use less energy

**Be Clean:** supply energy efficiently

**Be Green:** use renewable energy

**Be Seen:** Monitor, verify and report

05

Development Proposal

Technical reports

Sustainability & Energy

Arboriculture

The application is accompanied by an arboricultural impact assessment by Keen Consultants. This identifies root protection areas for trees on or near the application site. Proposed works are not in conflict with the root protection areas.

Biodiversity Net Gain

A BNG assessment has been undertaken by Arb Tech and the proposals have been assessed to establish whether BNG uplift is required. The application is accompanied by a BNG exemption statement.

Ecology

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Roost Assessment by Arb Tech. The report concludes with some recommendations for biodiversity enhancements which have been incorporated into the design.

Heritage

The application is accompanied by a Heritage Assessment by GJHP. The assessment identifies the parts of the building which are historic and the parts of the building which are contemporary. The assessment has informed the design so as to focus interventions on contemporary fabric and minimise any change to the historic fabric.

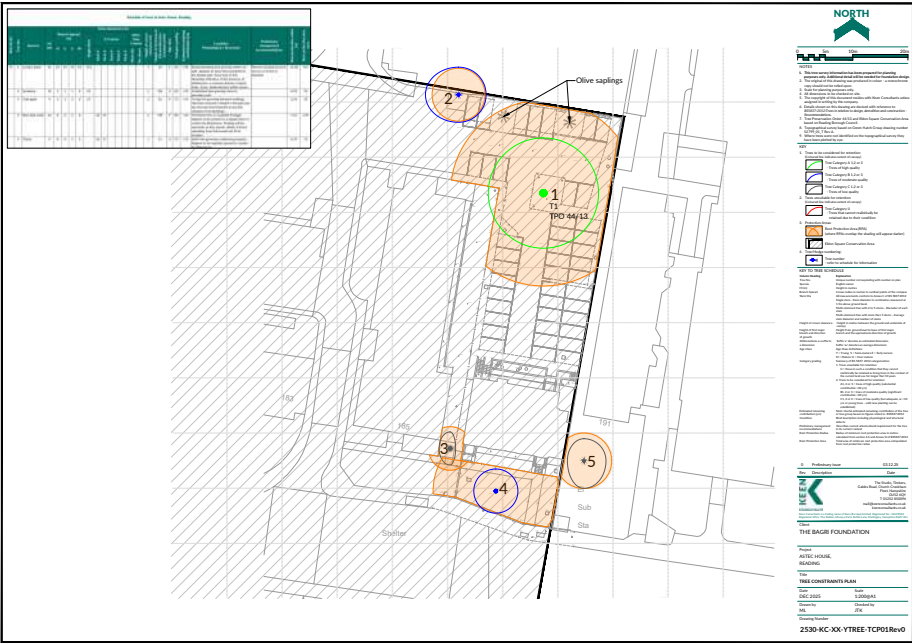
The heritage assessment has also assisted in identifying appropriate designs for replacement features such as the entrance doors.

Amenity Daylighting

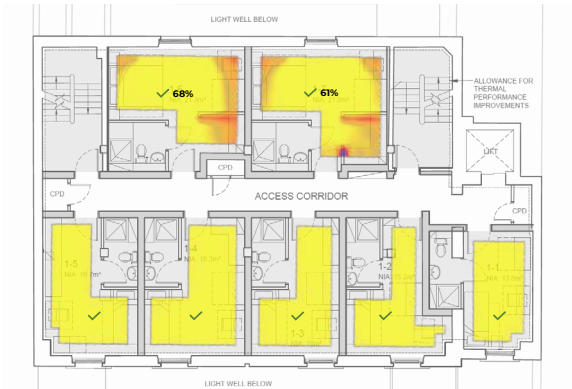
An amenity daylighting assessment has been undertaken by specialist consultant Ecolytik and the resulting report accompanies the planning application. This has been an iterative process whereby initial assessments identified spaces which didn't achieve the recommended levels of natural illumination. The design was tested with a number of different interventions to establish how best to achieve favourable outcomes for each habitable space and the current proposal achieves better than the minimum recommended levels of natural daylighting in more than 90% of rooms with only minor shortfalls in the remaining spaces.

Minor shortfalls at third floor level are addressed through the substitution of rooflights and the incorporation of skylights. The skylights pass through a modern mansard roof and therefore there is no impact on the historic fabric of the building to incorporate them.

The north facing (rear) lower ground floor rooms were also initially discovered to have shortfalls. We modelled a number of scenarios for these rooms. It was identified that the existing buildings offsite and to the north are impacting these spaces and that therefore the most effective way to improve the daylighting characteristics of these rooms is to introduce another window opening. The windows are concealed from view within the lightwell. It is proposed to fit the new openings with traditional sliding sash windows to match other windows in the development. The Morton Partnership has assessed the proposed openings and designed support which does not impact the existing structure.



Root Protection Areas



Typical Upper Storey amenity daylighting

Air Quality

The application is accompanied by an air quality assessment prepared by specialist consultants Ecolytik. The report concludes:

*“An assessment has been undertaken to define the potential impact on local air quality of the proposed development at Astec House, 187 - 189 Kings Road, Reading.*

*The proposed development comprises the conversion of the building to create student accommodation with ancillary landscaping and parking.*

*The construction phase works are primarily internal, therefore dust-related impacts on air quality are expected to be negligible.*

*Fewer parking spaces are proposed than the extant use, therefore a reduction in operational trips is expected. Impacts on air quality will therefore be negligible. The existing gas boilers on site will be replaced with high efficiency low-NOx models, reducing the building-related emissions associated with the site.*

*Local air quality monitoring data indicates that existing pollutant concentrations at the Site are well within the relevant health-based standards. The proposed development will not, therefore, introduce new exposure to poor air quality.”*

Contamination

The application is accompanied by a contamination assessment (PHASE ONE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (PRELIMINARY RISK ASSESSMENT)) prepared by specialist consultant Subadra.

05

Development Proposal

Materials & Construction

External Repairs

Works to the exterior of the existing building are limited to the following:

- Stonework repair
- Reinstatement of doors and windows in existing openings (ground floor)
- Replacement of south facing dormers with conservation rooflights
- Introduction of two north facing lower ground floor windows
- New skylights, maintenance access and flat roof membrane replacement

Stonework repair

Stonework repair shall be carried out in accordance with the Morton Partnership specification for repair works utilising lime mortar and colour matched shelter coat for existing stone.

Reinstatement of Doors and Windows

Window details are provided in the planning application drawings. General arrangement details for doors and windows are provided in the planning application drawings.

Doors and windows shall constructed of traditional painted hardwood.

Replacement of south facing dormers with rooflights

The existing dormers will be taken down and replaced with low profile conservation rooflights.

Lower ground floor windows

it is proposed to introduce 2 x new windows in the north facing (rear) lightwell. The windows would be heritage pattern, painted hardwood traditional sliding sash windows as detailed in the planning application drawings.

Roof works

The existing flat roof is modern with a trapezoidal metal deck. It is proposed to introduce high performance skylights into the flat roof as per the submitted planning application drawings.

It is proposed to upgrade the thermal performance of the roof through the introduction of additional insulation in accordance with a “fabric first” approach to sustainability and then it is proposed to provide a new single ply membrane roof covering as existing.

It is proposed to introduce an access panel from the existing water tank housing onto the flat roof for enhanced safety for maintenance along with a mansafe system.

These alterations will not be visible from street level.

Note: these images are illustrative only - for details of the proposal refer to the planning application drawings



Internal Works

Works to the interior of the existing building are limited to the following:

- essential fire protection to structure
- erection of partitions to subdivide the space
- installation of insulation to the external walls
- modification to the west stair second to third floors only
- new sanitary and services installation

Fire Protection

The structural survey identified that parts of the steel structure do not appear to be fire protected. As part of the works essential fire protection to floors, steelwork and the enclosure of escape stairs would be provided by way of certified plasterboard encasement design.

Partitions

New partitions would be formed in plasterboard lined studwork. The proposed materials and constructions are shown on the planning application drawings. Dry construction techniques are proposed and these are more easily altered in the future without impact to the existing historic fabric. Only minor local strengthening is required in the floors to accommodate these insertions as set out in te Morton Partnership report.

Thermal improvements to the external walls

In accordance with best practice it is proposed to utilise non-combustible insulation to upgrade the thermal performance of the existing building. Plasterboard lining over rockwool (glasroc to walls below ground) is proposed. This is appropriate and easily demountable and is not intrusive to the existing historic fabric. There are no cornices or other plasterwork features of note which would be impacted by this proposal.

West staircase

While the lower storeys of the stairs are being retained as existing, the top flight is relatively new and contemporaneous with the mansard extension. To make best benefit of the existing windows it is proposed to alter the new top flight as shown on the planning application drawings. Structurally, this impacts only on the third (new construction) floor. This has been designed in the Morton Partnership structural proposal contained within their report.

Sanitary Installation and MEP

The sanitary installation and MEP installatio would need to be replaced in connection with the proposals. The strategy for these would be to vent and discharge vertically so that only modern construction (floors and roof) are modified and the historical fabric (the stonework and windows) is not impacted.



# 06 Access

## Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

### Access

The application is accompanied by a Transport Statement by Markides Associates.

#### Pedestrian

Existing pedestrian access from Kings Road will be maintained via the main entrance into the building. Users will also be able to access the amenity space, cycle parking, bin store and parking area via the rear door.

#### Vehicle

Existing vehicular access will be maintained from Kings Road with an improved car park layout providing ten standard spaces and one disabled bay.

#### Cycles

Long term cycle parking is provided within the rear car park with an enclosed secure cycle store with two tier racks for 16 bikes. A Sheffield bike stand in front of the building is provided for two short term cycle spaces.

#### Servicing

Service vehicles will access the car park and can turn to the rear of the site so as to enable access and egress in a forward gear as per the current arrangement. Servicing the building will take place through the rear door via the car park as currently.

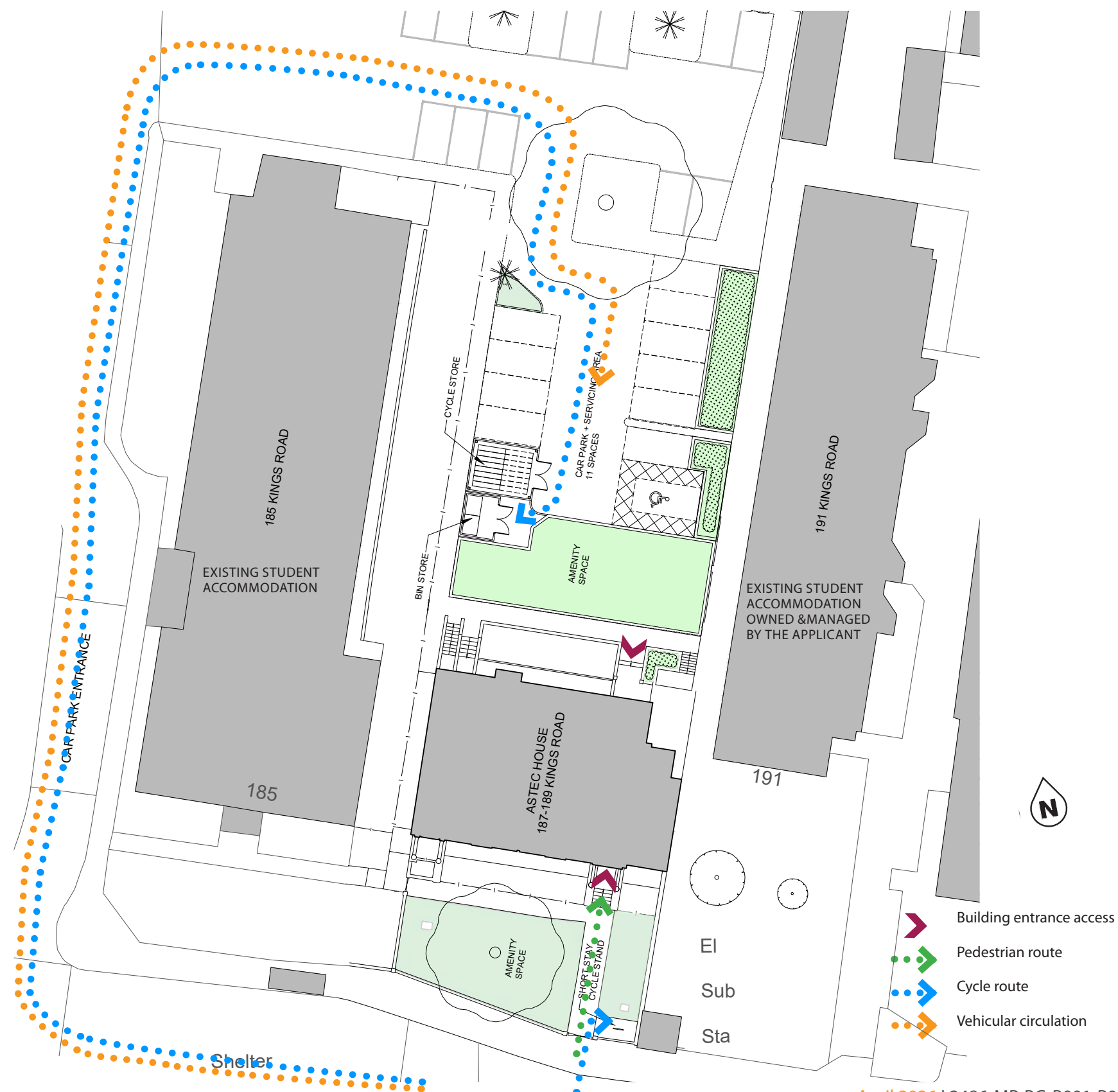
#### Accessibility

Existing access to the building is via a stepped approaches only. The ground floor sits approximately 1.3m above the external ground level. The existing entrances are set within decorative porches which are important design features of the listed building.

The introduction of level access either on the Kings Road frontage or to the rear of the building would present a number of challenges and would necessitate changes to the historic building fabric.

Adjacent to the application site is an existing student accommodation building owned and managed by the applicant with 75 recently refurbished ensuite rooms, which includes 9 accessible rooms, exceeding the 10% minimum for the building.

The applicant is seeking to explore the use of these accessible rooms as part of the proposed student accommodation, allowing for the retention of the existing stepped access to the subject building.



# 06

## Access

### Vehicular and Pedestrian Access

Access

Operational Statement

The following operational statement is provided by the Bagri Foundaion about how the site functions and existing logistical constraints

Highway Safety Constraints of Kings Road (Red Route)

Astec House is located on Kings Road, a principal arterial route through Reading that is designated as a red route with enforced restrictions on stopping, waiting, loading and unloading at all times. As such, any on street stopping associated with servicing, drop-off, or collection would be unlawful and would introduce a material highway safety risk.

Given the strategic function of Kings Road, any obstruction or informal stopping would impede traffic flow, increase collision risk, and pose danger to pedestrians and cyclists. The provision of on-site parking and loading space is therefore essential to ensure that all vehicle activity associated with the site can be accommodated off the public highway in a safe and controlled manner.

Relationship with 191 Kings Road (PBSA)

We are the owner and operator of both Astec House and the adjacent 191 Kings Road, a 75-bed purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) scheme. The car park at Astec House performs a functional role in supporting the operation of both buildings.

At present, 191 Kings Road has no dedicated on-site parking or servicing provision, which has resulted in unavoidable activity taking place on Kings Road during peak periods. Retaining the Astec House car park allows this activity to be consolidated within a managed on-site environment, thereby reducing highway safety concerns.

Management of Peak Move-In and Move-Out Periods

As a PBSA operator, the site experiences highly concentrated peak traffic particularly at the start and end of academic terms. During these periods, multiple arrivals and departures occur within short timeframes.

Despite the use of detailed management plans, arrivals are inevitably unpredictable due to long-distance travel and variable traffic conditions. The availability of on-site parking is critical to provide flexibility, prevent queuing on Kings Road, and ensure that vehicles can be accommodated without causing congestion or obstruction on the public highway.

Safe Loading and Unloading of People and Luggage

Students frequently arrive with multiple family members and significant quantities of luggage, often requiring extended loading and unloading times. In some cases, luggage trolleys are used to transport belongings between vehicles and the building. Undertaking these activities directly adjacent to a fast-moving arterial road would present a clear and unacceptable safety risk to students, visitors, and other road users. The retention of on-site parking enables loading and unloading to take place away from traffic, significantly reducing the risk of accidents and conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles.

Duty of Care and Risk Management

As the operator of a high-occupancy residential building, we have a duty of care to residents, visitors, contractors, and the wider public. This includes the responsibility to anticipate and manage foreseeable operational risks, particularly during peak changeover periods when activity levels are highest. Providing adequate on-site parking is a fundamental component of this risk management approach, ensuring that vehicle movements are properly controlled and that unsafe informal practices on the public highway are avoided.

Emergency Access and Servicing Requirements

The retention of a suitably sized and well-configured on-site parking area is also essential to maintain safe and unobstructed access for emergency and service vehicles. As a PBSA, the building accommodates a large number of residents, many of whom may be unfamiliar with the building. There is also an increased likelihood of emergency callouts and false alarms when compared to standard residential buildings. On-site space allows emergency vehicles to manoeuvre, position appliances, and operate effectively without obstruction on the public highway, which is particularly important given the constraints of Kings Road.

Conclusion

The retention of parking at Astec House is not about promoting unnecessary car use, but about managing unavoidable vehicle activity safely and responsibly in a highly constrained location.

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## 07 Issues for Discussion

# 07 Design Development

## Pre-Application Consultation Response

The scheme was subject to pre-application consultation with Reading Council who shared a response in September 2025. The current application submission seeks to address issues identified during the pre-application consultation. Below we include extracts from the pre-application consultation response in “black italic text” and the applicant’s response in “blue plain text”

*Design, character and appearance of the area and impacts on the listed building and conservation area*  
*The pre-application submission includes a heritage assessment. As outlined within policy, developments which affect heritage assets should be informed by an assessment of the impact on the relevant heritage significance. This appraisal should be updated to reflect any amendments, and requests made by the Conservation Officer.*

An updated heritage statement accompanies the planning application.

The appraisal highlights a number of aspects of significance which are proposed to be maintained. Bringing the building into a viable alternative use is also considered to be a positive aspect. The building has been through a series of extensive renovations, the majority of the internal area of the building has been modified, with the significant intrusion of a steel frame, which appears to have been undertaken without the requisite listed building consent. It is acknowledged that this was undertaken prior to the current owners purchase. To further inform the proposal and assessment of heritage significance and impacts, and in conjunction with RBC’s conservation officers consent, it would be beneficial to further record the works previously undertaken to the building.

The building has been assessed by a CARE accredited structural engineer and the current structural arrangement has been photographed and drawn. The report by the Morton Partnership accompanies the current planning application.

The building has been subject to a measured survey by Greenhatch Surveys which accompanies the current planning application.

*It is possible that the structural steels are required to remain, as removing them could cause further damage to the building. However, this should be presented through an application for listed building consent, with detailed justification. Similarly, the provision of MVHR systems, acoustic treatments, and sustainability improvements, to the building should be detailed at the outset to minimise impacts of such works, which could be extensive (i.e. MVHR venting etc.).*

The existing steel structure has been assessed by the Morton Partnership and has been identified as being required to remain in situ to support the building. This is described in greater detail in their report.

It is proposed to vent the building centrally to a terminus through the roof. The roof is a 20thC structure (see the Morton Partnership report) and this approach will minimise any impact on the historic building fabric.

*The proposal predominantly relates to internal alterations, with minor changes to the front of the building including: removal of modern dormer windows and replacement with roof lights, removal of access restrictions and window coverings, a new window within the front door area of no.187, and new rear doors.*

The proposed scheme includes the alterations described to south facing dormer windows and to contemporary steel faced security doors which will be replaced with doors more sympathetic to the historic building.

*The proposal would include significant changes to the parking area to the rear, and a ‘short-stay’ cycle store to the front, officers are concerned that this provision would be unnecessary and have impacts upon the appearance of the listed building.*

It is proposed to amend the parking layout to improve vehicle manoeuvring and to significantly reduce the quantum of parking from 29 spaces to 11 spaces in favour of amenity space, enhanced soft landscaping and cycle storage. This is illustrated on the planning application drawings and in the “Access” section of this statement.

It is proposed to provide a single short stay Sheffield stand (uncovered) close to the front boundary wall. It is considered that this is preferable to unsightly uncontrolled cycle parking in front of the building. The proposed covered cycle store has been located to the rear of the building.

*The proposal also includes an enlarged lightwell to the rear of the building (though as below, that appears to be an inaccurate description of the works). In addition to seeking more detail on previous works undertaken as outlined within the Conservations Officer’s comments, it would be necessary to provide sufficient details associated with the proposed works to allow the proposal to be fully considered. Such details should have been provided at pre-application stage to ensure that these works would be acceptable, or to avoid delay through an application should there be structural concerns with the works.*

The enlargement of the lightwell was an option which was explored in order to identify whether this would improve the daylighting to the lower ground floor rooms. Through modelling it transpired that enlargement would make negligible difference to the daylighting characteristics and therefore this proposal was abandoned. The only change within the rear lightwell will be to reduce the height of the upstand of the planter. This has been considered by the Morton Partnership in their assessment.

*The building, and its setting has been subject of significant unwelcomed works over time (i.e. complete internal demolition, expanse of carparking being provided). The further intervention of an ‘enlarged lightwell’ should be justified within the heritage assessment supporting the application. This should also be supported by clear existing and proposed section plans to further demonstrate the actual works, as the proposal plans are unclear.*

The proposed lightwell enlargement no longer features as part of the proposed scheme.

*It is advisable that complete details of works be provide at the earliest possible opportunity. The lightwell enlargement, should be accompanied by detailed structural information by an accredited and sufficiently experienced heritage engineer (CARE Registered Engineer).*

The proposed lightwell enlargement no longer features as part of the proposed scheme. The modest change to the upstand has been considered by the Morton Partnership in their report.

*The existing site has been through various iterations, and resulted in an overall degradation of the Listed Building and its setting. As outlined within the Local Plan policies, proposals should preserve and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets. In this instance, the proposed development, in addition to bringing the building back into productive use, has the opportunity to enhance the setting of the listed building, and the conservation area. This should include enhancing the landscaping to the frontage of the building (including boundary treatments where appropriate), and provision of a greened rear amenity space for residents. Failure to provide these enhancements and responding to Local Plan policies in this regard may result in a recommendation for refusal. It is noted that provision of a rear communal garden area would result in the loss of parking for the development. However, Officers would have limited concern around the provision of a car-free development given the co-location with education facilities, location next to high frequency bus routes, and town centre adjacency.*

It is proposed to enhance the landscaped setting of the building and to provide amenity space for the scheme. This is illustrated in the proposed site plan. The quantum of parking on the site is proposed to be significantly reduced from 29 spaces to 11 spaces. A small amount of parking, but more importantly hardstanding for servicing is required for operational purposes as described in the “Access” section of this statement.

Overall, it would appear the proposal would preserve the Listed building through continued use which would bring maintenance and ongoing care. The opportunity to enhance both the setting of the listed building, and conservation area should be taken as a holistic approach to the site in accordance with Policy EN3.

It is proposed to conserve the listed building and enhance its setting in accordance with Policy EN3.

*Provision of student accommodation*  
*Policy H12 provides further guidance on locating new student accommodation. It is clear that the site is within close proximity to an existing further or higher education campus (Reading College). The principle of student accommodation within this location accords with the allocation within the local plan (subject to demonstrating acceptability on a number of points), the location of student accommodation within close proximity of Reading College also broadly accords with Policy H12. Satisfactorily demonstrating the loss of employment land in line with Policy EM3 is required prior to confirmation of the proposal being acceptable in principle.*

The current application is accompanied by a planning statement which sets out the Policy EM3 considerations.

# 07 Design Development

## Pre-Application Consultation Response

### Amenity

Policies CC8, EN9, CC9, EN15, EN16 relate to ensuring an appropriate level of amenity is provided for residents. It is noted that student accommodation is a residential-type use with slightly different requirements to other residential uses. The layout seems to be generally logical however the following concerns are to be addressed further through any submitted applications:

- Impacts upon future occupiers of the proposed rooms on the south elevation of Nos. 187-189 at third floor level (2 units) suffering visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development resulting in a lack of outlook, caused by the existing parapet wall in close proximity to the revised roof lights serving these units;
- Concerns that the amount of daylight/sunlight to all north-facing units (9 units) is not sufficient
- Concerns that the amount of daylight/sunlight to the south-facing basement units (3 units) is not sufficient, particularly LG-1 as shown on the proposed basement plans

The current application is accompanied by an amenity daylighting assessment report by Ecolytik. The design was developed iteratively to ensure spaces received adequate daylighting.

With respect to the south facing third floor rooms (including the communal space) - it is proposed to replace the existing dormers with conservation rooflights and to augment natural daylighting with the introduction of skylights through the modern roof. The structural interventions have been assessed by the Morton Partnership. The rooms all pass the daylighting assessment and will benefit from less obscuration of the outlook by virtue of the rooflights in lieu of the existing dormers.

All of the north facing units pass the daylighting assesement as is illustrated in the report which accompanies the current application.

The lower ground floor rooms were slightly more challenging but are essential for the viability of the proposed redevelopment. The south facing rooms (front elevation) fall very slightly short of the target daylighting figure however with the removal of the externally mounted security bars the daylighting will be significantly improved. It was decided that since the results were very close to the pass mark and in light of the building's listed status that no change to the front elevation would be proposed.

With respect to the north facing (rear elevation) lower ground floor windows the geometry of the obstructions from projecting features above coupled with existing buildings off-site meant that the daylighting characterists as existing are more challenging. Unlike the front elevation, the rear elevation windows are fully below the parapet of the lightwell and therefore are not visible externally from ground level. It is proposed to introduce 2 x additional windows below ground to help provide additional amenity lighting to these spaces. The proposal has been considered by the Morton Partnership to ensure that there will be no adverse impact on the structure of of the building and to propose a suitable lintel design. The proposal has also been considered by the heritage consultant for the scheme. The proposed alteration is on the rear elevation and below ground level. The proposed new windows will be heritage timber sliding sahs windows as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

To address the concerns related to daylight/sunlight, an assessment would be required to support the application. In addition to the assessment being provided, a third-party review would need to be undertaken, funded by the applicant to ensure the report is undertaken to a satisfactory standard.

With regard to outlook from the south facing top floor rooms, it is possible that the proposed conservation roof lights would provide improved outlook. However, it would appear this would still be dominated by the view of the parapet. Adjusting the parapet would not be acceptable. Consideration of using the entire top floor south facing area as communal space, given the potential issues with outlook from these rooms.

It is noted that alteration to the parapet would not be acceptable and no change is proposed. It is proposed to use part of the south facing space as communal space however it is essential for the viability of the scheme to maintain unit numbers. The change to conservation rooflights will significantly improve the outlook along with the addition of skylights for these rooms. This is noted and acceptable to the applicant.

It is noted that the proposed accommodation includes some ancillary facilities, such as a larger communal area at fourth floor and a laundry and store room within the basement. These facilities would likely be conditioned to remain and ensure these facilities would be ancillary to the main use of the building.

This is noted and acceptable to the applicant.

As above, the loss of garden to the rear of the listed buildings being noted as a negative of the Conservation Area. Therefore, the provision of open space to the rear of the building must be included.

On the basis of the current proposal, the development is considered to have a shortfall of open space, which could easily be provided on site.

The scheme includes enhanced soft landscaping, rationalisation and reduction of the car parking area and the incorporation of amenity space. The amenity space has been increased since the initial application.

All matters raised by RBC's Environmental Protection consultee response must be demonstrated. As per the site allocation, noise and air quality must be demonstrated to be acceptable for residential uses. This should include, beyond that mentioned within the local validation requirements, details of any mechanical ventilation required, including noise from any specific units themselves, and locations for air intakes.

The application is accompanied by an air quality assessment by Ecolytik which concludes that the site is acceptable for residential uses from an air quality perspective.

The application incorporates design strategy for ventilation and the applicant would accept a condition to any consent requiring the submission of details of units and air intakes.

### Sustainability

Based on the scheme being a 'minor' development, policy CC2 requires development to meet an 'Very Good' standard in accordance with BREEAM requirements. This should be demonstrated through provision of a BREEAM pre-assessment with an application, with allowance for a buffer in the event credits are dropped through detailed design.

Policy CC3 also seeks to ensure that all developments respond to the effects of climate change. The proposal should include provision of non-carbon based energy, and heating. These could include ground source heat pumps, photovoltaic panels, and also consider the effects of overheating and low-carbon options for cooling (ground source heat pumps have cooling functions).

The applicant and design team have undertaken a BREEAM pre-assement to try to meet a "Very Good" standard. The BREEAM pre-assessment is aligned with the sustainability and energy strategy which accompanies the application.

### Waste Management

No details of waste storage, or management have been shown on the proposal plans. It is likely that waste storage will include larger 1100L bins for at least some waste types (to be confirmed by RBC waste operations). All waste storage must be collected from the rear of the site. Adequate turning and collection distance will need to be demonstrated (to be confirmed by RBC waste operations). Waste stored or collected from Kings Road may have unacceptable impacts from a heritage perspective.

A bin store has been located to the rear of the site from which all waste collection would take place. This is described in greater detail in the "access" section of this statement.

### Biodiversity and Natural Environment

Policies EN12 and EN14 of the Local Plan seek to provide for enhancements to the natural environment. For biodiversity, though not mandatory through new BNG requirements, Policy EN12 seeks to provide a net gain wherever possible. Biodiversity enhancements should be considered on site in tandem with enhancements recommended to the site frontage and rear carparking area works.

Policy EN14 specifically seeks additional tree planting, in tandem with ensuring existing trees are protected from any works. New tree planting, where there is sufficient space for a mature tree, should be considered in an amended scheme which addresses all requirements outlined within this response.

The application is accompanied by a preliminary roost assessment by Arb-Tech and an arboricultural assessment and tree protection plan by Keen Consultants. The PRA makes suggestions for ecological enhancements which will be incorporated into the scheme. The arboricultural assessment identifies that the works lie outside the root protection areas of the significant trees on or near the site. While additional soft landscaping is proposed it is not considered that the site would be suitable for additional mature trees on account of the existing structure and lightwell structures and potential conflict with the existing established trees.

# 07

## Design Development

### Pre-Application Consultation Response

*Transport*

*As outlined within the RBC transport comments. It is noted that there are no specific requirements for off-campus student accommodation. It is also noted that the previous application (161205) which included additional student accommodation on the site, was considered acceptable (in terms of transport) with the provision of 1 parking space (to be used for two part-time staff). Therefore, a car-free development, or provision of 1 parking space (dependent on staffing numbers) should be pursued in line with other comments above.*

*It is noted that peak arrival and departure times (start and end of tenancies) will result in significant vehicle movements. A student management plan should be provided, which outlines how arrivals and departures will be managed. A travel plan is also required which identifies methods to maximise the usage of public transport, walking or cycling by students.*

*In terms of cycle storage, in accordance with the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 cycle parking space per 3 staff and 1 space per 5 students.*

*The application referred to dates from 2016. It was for an entirely different proposal with a different servicing strategy and site boundary. The operational arrangements for the proposed scheme and for the student accommodation also owned and operated by the Bagri Foundation at 191 Kings Road are described in the access section of this statement and support the adopted strategy.*

*Cycle parking is provided in line with the recommendations in a secure cycle store located at the rear of the site.*

*The applicant would accept a requirement for a travel plan as a condition to an approval.*

*Loss of office use*

*The use of the building is currently Class E, with the building last in use as offices and has been vacant since ~2014. While the designation allocated the site for residential/student accommodation, the applicant is still required to address Policy EM3 as offices is likely to remain the lawful use of the site. The site is not located within a core employment area, and therefore, the loss of employment may be demonstrated in line with the requirements of Policy EM3.*

*It is noted that, in support of the 2016 applications over the site, sufficient evidence was submitted to demonstrate compliance with Policy CS11 at the time. It should be acknowledged that Policy EM3 and CS11 include identical criteria when considered the loss of employment land. Notwithstanding previous demonstration that the loss would be acceptable, considerable time has passed since this assessment was carried out. Further information, and demonstration in line with current policy is required to accompany any future application.*

*The guidance is noted. This matter is addressed in the planning statement which accompanies the current application.*

*Community Infrastructure Levy*

*The proposal would be liable for CIL, and a detailed floor plan showing the communal areas, vs accommodation should accompany any application.*

*Plans which illustrate this are attached to the planning application.*

*Conclusion*

*The proposed use of the Grade II Listed Building is for student accommodation aligns with the Local Plan allocation for the site. The applicant must detail fully, all heritage implications and justify the proposal accordingly. There are some concerns over the previous works undertaken. There is also the possibility that further remnants of historic fabric could be uncovered through proposed works. The proposed development would need to preserve and enhance the remaining historic fabric and carefully consider all proposed works and their implications (i.e. MVHR). Other details which must be adjusted include a symmetrical door to the main frontage, albeit not functional, and careful consideration of bicycle/waste storage (particularly avoiding the frontage for such aspects).*

*The applicant should consider the proposal carefully with regard to amenity in terms of noise, and air quality as outlined within Policy CR14 to ensure suitability for the proposed use. The principle of student accommodation for this site would broadly align with a number of policies, and subject to demonstrating the above is likely to be acceptable. The provision of daylight/sunlight for all units (particularly the north facing units) including basement units.*

*In terms of the layout of the site, the provision of carparking is not required for the use, and in tandem with other matters raised above, should be returned to garden space associated with the use. Whereas the provision of a rear garden area would meet a number of policy objectives as outlined throughout this response. The conservation and enhancement of the setting of the listed building which has been degraded by the extensive carparking area to the rear, and the benefits to the conservation area, including additional potential landscaping to the front would be significant benefits that would be necessary to gain officer support in the proposal.*

*The applicant and design team have carefully considered the pre-application consultation advice and sought to balance viability with the requested enhancements to achieve a sustainable outcome which preserves and enhances the listed building while bringing it back into meaningful use after a period of vacancy of more than 10 years. The applicant believes that the current proposal would achieve an excellent outcome for the building while carefully balancing operational requirements and functionality with sustainability and heritage considerations.*



# MountfordPigott

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