Kings Meadow View Outline Planning Application

Design & Access Statement

June 2026

Foreword

A Vision for Kings Meadow View

Kings Meadow View aims at transforming and providing a new heart to the town centre of Reading. This Kings Meadow View Outline Planning Application (KMV OPA) will host both residential and retail building uses as well as landscaped areas and associated activities.

Document History

Rev	Date	Purpose of Issue	Author	Reviewer	
P01	20/05/23	Issued for Planning	NCo	SS	
P02	13/10/25	Issued for Planning	RKB	MPo	
P03	12/11/25	Issued for Planning	RKB	MPo	
P04	05/06/26	Issued for Planning	RKB	MPo	*Note : P04 Updates made in response to statutory consultee comments are shown in blue text.

Contents

Introduction **1** **...P.07**
Executive Summary 1.1
Overview of submission documents 1.2
Contents of this document 1.3
Client & professional team (& previous experience) 1.4
Application Progress to Date

The Site & Context appraisal **2** **...P.15**
Site location 2.1
Site analysis 2.2
Scale, character and materials 2.3
Historical development of the Site 2.4
Environmental analysis (incl. prospect, aspect & legibility) 2.5
Transport & movement 2.6
Socio economic context 2.7

Planning, Context, Consultation & Community Involvement **3** **...P.63**
Planning context & policy considerations 3.1
Planning history 3.2
Consultation strategy (statutory & community) 3.3

The Masterplan **4** **...P.69**
Masterplan vision & objectives 4.1
Initial concept & design development 4.2
Urban form & building layout 4.3
Links, connections and public space 4.4
Height & massing 4.5
Materiality 4.6
Land & building uses 4.7
Amount & density 4.8
Illustrative Views 4.9

Accessibility, Social inclusion & Safety **5** **...P.125**
Overview 5.1
Transport & Servicing 5.2
Approaches to buildings 5.3

Landscaping & Public Realm **6** **...P.129**

1

Introduction

Project Summary

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by Squire and Partners and is submitted in support of the Kings Meadow View Outline Planning Application (KMV OPA). Located on the Forbury Retail Park site, the development sits at a pivotal location nearby to the High Street and Reading Station.

1.1 Executive Summary

Vision

The Kings Meadow View Outline Planning Application (KMV OPA) site is a located centrally within Reading. Kings Meadow View sits at a key junction between new commercial and residential developments and older listed buildings. The KMV OPA will form a connection between the old and the new as well as providing links to the existing green spaces surrounding the site.

The town itself has a rich and varied history, but the current retail park that occupies the site does little to enhance the character of the existing town centre.

The aim of the KMV OPA is to invigorate the existing town centre in a manner that draws from the heritage and culture of the town and it's residents.

Illustrative view of proposed Kings Meadow View scheme

Overview of Submission Documents 1.2

Context of wider planning application documents

The DAS forms part of suite of documents that have been submitted as part of this outline planning application and as such should be read in conjunction with the Design Codes document that provides a series of guidelines and mandatory rules for the detailed design of the masterplan in future reserved matters applications.

The chart opposite explains the structure of the planning application submission documents and how they sit within the approval process.

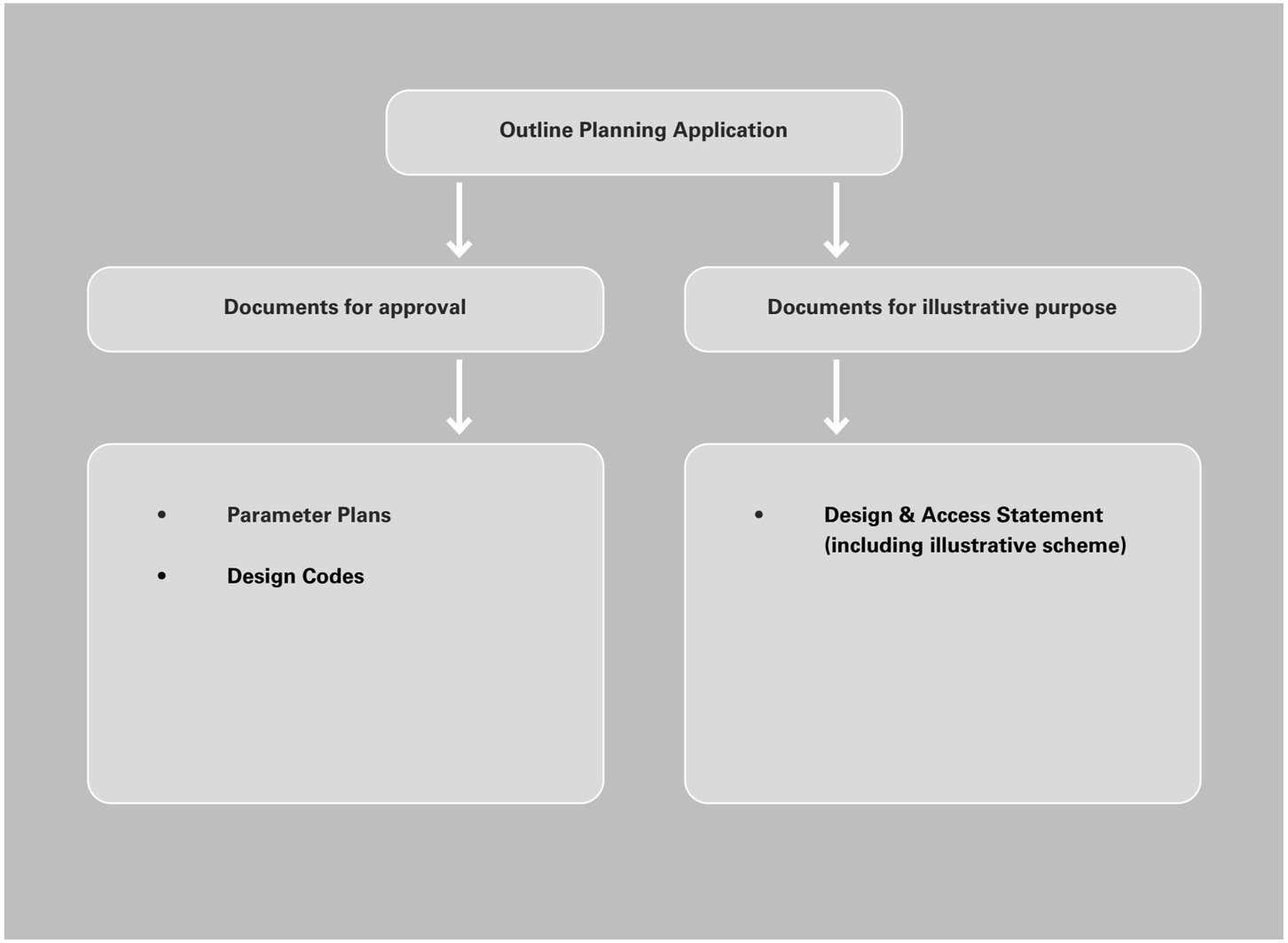


Diagram explaining structure of planning application documents

1.3 Contents of this Document

1.3.1 Structure of Design & Access Statement

This DAS has been prepared by Squire & Partners to provide an overview of the masterplanning principles, concepts and strategies that apply to the KMV OPA as well as an Illustrative Scheme that provides more detail regarding how the outline proposal could be evolved in future reserved matters applications (RMAs).

The DAS has been prepared having regard to updated policy and guidance, including the Reading Local Plan and the 'National Planning Practice Guidance'.

The DAS is presented in a single volume including the following Sections:

Section 2 outlines the Site extents, Site evaluation, historical development and contextual analysis.

Section 3 summarises the planning context, pre-application process and community engagement.

Section 4 takes the analysis and investigation and overlays the client brief, strategic aims and influences in order to arrive at a preferred development concept. This section also discusses layout, amount, appearance and scale of the design proposals.

Section 5 contains the Access Statement and is accompanied by an overview of issues such as servicing, pedestrian movement and the safety and security strategy.

Section 6 contains an explanation of the landscape and public realm strategy.

This DAS is not submitted for approval and all drawings and illustrations in this document are for illustrative purposes only.

1.4.1 Team

This DAS has been prepared by Squire & Partners with input from the following consultancy team:

Applicant | **Aberdeen Standard Investments**

Architect | **Squire & Partners**

Landscape | **Macgregor Smith**

Transport | **Stantec**

Civils & Infrastructure | **Clarke Nicholls Marcel**

Heritage & Townscape | **Montagu Evans**

Mechanical & Electrical and Access | **Method Consulting**

Planning Consultant | **Montagu Evans**

Project Manager | **Ikon**

1.5 Background to Application

The planning application ref. 230822 was submitted on 8th June 2023 and confirmed as valid on 14th September 2023. Consultation comments have been received and reviewed including requests for conditions as well as comments that request amendments to the application.
A number of meetings have also been held with the case officer in relation to the design of the outline scheme. As a result of responding to the consultation comments and discussion with Reading Borough Council a design review has been undertaken by the project team. This has led to a number of key changes which can be summarised as follows:

Reduction in maximum building heights adjacent to the railway and facing Kings Meadow

The building heights previously proposed in the application ranged from 6 to 12 storeys, with the blocks along the north boundary that faces King's Meadow comprising two 8 storey buildings, three 12 storey buildings and an 11 storey building. RBC did not support the proposed maximum building heights as they reached the 12 storey definition of a tall building. Concerns were raised in relation to the concentration of height along the north boundary due to the potential impacts on King's Meadow.

In response to these comments the building heights have been adjusted substantially and reduced. The amended proposed heights now range from 5 to 11 storeys. As such no buildings reach the 12 storey or 36m definition of a tall building (as defined by Local Plan Policy CR10), the tallest building is a total of 11 storeys (34.5m). Furthermore, along the north boundary the heights now comprise one 7 storey building, an 8 storey building, two 11 storey buildings, and two 9 storey buildings.

Improved variation in heights of the blocks

The previous scheme raised comments from RBC about the relationship with the former jail and that consideration should be given to the potential to step the proposals down to Forbury Road. The amended proposals incorporates substantial steps down between the top of the blocks along the south side of the Site and Forbury Road resulting in stepped building heights of 5 storeys and 7 storeys directly opposite the former jail.

As a result the taller elements are now concentrated within the central blocks rather than along the entirety of the rear of the site. This is also enhanced through the reduction in maximum block heights in the eastern groups of blocks, which proposes three of the four blocks at 9 storeys, rather than the previous 11-12.

Reduction of block footprints, reorientation of the spaces within the development and increased sense enclosure

RBC raised concerns on the previously proposed public spaces, principally that they lacked clear definition and could be more generous. The amended proposals respond positively to these comments and seek to reorientate the blocks which frame the spaces so as to provide two very clearly defined spaces one at the core of the central group of blocks and another within the centre of the eastern group of blocks. The reorientation and reduction in individual building footprints is facilitated by the inclusion of link blocks to the north of the central and eastern groups of blocks. The link blocks improve the sense of enclosure of both of the public spaces, whilst not impacting the overshadowing of the spaces, by virtue of their location to the north.

The revised proposals improve the now clearly defined east west route through the Site. The south eastern most block (East Block 3) incorporates a chamfered corner, providing a more generous public space, also assisting with wayfinding and experience along the east west route. The south west chamfer also ensures there is sufficient space for the proposes access road from Kenavon Drive.

Reduction in the size of the basement car park and therefore removal of the podium to the east allowing seamless integration of the site with surrounding areas

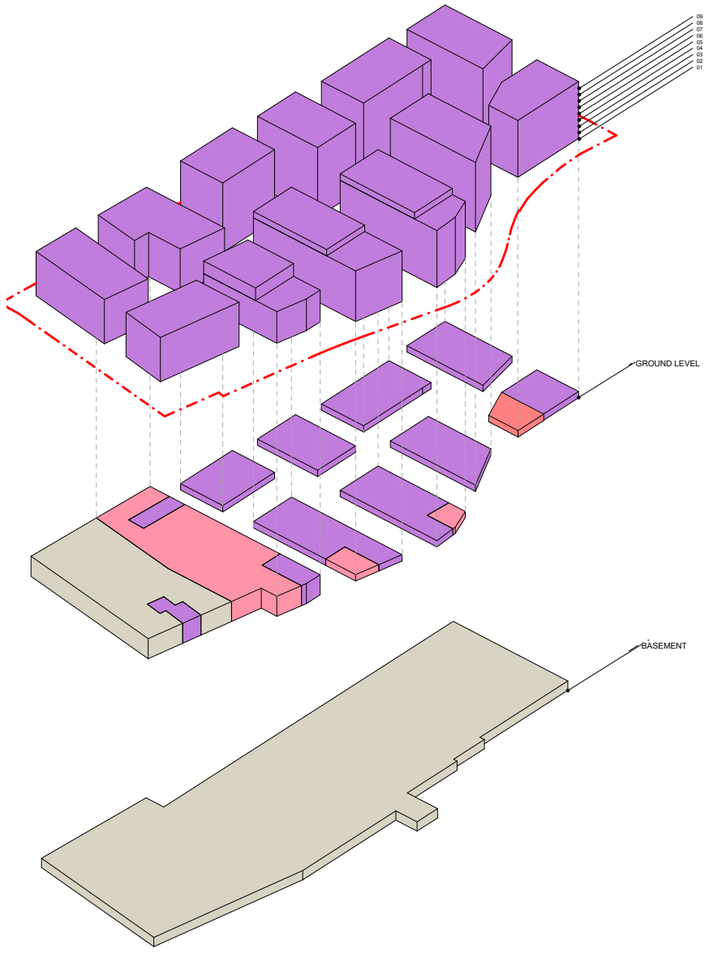
The previous revision of the scheme raised viability concerns with RBC. In order to improve the position despite the reduction in unit numbers, the amended proposals reduce the proposed basement area by approximately a third by removing the basement area under the eastern group of blocks. Substantial construction costs are associated with basement construction, therefore the reduction by a third reduces costs. The level access to the public realm provided within the Site is maintained,

ensuring direct level access across all of the public realm, providing excellent integration with surrounding areas.

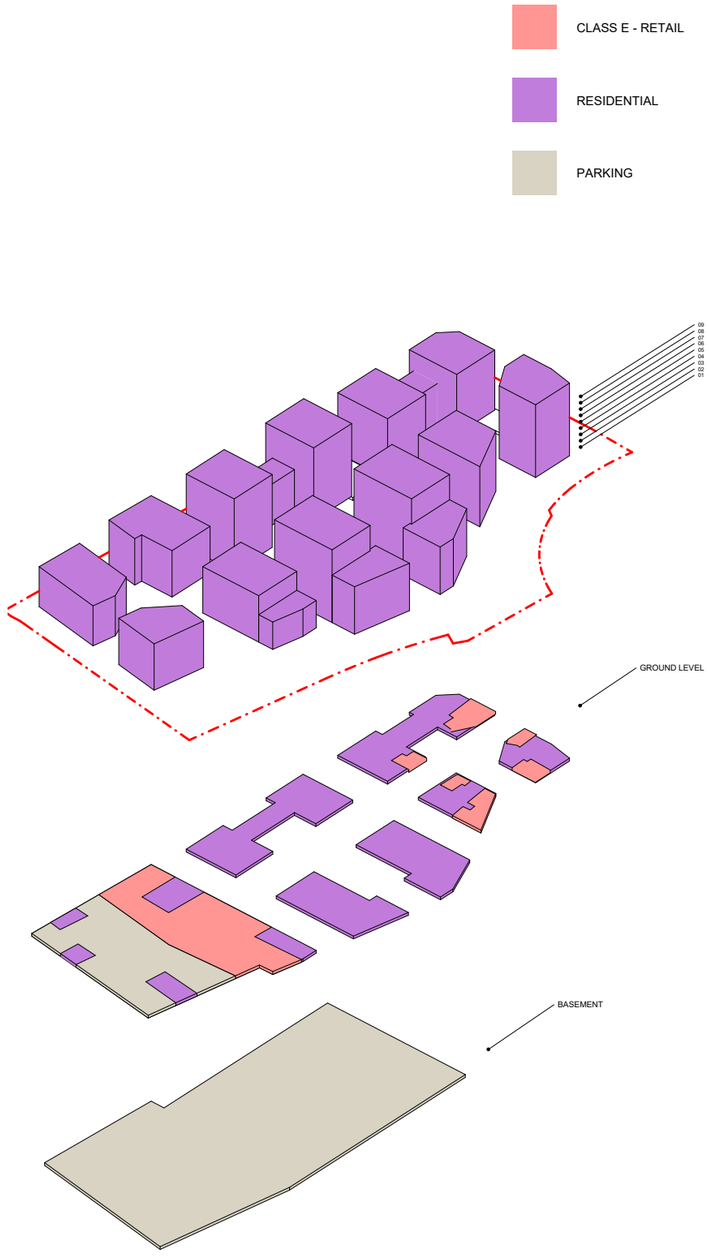
Reduction in commercial floorspace

The previous revision of the scheme proposed ground level Class E floorspace within a single large unit at the western block as well as Class E floorspace at ground level throughout the Site. RBC feedback was that the Class E floorspace should be reduced and dispersed to the ground levels of some of the other blocks. In response, the amended proposals retain the single large unit at the western block alongside customer parking, and propose a reduced quantum of small unit Class E floorspace all located within the eastern group of blocks.

Overall, the amendments to the proposals seek to address all the matters raised by RBC, with a summary of key topics set out above and submitted as a new application. Principally the height and massing of the scheme has been reduced and the footprints of the blocks reduced and reorientated to provide more generous and improved public spaces.



Previous Submitted Scheme: Exploded Axonometric



Proposed Scheme: Exploded Axonometric

2

Site & Context Appraisal

Introduction

Site location 2.1
Site analysis 2.2
Scale, character & materials 2.3
Historical development of site 2.4
Environmental analysis 2.5
Transport & movement 2.6
Socio economic context 2.7

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 Immediate Site Location & Description

The Site

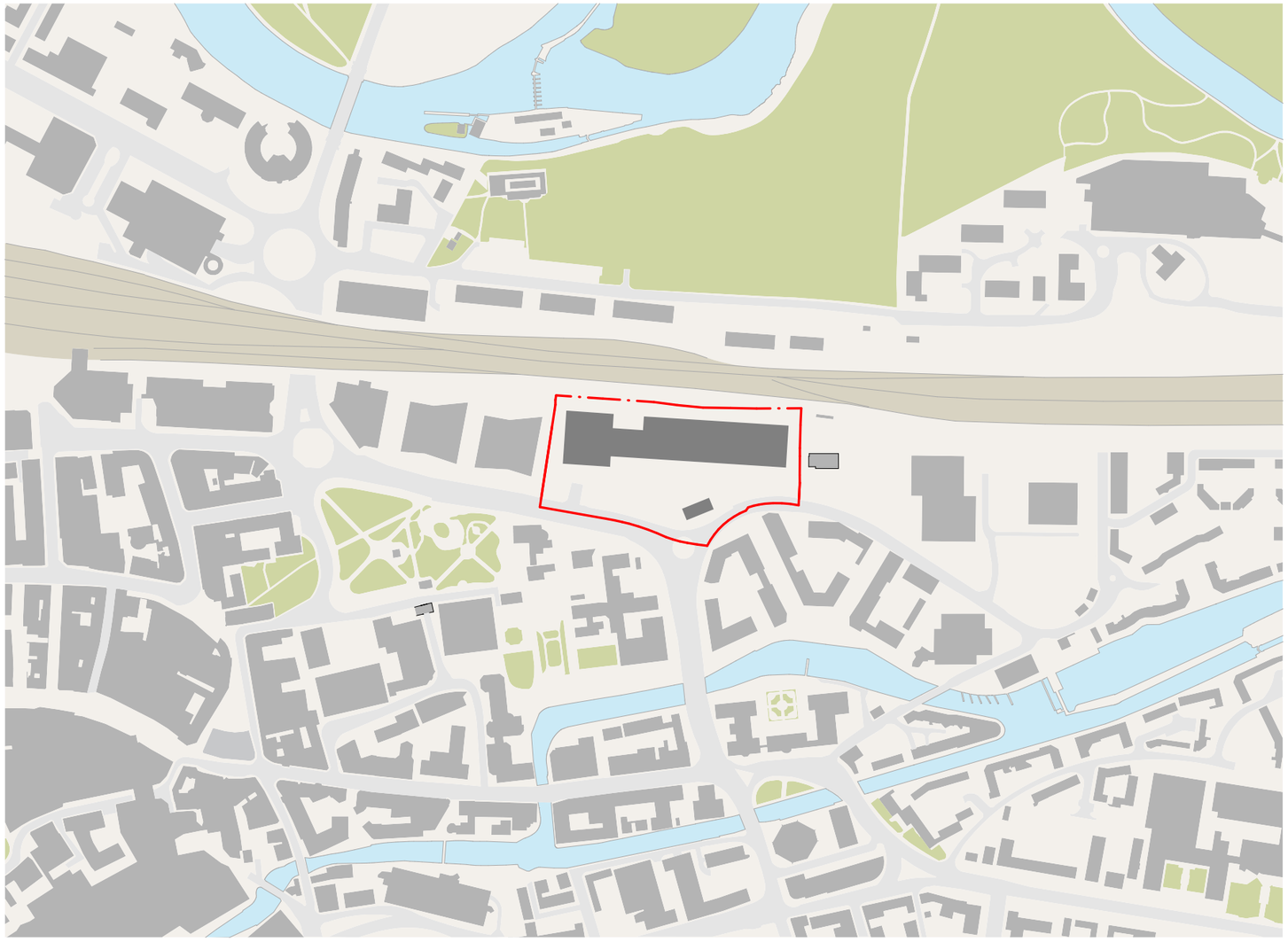
The site is located within Reading Town Centre. It is bounded by Forbury Road and Kenavon Drive, as well as Huntley Wharf, Reading Prison and St James's Church to the south.

The northern edge of the site runs parallel with the main train line. The western edges of the site adjoin the offices at Forbury Place and the eastern edge adjoins the western edge of the neighbouring retail park.

The site ownership boundary currently comprises the existing Forbury Retail Park which hosts a variety of shops, as well as a smaller food outlet building and a large car park.

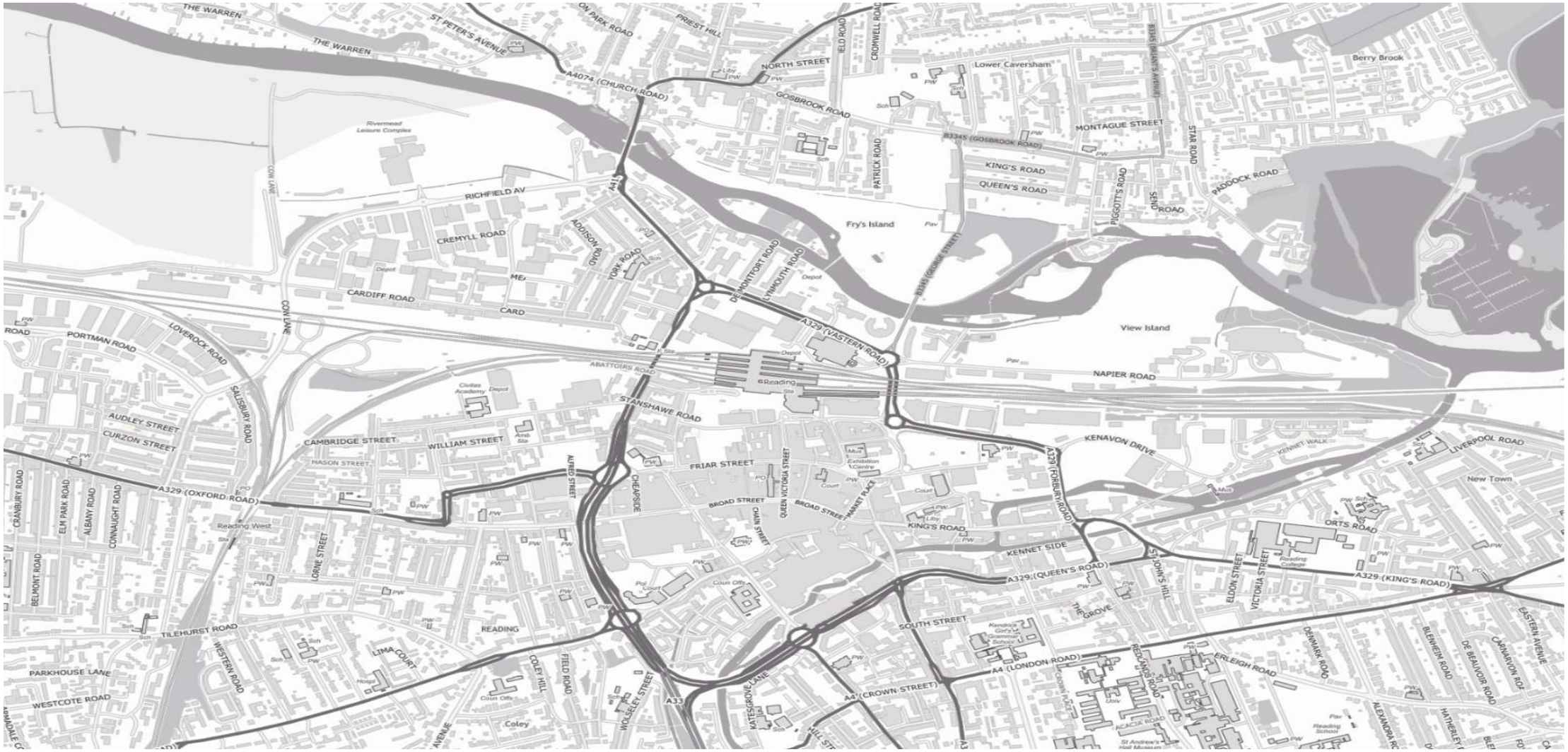
The KMV OPA application boundary covers the part occupied by the Forbury Retail Park and associated access road.

Aerial photograph of the existing Forbury Retail Park



Existing Site Plan

Site Boundary



Wider Existing Site Plan

Site Boundary

2.1 Site Location

2.1.2 Regional Points of Interest

The KMV OPA Site is located within Reading town centre, which falls within the 'Central' constituency of Reading Borough Council. In the wider regional context Reading sits between Newbury (to the west), Basingstoke (to the south), and Windsor, Heathrow Airport (and Greater London) to the east.

Range of amenities in wider region

The town of Reading is itself set amongst an interesting and diverse mix of regional (and national) attractions that residents of and visitors to Reading alike would benefit from. These attractions include the following:

Historic Landmarks
- Reading Abbey Ruins
- Reading Abbey Gateway
- St Mary's Church
- Mapledurham House

Parks
- Forbury Gardens Public Park
- Dinton Pastures Country Park
- Woodford Park
- Prospect Park
- Beale Wildlife Park
- National Trust Basildon Park

Museums
- Reading Museum
- Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology
- Cole Museum of Zoology
- Riverside Museum
- The Museum of English Rural Life

Active/ adventure
- Reload Reading
- TeamSport Indoor Karting Reading
- Red Kangeroo Trampoline Park
- Reading Climbing Centre

Events
- Reading Festival
- Reading Carnival
- Reading Pride
- Reading Fringe Festival
- Readipop Festival

Leisure
- Thames Lido
- Sonning Golf Club
- Nirvana Spa
- The Caversham

1. Reading Abbey Ruins

2. Reading Abbey Gateway

3. St Mary's Church

4. Mapledurham House

5. Forbury Gardens

6. Dinton Pastures Country Park

7. Woodford Park

8. Prospect Park

9. Beale Wildlife Park

10. National Trust Basildon Park

11. Reading Museum

12. Ure Musuem

13. Cole Museum of Zoology

14. Riverside Museum

15. Museum of English Rural Life

16. Reload Reading

17. TeamSport Indoor Karting

18. Red Kangeroo Trampoline

19. Reading Climbing Centre

20. Reading Festival

21. Reading Carnival

22. Reading Pride

23. Reading Fringe Festival

24. Readipop Festival

25. Thames Lido

26. Sonning Golf Club

27. Nirvana Spa

28. The Caversham

Photographs of regional points of interest

Map of key regional points of interest

2.2 Site Analysis

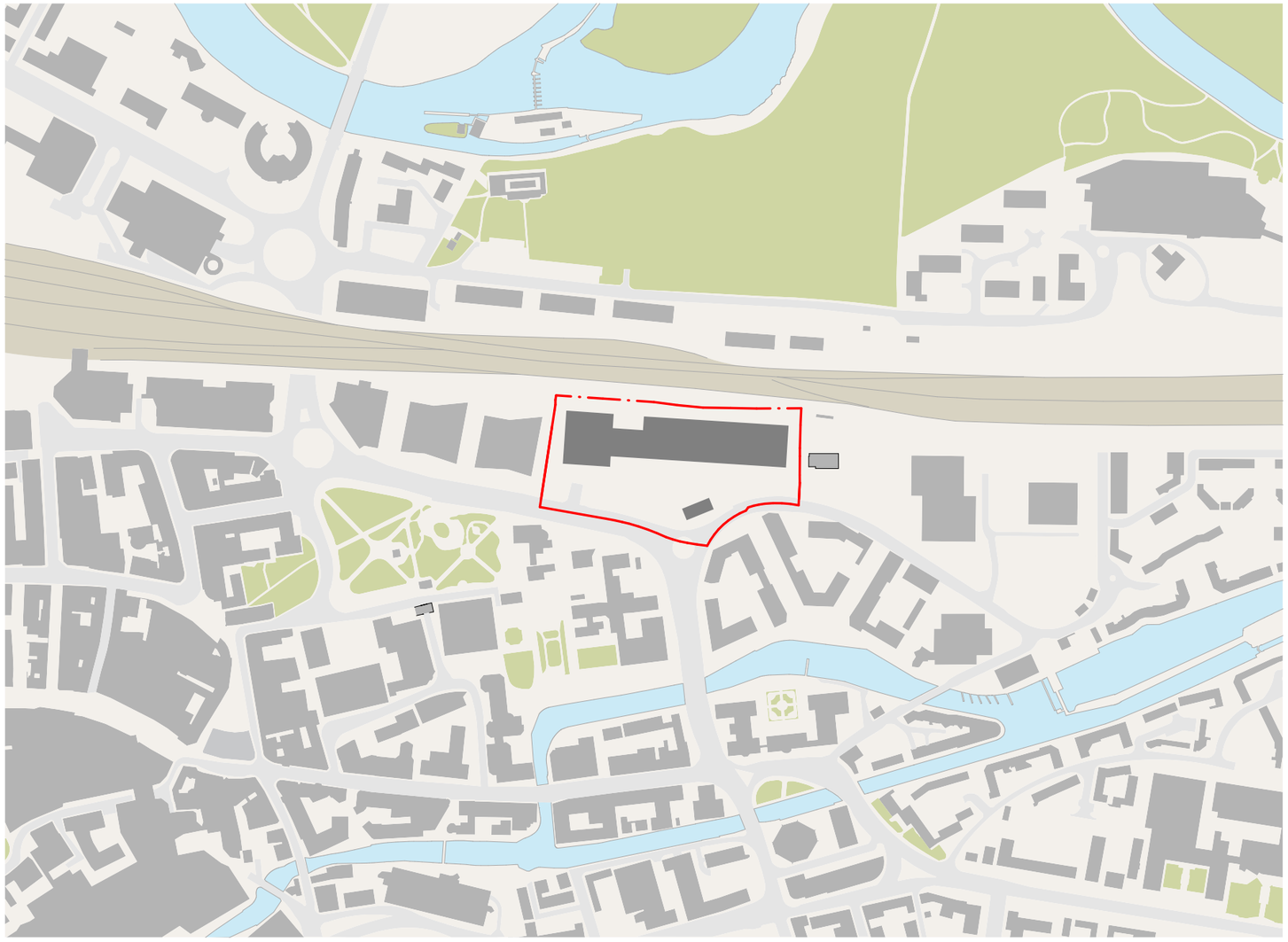
2.2.1 Site Constraints

Reading Regeneration Framework

Reading's regeneration framework is a comprehensive plan that outlines the town's strategic vision for future development and growth. It focuses on creating sustainable and well-connected communities that support economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability.

The framework also identifies key areas for investment and development, such as the town centre and transportation hubs, while also seeking to preserve and enhance Reading's historic architecture and public spaces.

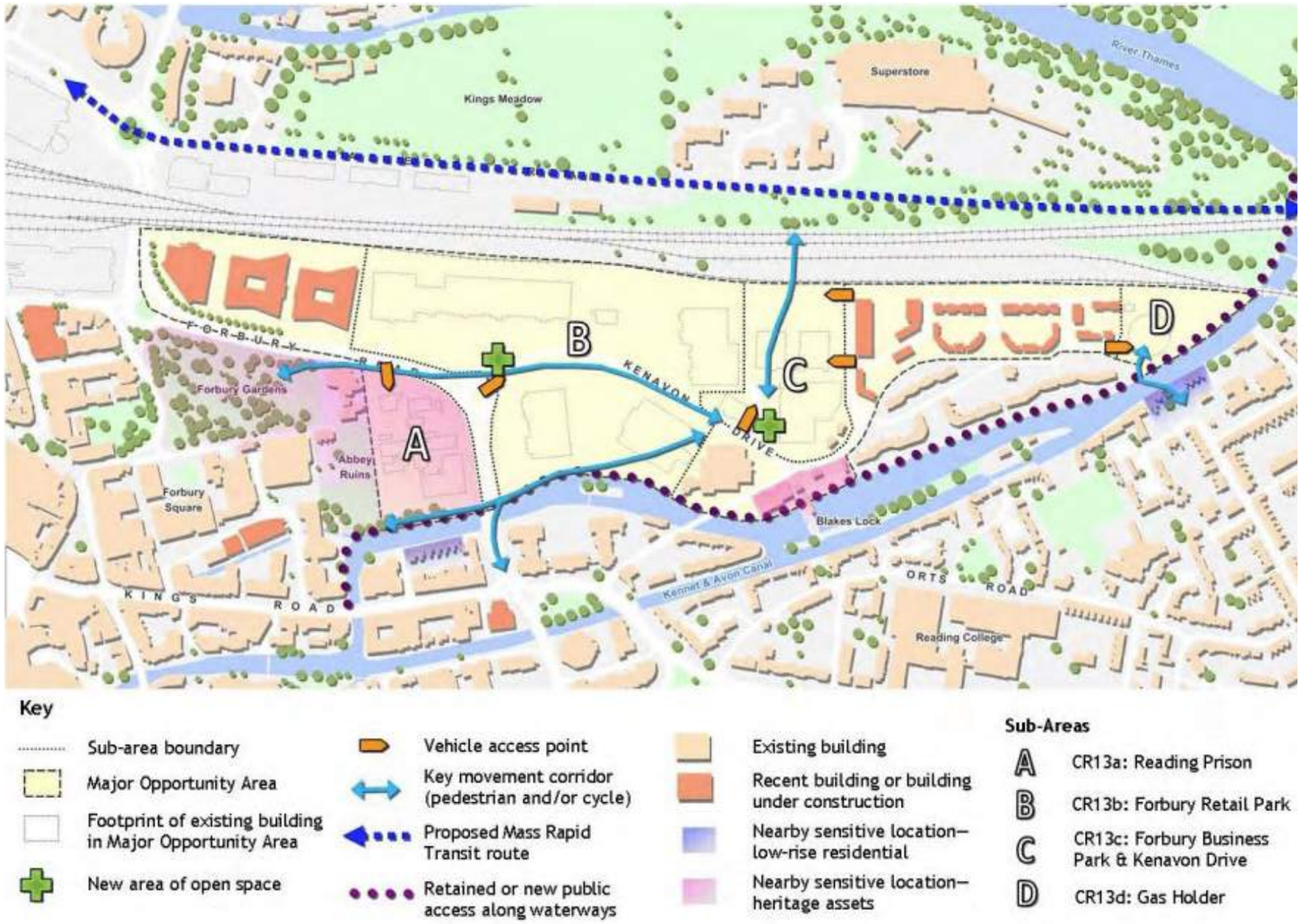
The framework provides a clear and ambitious roadmap for Reading's continued growth and transformation, balancing the town's history with its future potential.



Existing site plan

Site Boundary

2.2.2 Local Plan



Local Plan Area - East Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy

Local plan - East Side Major Opportunity Area Strategy

"The station/river area will be a flagship scheme, extending the centre and providing a mixed use destination in itself and centred on the new station and public transport interchange. It will integrate the transport links and areas northwards towards the River Thames and into the heart of the centre."

This area is one of the most accessible in the south east so development should capitalise on this. The development should facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly in regard to the north-south links through the centre.

The area around the station is appropriate for "well designed tall buildings," even where there are no tall buildings. Buildings in his area will have to mitigate issues relating to noise and air quality.

CR13b, FORBURY RETAIL PARK:
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 ha ***Indicative potential: 1,230-1,840 dwellings, no net gain of retail.***

2.2 Site Analysis

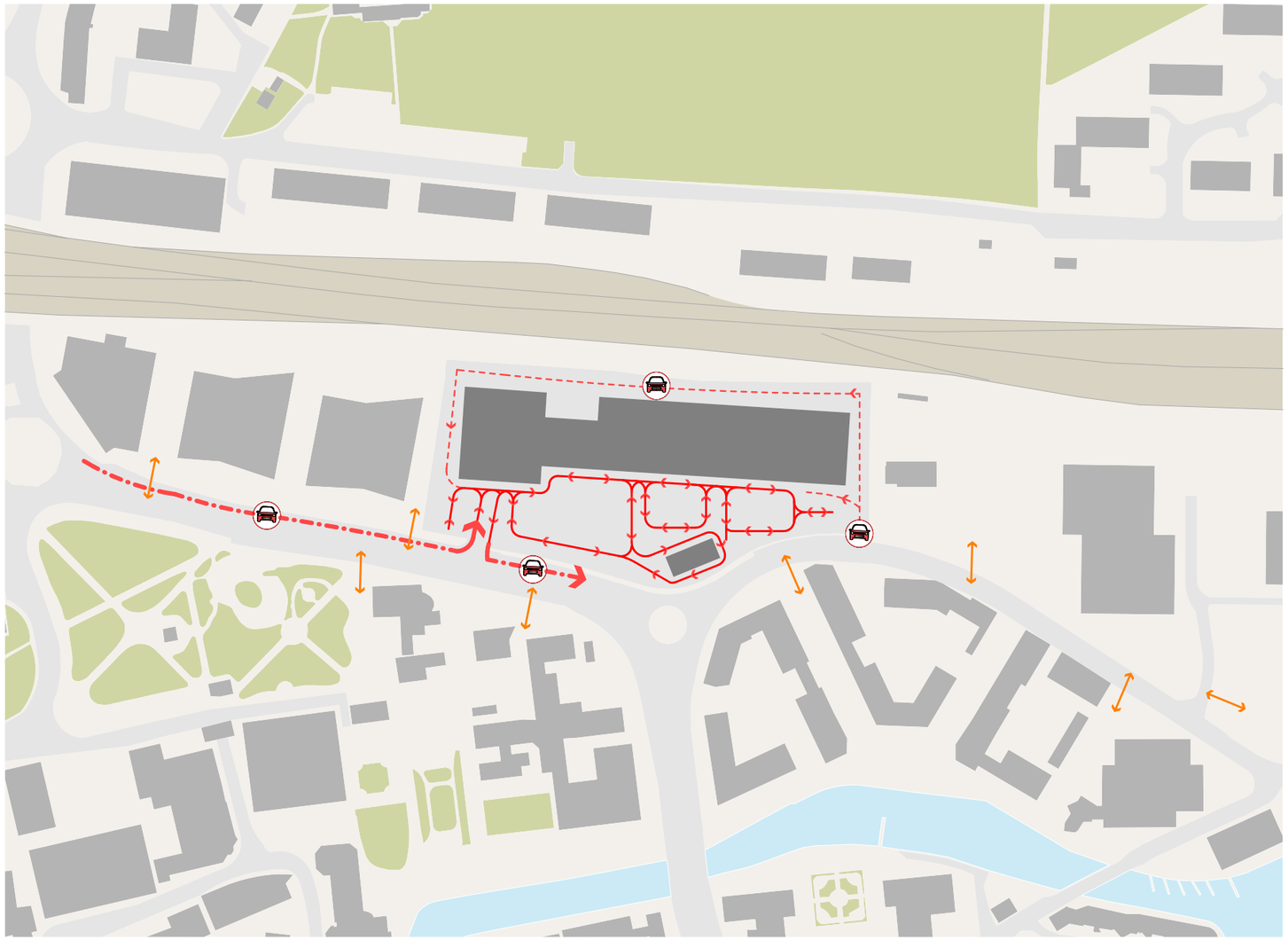
2.2.3 Existing Access Requirements

This drawing examines the existing vehicle entrances and exits to and from the site as well as any other access requirements that must be maintained to adjacent properties.

The site has two existing vehicular entrances; one to the east and one to the west, that allow visitors to access the site, with both entrances accessible from the main through fare of Forbury Road.

In addition to the existing vehicular entrances, there is a servicing road that runs around the perimeter of the site. This road allows service vehicles to access the retail park without disrupting the flow of traffic on the main roads.

The site is predominantly made up of hard landscaping and parking spaces for customers and employees.



Existing access requirements

Existing Vehicle Circulation

Site Vehicle Access

Servicing Access and Circulation

Surrounding Property Vehicle Access

2.2.4 Relationship with Surrounding Context

The existing retail park entrances face onto Forbury Road and the former Reading Prison, as well as the Huntley Wharf development, whilst the back of the retail park faces the train tracks.

These long site boundaries combined with the low existing height and lack of routes through the site result in a very long and low continuous elevation fronting onto these routes.

While these facades incorporate some ground floor active frontage, the elevations provide limited animation to the existing streetscape and feel distant from the main thoroughfares that surround the site.

The eastern boundary faces onto another retail park, whilst the western boundary faces the offices at Forbury Place, both are inactive frontages.

1. Prison and Huntley Wharf

2. St James's Church

3. Reading Abbey Ruins

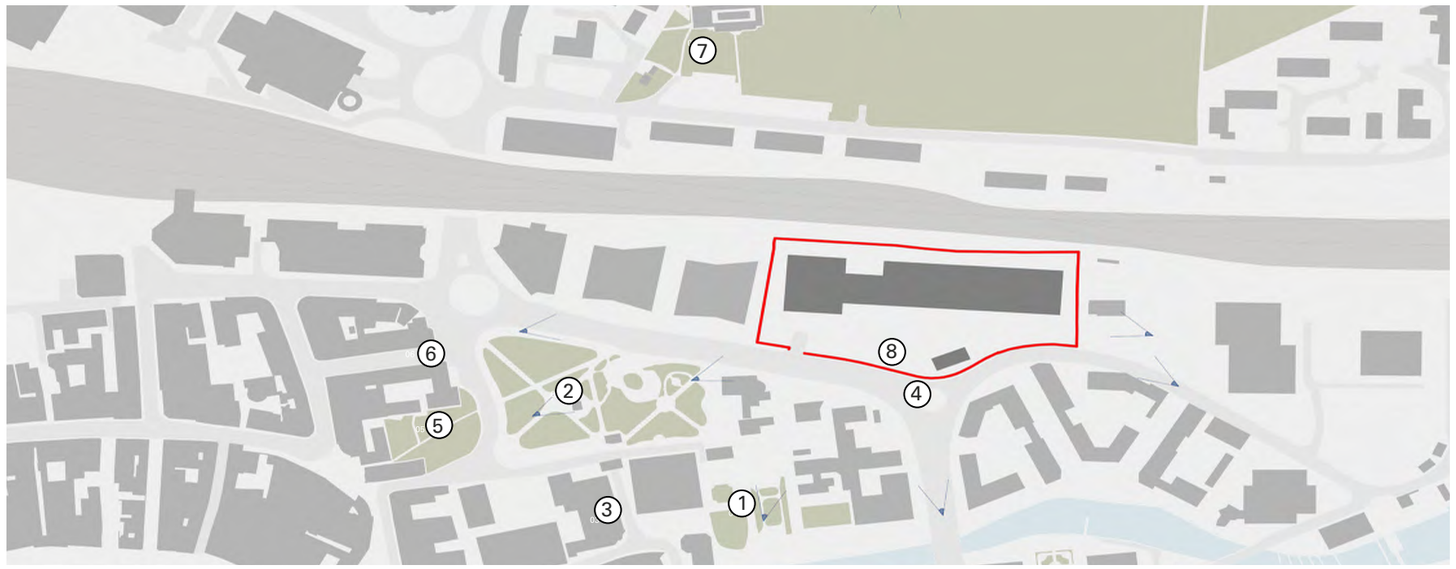
4. Kenavon Drive

5. Forbury Gardens

6. Forbury Road

7. Kings Meadow

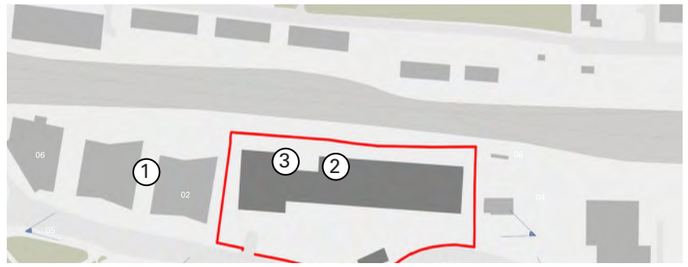
8. Forbury Retail Park



Photographs of surrounding streets

2.2 Site Analysis

2.2.5 Site Photographs



1. Forbury Road

2. Forbury Retail Park - view towards existing building

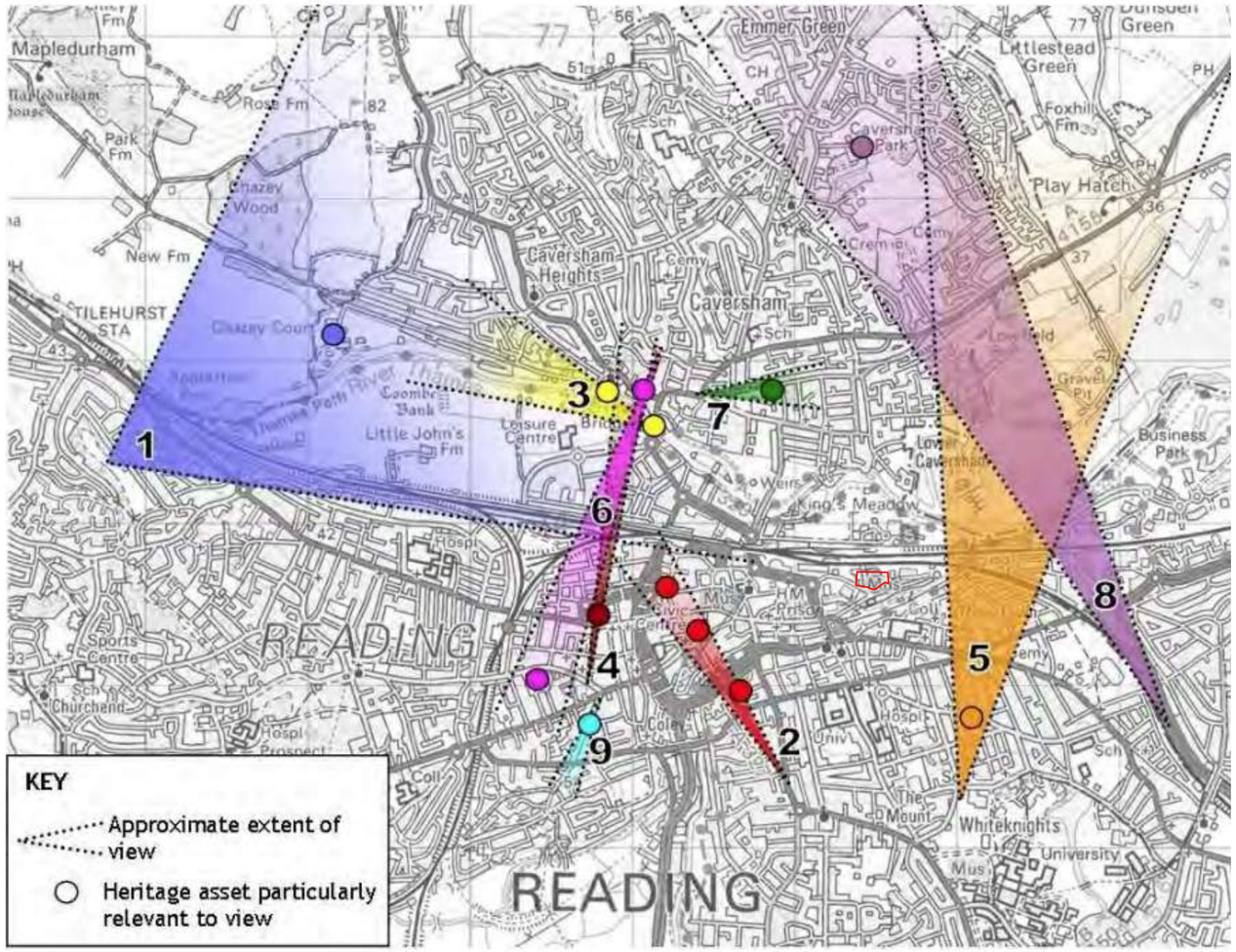
3. Forbury Retail Park - view looking west from within the site

2.2.6 Wider Townscape Views to and from the Site

The Reading local plan details significant views with heritage interest in Reading.

KMV site does not lie within the extent of any of these views therefore this is not directly applicable to the KMV site.

Figure 4.2: Significant Views with Heritage Interest



Significant Views Map