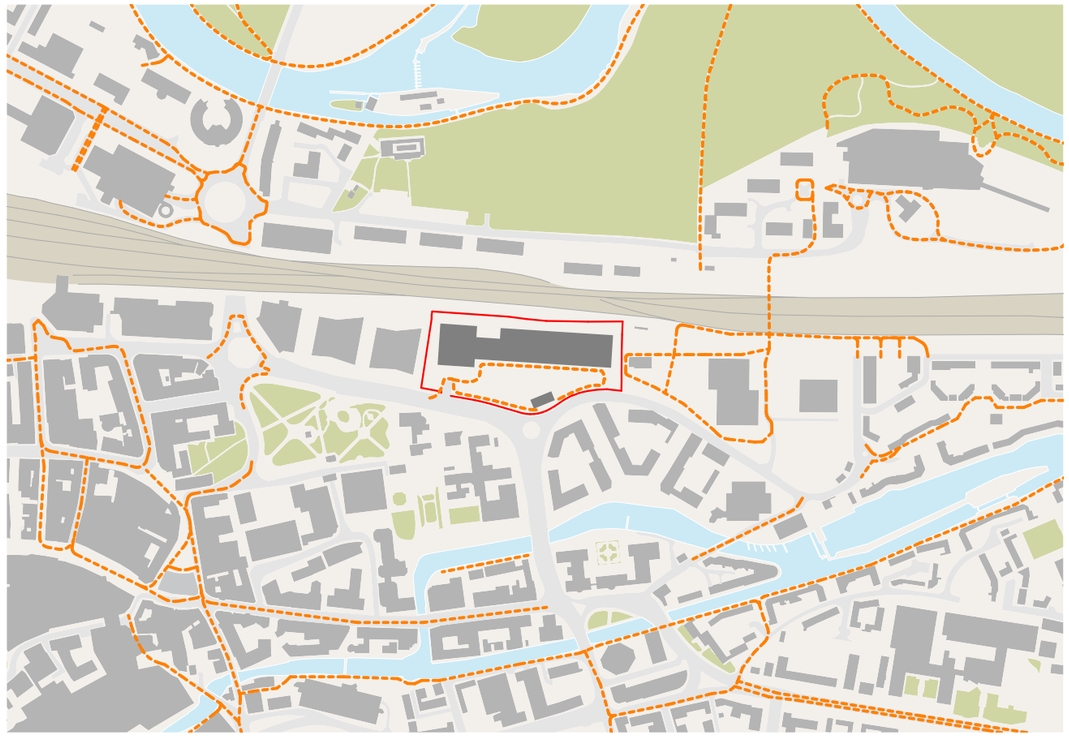
Cycle routes

Reading has a high rate of cycle activity with parking facilities and lots of signposted cycle routes including the new King Alfred's Way cycling route.



Existing Cycle Routes

Cycle routes

Pedestrian routes

Pedestrian routes around the site have low movement due to their proximity to the larger roads that run through reading, the developments around the site are generally accessed by car or bus. Whereas in the west towards the high street there is much higher pedestrian movement with pedestrianised zones to accommodate for this. The railway disrupts pedestrian access to the north.

Pedestrian Crossings

Pedestrian Zone

High Pedestrian Movement

Low Pedestrian Movement

Pedestrian routes

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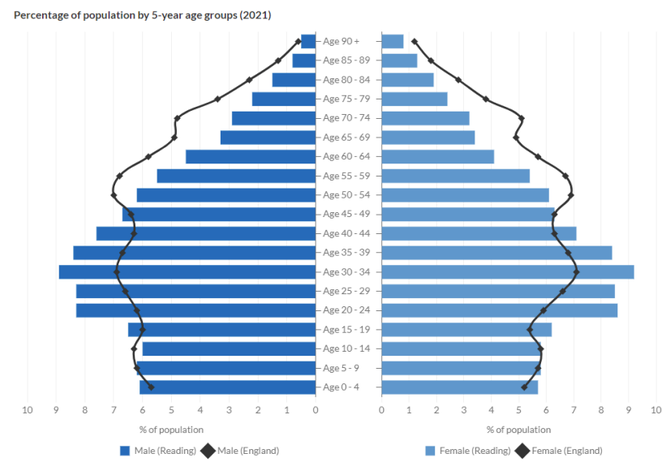
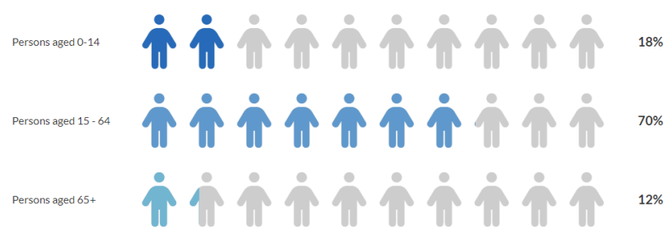
2.7 Socio-Economic context

2.7.1 Key statistics

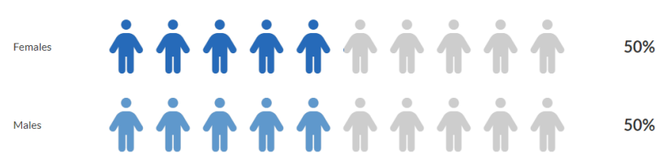
In order to understand the socio-economic context of the KMV OPA, extensive research has been undertaken to compile statistics relating to the existing population and economy. These factors should be considered and influence the overall vision for the proposals. Likewise, the design of the KMV OPA should be considerate to the impact it is likely to have on these existing statistics.

Population

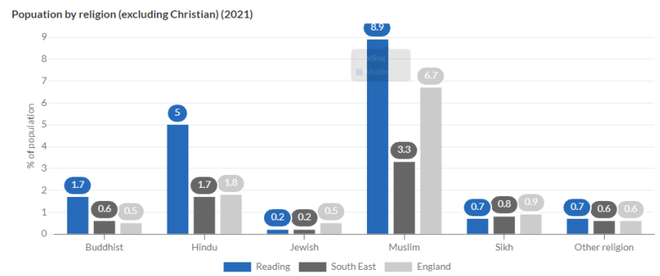




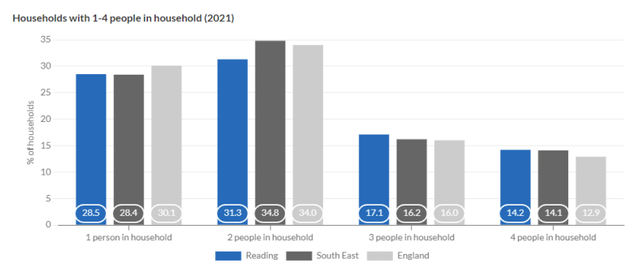
Gender



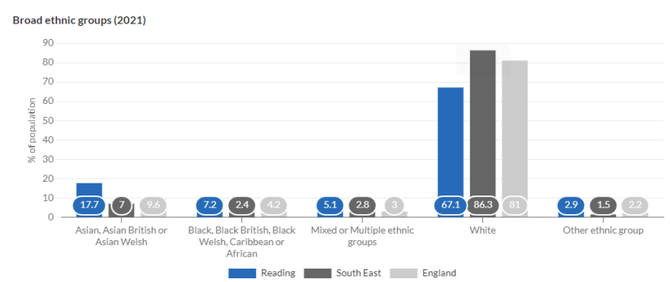
Religion



Household Size



Ethnic Groups



Key statistics

3

Planning, Context, Consultation & Community Involvement

Introduction

This chapter of The Design and Access Statement contains the following sections:

Planning, context, consultation & community involvement 3.1
Planning history 3.2
Consultation Strategy 3.3

3.1 Planning Context & Policy Considerations

3.1.1 Planning Context & Policy Considerations

The development proposal has taken guidance from national and local planning policies, planning guidance, and other considerations. The relevant Development Plan for the site is the Reading Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in November 2019.

The policies that apply to the development proposal are derived from the set of adopted Development Plans mentioned above, as well as The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) from 2024. The proposal has been created with regard to the appropriate national and local policies, and this statement will evaluate the development against these policies.

The Reading Borough Council is currently in the process of producing a partial update to its Local Plan, which will set out the planning framework for development in the borough up to 2041. Following public consultations in 2023 and 2024, the updated plan was formally submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for examination by on 9 May 2025, and is now under review by an independent planning inspector.

Site allocation CR13b which relates to the Site has been updated as follows:

> *'This site would be the focus of the new residential community, and, alongside residential, additional retail, leisure and community uses at a scale to serve the Kenavon Drive area would be appropriate. It should include a new area of open space ~~and enhance the frontage to the canal, including a buffer zone to the top of the canal bank to reflect its wildlife significance.~~ Implementing this policy may involve complete redevelopment or using new additional development to improve the existing urban form of the area. Some parts of the site are likely to be implemented in the long term.*
>
> *Site size: ~~6.99~~ 3.98 ha*
>
> *Indicative potential: ~~1,230 - 1,840~~ 870-1,300 dwellings, no net gain of retail'*

The amendments to the Site allocation affords the Site an increased density of dwellings per hectare within the allocation. Which on a pro rata basis allocated the Forbury Retail Park Site (to which this application relates) has an indicative potential of 644 -962 dwellings. The removal of the reference to canal and associated development areas, reflects the delivery of the Huntley Wharf Site to the South which has been delivered.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a material consideration in relation to planning applications and provides a simplified single source of guidance at the national level. Of relevance to applications including retail elements is the Town Centre and Retail PPG, which provides guidance on retail considerations and the sequential and impact tests.

The Effective Use of Land PPG supports the more effective use of land and outlines how local planning authorities can encourage the best use of under-utilised land and plan for higher density development. The Environmental Impact Assessment PPG provides guidance explaining the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 state that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory development plan for Reading Borough Council comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan adopted in November 2019, which includes the adopted Proposals Map (2019) and Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (2015).

The relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for the proposed development include;
Affordable Housing SPD,
Employment & Skills & Training SPD,
Revised Parking Standards SPD,
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 SPD, and Sustainable Design & Construction SPD.

According to the Council's adopted Local Plan Proposals Map, the Site currently falls within several designations, including; Allocated Development Site CR13b, Forbury Retail Park, Borough of Reading Central Area, Policy CR1-10, Air Quality Management Area, Policy EN15, Major Opportunity Area (East Side) Policies CR11-13 and SR1, and, Area of Archaeological Potential – Policy EN2.

There has been communication with Network Rail throughout the design period. Guidance with regards to conditions set by Network Rail received will be incorporated through the RMA process.

3.2.1 Pre-Application Consultation

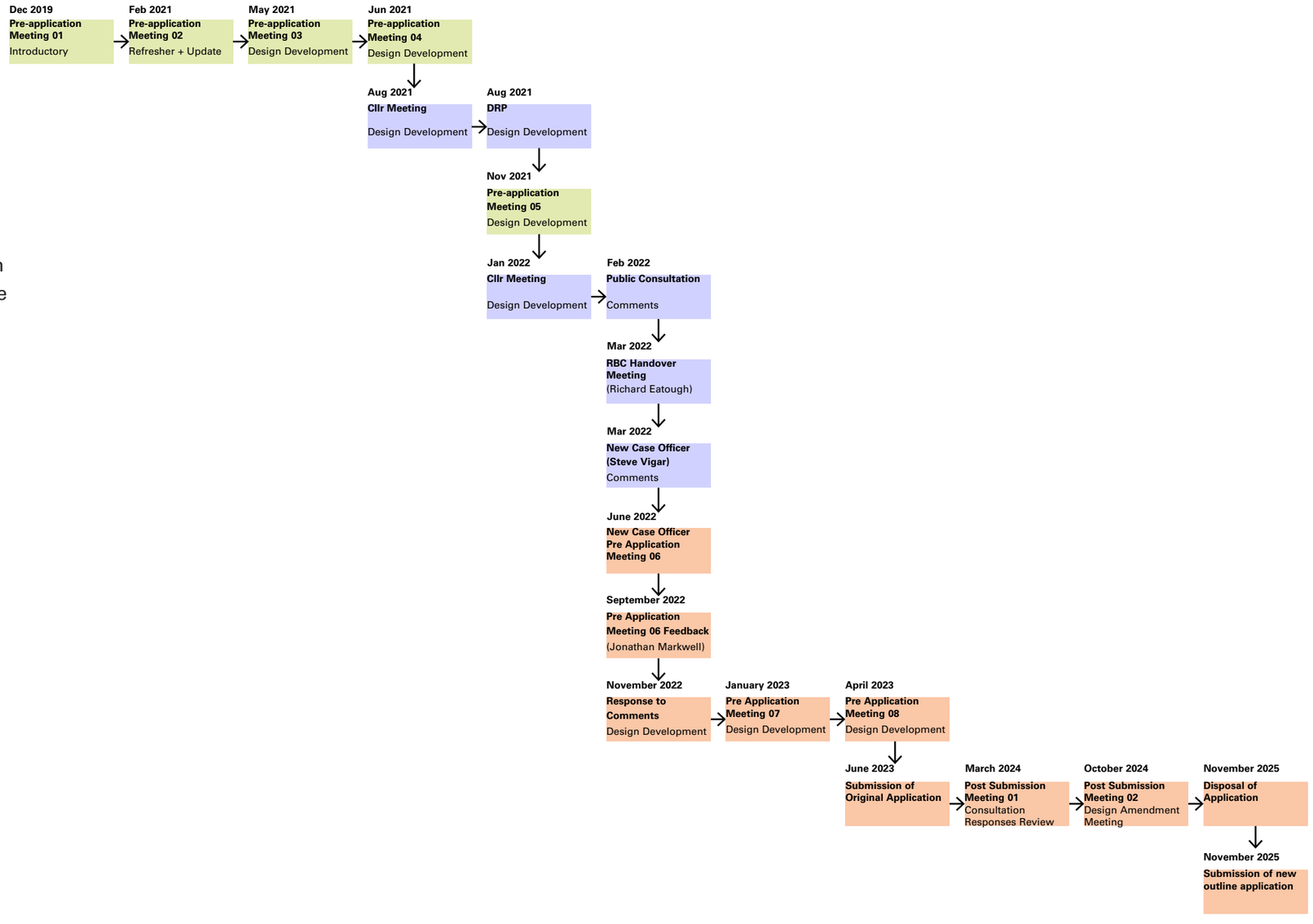
Over the course of five years, from December 2019 to October 2024, an extensive pre-application process was undertaken with Reading Borough Council to ensure that the proposed development would meet the necessary planning requirements and be appropriate for the local area.

This process involved several pre-application submissions, each of which underwent rigorous scrutiny and feedback from the Council, as well as participation in multiple design review panels, to ensure that the design and materials were of a high quality and would fit in with the local context.

The aim of this process was to ensure that the proposed development would be sustainable, deliverable, and ultimately contribute positively to the local community. The lengthy nature of the process reflects the importance placed on ensuring that the development is of the highest quality and are well-integrated into the local fabric of Reading.

On 3 November 2025, Reading Borough Council formally confirmed that Outline Planning Application reference PL/23/0822 had been disposed of. In order to build upon the progress made in relation to the previous application and engagement with the Local Planning Authority this application is submitted as a new Outline Planning Application.

The proposed amendments within this new Application remain broadly within the scope of the previous scheme's description of development, and again seeks all matters reserved, save for highway access



3.3 Consultation Strategy

3.3.1 Consultation & Community Involvement

A full process of consultation with the Local Authority, local Stakeholders, neighbours and members of the public has taken place during the pre-application period.

The public & stakeholder consultation were held virtually on **Tuesday 15th February** and in person on **16th February 2022 at the Bel and Dragon in Reading**

For further information on the Consultation & community involvement, please refer to the Statement of Community Involvement within the appendices.

Public Consultation Photographs - 10/02/22

The following list summarises the key themes that were raised at or after those events:

- Height of buildings
  Questions about obstruction caused by tall buildings, some comments about creating more variation in height, some comments about design/materials and needing more visual interest along the Forbury Road frontage.

- Congestion
  Questions around air quality, noise and obstruction of the flow of traffic were mentioned especially in relation to the existing railway.

- Infrastructure
  Questions around a need for additional public services to support a larger population.

- Affordability
  Questions about the cost of new homes within the development being affordable for the community.

- Family size homes
  Questions about why there are so many flats and no suitable accommodation for larger families.

- Loss of retail space
  Questions around value placed on the current shops, opinions in favour of new retail options, cafes and workspaces.

This list outlines some more specific ideas about the scheme:

- Creating a community with the church - and potentially some co-working space
- Shared growing spaces for the residents
- Creating a connection to Biscuit Tunnel at the rear of the site
- Creating a connection to Reading Gaol
- Secure cycle parking for visitors

Public Consultation Boards - 10/02/22

As a consequence of these comments, the client & design team sought to:

- Review the percentage of affordable housing within the scheme and the percentage unit mix
- Refine parameter and Illustrative Scheme heights along sensitive perimeters to create more variation in height
- Minimise impact of servicing traffic on surrounding streetscape through careful refinement of the servicing strategy and vehicular routes
- Review pedestrian crossings with transport consultants

Public Consultation Boards - 10/02/22

4

The Masterplan

Introduction

This chapter of the Design and Access Statement contains the following sections:

Masterplan vision & objectives 4.1
Initial concept & design development 4.2
Urban form & building layout 4.3
Links, connections & public space 4.4
Height & massing 4.5
Materiality 4.6
Land & building uses 4.7
Amount & density 4.8
Illustrative Views 4.9

4.1 Masterplan Vision & Objectives

4.1.1 Vision

The vision for the KMV OPA has been developed together with Reading Borough Council and with respect to the Local Plan and can be summarised by the overarching aspirations:

Create a genuine point of difference from other Thames valley town centres by providing a new heart to Reading that is distinctive and attractive to locals, new residents and visitors alike.

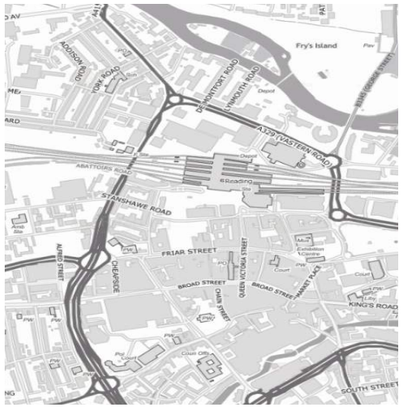
Adopt a flexible and resilient approach so that future RMAs are able to adapt to future needs & demand.

Provide a smartly sustainable development that encourages sustainable modes of transport and incorporates sustainable features.

Nurture a sense of pride and loyalty by providing a well designed town centre with a strong sense of place that local people enjoy using and are proud to call their home.

Increase confidence in Reading by providing facilities that make the town centre a successful and attractive place for commerce that increases spending, investment and the prosperity of the wider town.

Town Hall Square Reading



Site plan

Cycle routes within landscape

Graffiti by Banksy on Gaol

Signage at entrance to Reading Station

4.1.2 Elements of a Great Development

Having undertaken studies of various other residential developments, the design team have identified a series of elements (as described opposite) that contribute to the makings of a great development.

The balance of these diverse components is often varied within different proposals and what works or is required for one might not work or be needed for another.

The following section assesses the existing site against these criteria and this research has assisted with the refinement of the overarching vision for the KMV OPA and the project brief.

HERITAGE

Architectural
Cultural
People
Topography
Landscape
Industrial
Objects

CULTURE

The Arts
Tradition
Gastronomy
Education
Community
Skills
Values

COMMUNITY

Multicultural
Diverse
Inclusive
Active
Events
Festivals

MIXED-USE

Experimental
'10 Minute Town'
Live - Work -
Rest - Play
Flexible Spaces
Adaptable

RE-USE

Up cycling
Creative,
Innovative
Re-use of Spaces

JOB CREATION / PRODUCTIVITY

Strong
Varied
Growing
Opportunity

PUBLIC REALM

Meeting Point
Community
Diverse
Joyful
Large
Small
Incidental

NATURE

Various Qualities
Spread
Accessible
Clean Air Initiative
Central
Diverse

TRANSPORT

Accessible
Technology
Frequent
Close-knitted
Tailored

Lists identifying elements of a great town

4.1 Masterplan Vision & Objectives

4.1.3 Analysing Elements of the Existing Town Centre

Summary of strengths and opportunities

Heritage:
Rich history & selection of interesting buildings.

Culture:
Unique cultural history but limited cultural offerings.

Mixed Use:
Mixed use developments have some good examples such as No.1 Reading and Huntley Wharf.

Community:
Diverse community, complementary communal use projects.

Re-Use:
Few successfully re-used structures other than some residential developments.

Job Creation and Productivity:
Economically strong town.

Public Realm:
Lack of high quality public realm in Reading.

Nature:
Beautiful surrounding countryside & variety of green spaces , however central Reading is lacking green spaces.

Transport:
Wider transport network and inner public transport very good.

Heritage

1. Huntley and Palmers Biscuit Factory

2. St James's Church.

3. Reading Abbey Ruins

Culture

1. South Street Arts Centre

2. Reading Carnival

3. The Hexagon

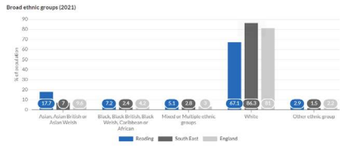
Mixed Use

1. No1 Reading

2. Huntley Wharf

3. Station Hill

Community



1. Diversity in Reading

2. Readipop Festival

3. Reading Town Hall

Photographs of existing town centre elements (including images overleaf)

Re-use

1. Jackson's

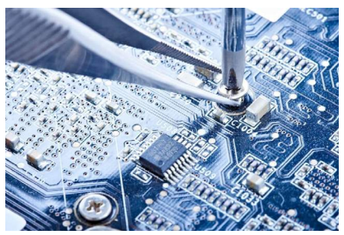
2. Thames Tower.

3. Station Hill

Job Creation

1. Festivals

2. Retail



3. Tech Companies.

Public Realm

1. High Street.

2. Chestnut Walk

3. Reading Station

Nature

1. Forbury Gardens

2. Kings Meadow

3. Christchurch Meadows

Transport

1. Reading Station

2. Buses

3. Cars

4.1 Masterplan Vision & Objectives

4.1.4 Designing for Change

General principles for a 'town of the future'

In order to create a sustainable community based on contemporary aspirations and desires, a series of interventions are proposed within the KMV OPA.

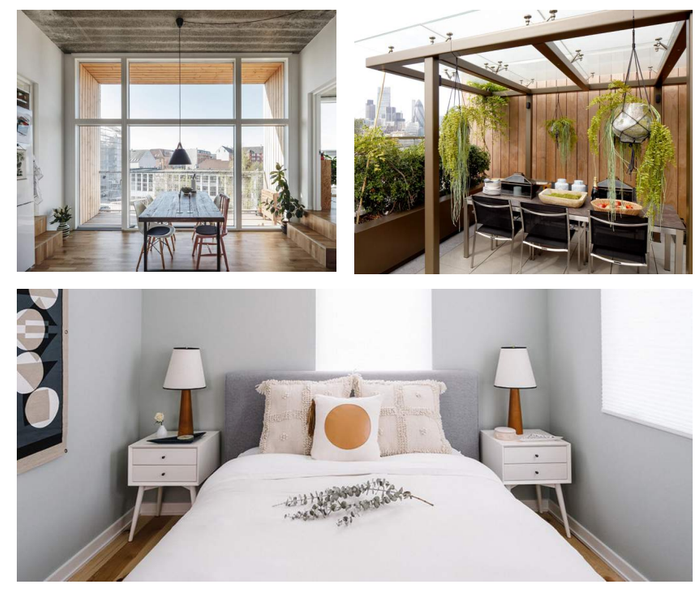
Sustainable ethos

Design of buildings and landscape should incorporate energy saving and carbon minimising features and encourage the end users to do so to. Proposals should aspire to improve pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport access to reduce car reliance and enable all essential needs to be covered within very small walking distances, be it groceries, the workplace or childcare.

Sustainability elements for consideration

Provide quality homes

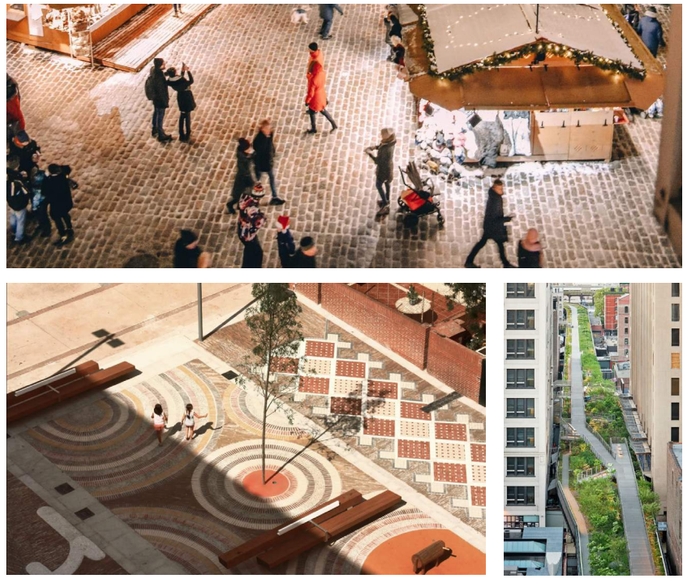
Design housing to be practical, with warm materiality, well placed fenestration that optimises daylight intake and generous amenity/ outdoor facilities.



Examples of quality homes & amenity

Provide spaces for the people of Reading

Design spaces for the diverse population of Reading in the form of a wide range of squares, parks, streets and lanes that are safe, beautiful and complement the living, working and shopping spaces that surround them.



Examples of animated public realm

Maintain flexibility for changing retail market

With the decline of retail park vernacular, alternative forms of retail should be considered and be flexibly planned for.

Examples of flexible retail spaces

Animate ground floor level facades

According to a study by YouGov questioning residents from several regions their number one reason to life in a neighbourhood is to be close to restaurants, leisure and cultural facilities that typically occupy the ground floor level of buildings. This active frontage sets the scene for the entire development.

Examples of town centre uses

4.1 Masterplan Vision & Objectives

4.1.5 Key Site Specific Features of the Vision

As well as the overarching vision for the KMV OPA, more site-specific features have been determined as being fundamental to the success of the development. These features include the following:

1. Provision of a new strengthened connection to/ from the train station and main thoroughfare across Kenavon Drive and Forbury Road

2. Respect and sympathetically sit within the existing context and emerging developments.

3. Provision of high quality and generous public realm.

4. Provision of high quality and sustainable residential dwellings to create a new and exciting residential development that positively contributes to Reading Town Centre.

4. Stitching of proposed new streetscape into existing wider urban grain.

These key masterplanning principles have been taken forward in the Design Codes that accompany this OPA and are reflected in the Illustrative Scheme.

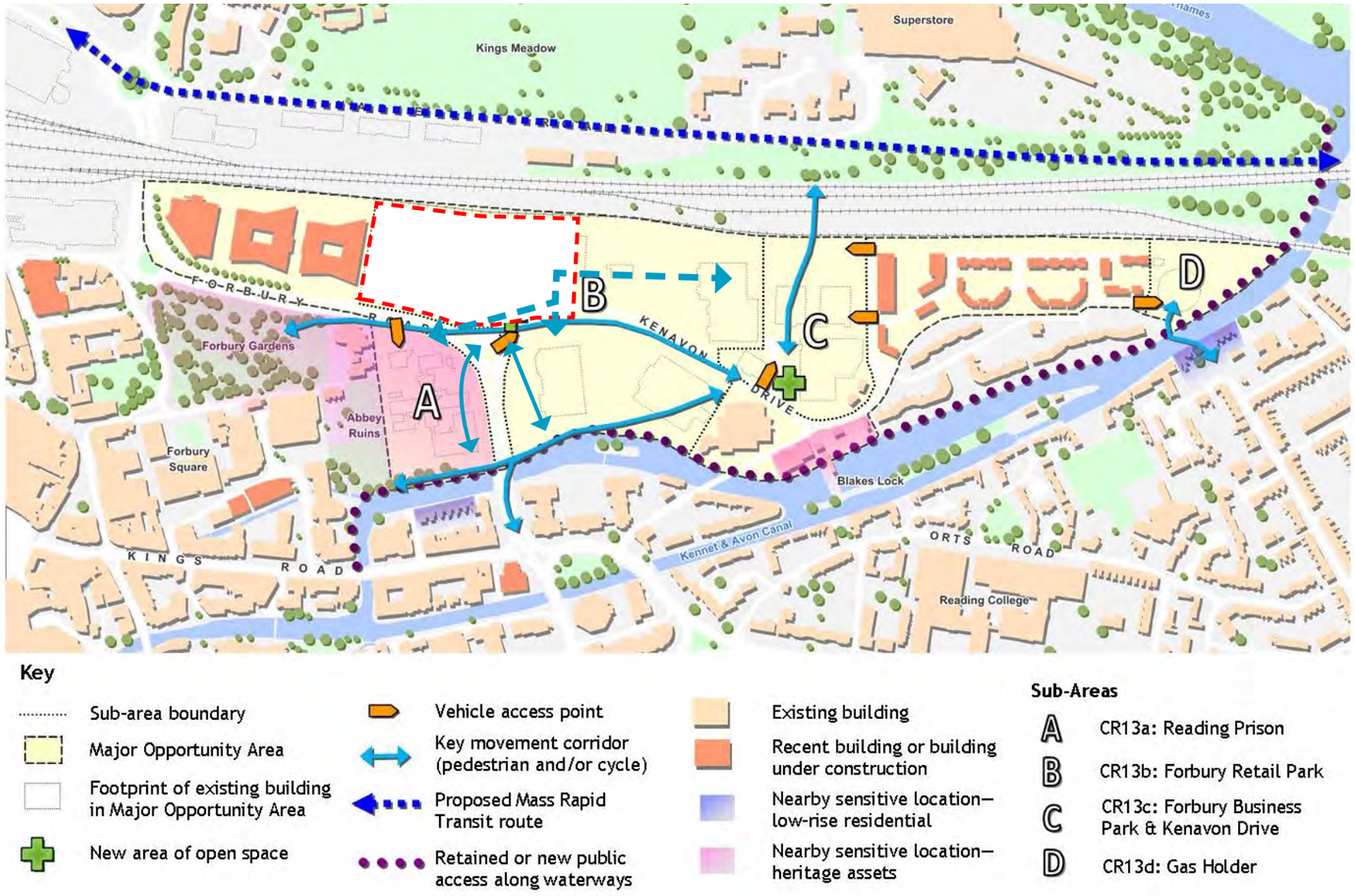


Figure 5.5: East Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Reading Borough Council. Account No. 100019672. 2016

Site Plan Highlighting Key Routes Through

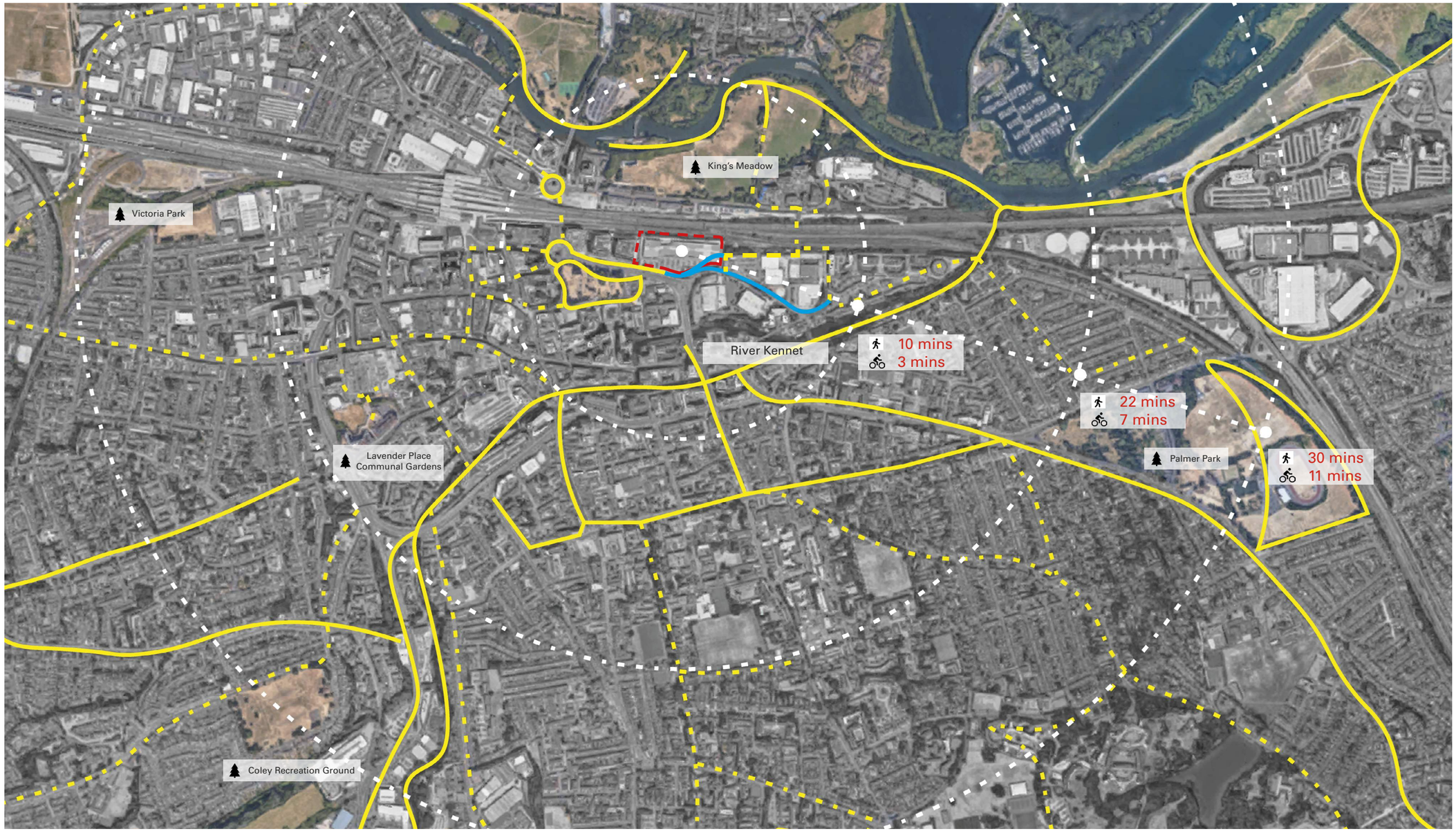
Site Boundary

Proposed Key Movement Corridor

Proposed Public Route (cycle/pedestrian)

Town Centre Route

Bicycle-friendly routes



Wider Site Plan Highlighting Key Routes Through

4.2 Initial Concept & Design Development

4.2.1 Design Development

Evolution of design

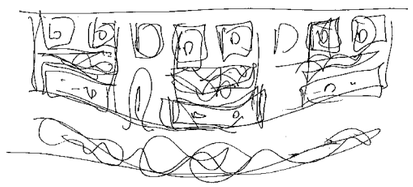
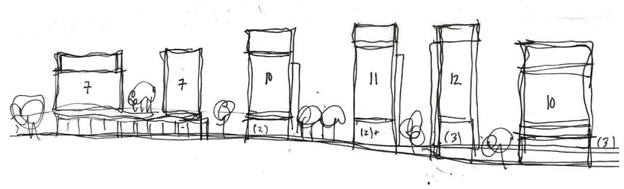
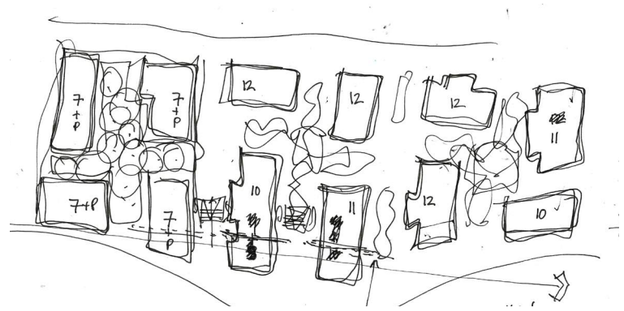
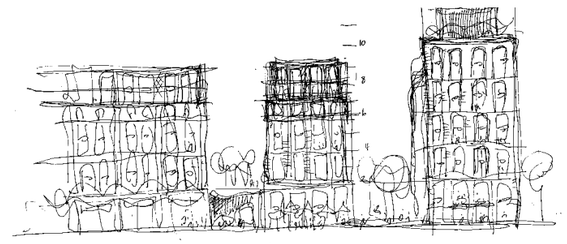
Drawing from the extensive research and site analysis that was undertaken in the initial feasibility stage, the evolution of the design of the KMV OPA has focussed on refining the following aspects:

- Overarching vision for the masterplan
- Street network
- Primary, secondary & tertiary pedestrian routes
- Development of urban realm distribution
- Building footprints
- Building heights and massing
- Development of building typologies
- Relationship with existing townscape context
- Incorporation of desired mix targets for uses
- Consideration of residential quality
- Indicative appearance
- Retail strategy (distribution and layout)
- Development approach
- Sustainability approach

Design Development - Consultation Progress

As outlined within section 3, over the course of more five years, from December 2019 to October 2024, an extensive pre-application process was undertaken with Reading Borough Council (RBC) to ensure that the proposed development would meet the necessary planning requirements and be appropriate for the local area.

Throughout the process, the design has evolved taking on board the comments made by members of RBC and members of Reading Design Review Panel, the scheme has been adapted and fine-tuned to create a significant positive contribution to Reading town centre.

Throughout the consultation process, the building form typologies have shifted from cluster formations of buildings on podiums levels to distinct residential blocks defined by a rational landscaping strategy that takes into accounts inclusivity and day to day activities of its residential users as a priority, creating active and accessible public realm spaces which positively stitches into the wider context of Reading town centre.

The sketches and text on the opposite and proceeding pages of the document provide a succinct overview of the indicative sketch designs that were prepared for earlier iterations of the brief.