



## TO

Jonathan Markwell (RBC Case Officer)  
Reading Borough Council Planning Department  
Civic Offices,  
Bridge Street  
Reading, RG1 2LU

## FROM

Montagu Evans LLP (Heritage)

## DATE

1<sup>st</sup> July 2026

## SUBJECT

Heritage Consultation Responses  
Forbury Retail Park, Forbury Road, Reading, RG1 3JD  
Planning Application Reference: PL/25/1706

---

Montagu Evans is instructed by Aberdeen Standard Investments (hereafter the 'Applicant') to provide heritage consultancy for proposals at Forbury Retail Park, Forbury Road, Reading, RG1 3JD ('the Site'). A planning application (ref: 230822) was originally submitted to Reading Borough Council (RBC) on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 ("the 2023 Application") for the mixed-use redevelopment of the Site.

This note follows our response of 20 May 2026 to stakeholder comments from RBC's Conservation Officer, the Berkshire Gardens Trust (BGT), and the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (RCAAC). We have since received further responses from BGT and RCAAC. As our position on matters of professional judgement remains unchanged, this response addresses only points of clarification.

We welcome BGT's confirmation that it has no objection in principle to the proposed development.

### **Berkshire Gardens Trust – Clarification Points**

#### **2. Setting**

The BGT state, in regard to the contribution that the Site makes to the significance of Forbury Gardens RPG: "*Referring to Montague's definitions, the current effect of the existing site on the asset is neutral.*" To clarify, in both our Built Heritage Chapter of the ES (dated November 2025) and original consultation response dated the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026, we consider that the Site forms a detracting element within the wider setting of the RPG. The current retail warehouses and the associated surface level car parking on the Site are of poor architectural quality and utilitarian in character, which do not make a contribution to the setting and heritage value of the gardens.

#### **4. Green Space**

The scheme delivers a substantial amount of green space and planting, with over 50% of the Site provided as public realm, supported by significant landscaping. This represents an ambitious level of provision, while also enabling the Site to deliver an appropriate quantum of residential development in accordance with the Site Allocation. Site allocation CR13B comprises

the Site, the adjacent retail warehouses and Huntley Wharf. The indicative capacity of the wider 6.99 ha allocation is 1,230–1,840 dwellings, with no net gain in retail floorspace.

The Site forms part of allocation CR13B and extends to approximately 2.94 ha. On a pro rata basis, the adopted allocation indicates that the Site would be suitable for approximately 517–774 dwellings.

The emerging draft Local Plan proposes an increased residential density for the allocation. Applied on a pro rata basis to the Forbury Retail Park Site, this would indicate a potential capacity of approximately 644–962 dwellings on the Site. Indicating strong policy support for an increased density.

The proposed 700 dwellings therefore sit comfortably within the adopted and emerging density range for the Site. Any material reduction in the number of homes in order to provide additional public realm, landscaping or reduced building heights would result in a failure to meet the clear policy expectation for the Site to make a substantial contribution to housing delivery.

### **Reading Conservation Area Committee – Clarification Points**

#### **2. Other heritage comments**

The RCAAC have stated that we did not respond to other heritage comments raised beyond that of Forbury Gardens. The original RCAAC consultation response dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026 raised heritage comments in relation to the Abbey Quarter heritage assets and Reading Gaol. We can confirm that the impact of the Proposed Development on these assets was addressed in the Built Heritage Chapter of the ES (dated November 2025) and formed part of the 'Heritage Impact Discussion' in our original consultation response dated May 2026.

#### **3. The applicant did not address our comments on the heritage impact of the IDR**

The RCAAC state the following: *The route of the IDR passes along Forbury Road to the south of the retail park. The change from retail to residential and the proposed up to 700 residential units gives an opportunity for an improvement of this section. This should be seized upon to improve the quality of life and amenity of future residents of the development and other nearby residents along Kenavon Drive and at Huntley Wharf and improve the setting and readability of the northern edge of the Abbey Quarter (policy CC8).*

The only heritage-related comment concerns potential improvements to the setting of the 'Abbey Quarter' heritage assets. As set out in the Built Heritage Chapter of the ES (dated November 2025) we have concluded that the existing Site and IDR make no contribution by virtue of setting, to the significance of the heritage assets located within the Abbey Quarter. Limited to no intervisibility, due to interposing development and separation distance, means the proposals would have no setting impact.

No works are proposed to the IDR as part of the application. Any works would have to be coordinated and could not be brought forward in isolation.

We refer to information provided by the Planning Consultant and Architects to comment on improvements to the amenity and quality of life of future residents.

Yours Sincerely,



Montagu Evans LLP