

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	2 JULY 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	DRAFT HOSIER STREET AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	PLANNING	WARDS:	ABBEY
LEAD OFFICER:	KIARAN ROUGHAN	TEL:	0118 9374530
JOB TITLE:	PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:kiaran.roughan@reading.gov.uk">kiaran.roughan@reading.gov.uk</a>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval of the draft development framework for the Hosier Street Area. The area includes the Broad Street Mall, the now vacant site of the former Civic Offices, the Thames Valley Police headquarters, the Magistrates Courts and the Hexagon Theatre. In the light of the multiple ownerships of the area, it was decided that a draft framework should be produced to guide future development. The draft framework has been produced by the Council (with the assistance of an urban design consultancy). Subject to approval by Committee, the draft framework will be published and will be the subject of a formal consultation exercise.

2. Recommended Action

- 2.1 That the Draft Hosier Street Area Development Framework (Appendix 1) be approved for community involvement.
- 2.2 That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Draft Hosier Street Area Development Framework in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to the start of community involvement on the draft document.

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The former Civic Offices were vacated during 2014/15 and subsequently carefully demolished. In order to develop proposals for the eventual disposal and development of the site, the Council entered into a partnership arrangement with Kier Construction.
- 3.2 At the same time Thames Valley Police have been reviewing their headquarters buildings with redevelopment of the site being one option. The Council and its partner Kier have been involved in discussions in relation to possible future redevelopment of this site.
- 3.3 In the meantime, the new owners of Broad Street Mall have been evolving ambitious plans for the remodelling and development of the Broad Street Mall which includes incorporating a significant level of new residential development in various buildings above the roof of, and adjacent to, the current building, along with various improvements to the Mall and other property in the vicinity. The owners (Moorgarth) are currently discussing their proposals with officers as part of a process of pre application advice. They propose to submit a planning application in the near future.
- 3.4 Planning policy for the future development of the area is provided in the Reading Central Area Action Plan. This has now been updated in the Submission Draft Local Plan that was approved by Committee in November 2017. Draft Policy CR12 deals with the West Side Major Opportunity Area. CR12d indicates that, *“The site will be used for continued retail and leisure provision, maintaining frontages ....., with uses including residential, with some potential for offices, on upper floors.”*
- CR12e indicates that, “Development on this site will result in a new residential community centred around an improved area of public open space and a high quality environment, with an improved entrance to the site from St Mary’s Butts. The edges of the open space will be activated with retail, leisure and/or other main town centre uses such as hotel use, and development may also include some limited offices uses. The Hexagon theatre will only be developed if a replacement facility for Reading is provided, and approaches to the theatre will be improved. Development will also include a replacement site for the street market. The car parking below ground level will be retained and incorporated into the development.”*
- 3.5 The policy provides a very broad basis for considering the future development and use of land. However it is of limited value to promoting the most appropriate form of development of a large complex site in multiple ownerships. A more detailed masterplan or

framework which has been subject to public consultation would normally be sought for a site such as the Hosier Street Area.

#### 4.0 Development Framework

##### (a) Current Position

4.1 While the development of the area is governed by existing and emerging local plan policies, these are very high level and offer limited advice on how the area should be developed in the future. With the multiple ownerships and the likelihood that different parcels of land will come forward at different times in an unacceptable piecemeal fashion.

4.2 In order to move forward in terms of the future development of the wider area and in the interests of achieving a high quality, comprehensive development of the area in accordance with the Local Plan policies, officers sought to encourage the preparation of a single development brief by the various owners of land in the area. In the light of the difficulties in getting the agreement of the owners to prepare (and fund) that piece of work, and with a need to move forward on the former Civic offices site, a decision was taken that the Council would undertake the work.

##### (b) Proposed Option

4.3 A draft development framework for the area has been prepared, with the assistance of Urban Place Labs, an urban design consultancy, in consultation with various parts of the Council including Property, Housing, Parks, Streetcare, Highways, Sustainability, etc. Versions of the draft document have been shared with other landowners or parties with an interest in land in the area.

4.4 The primary purpose of the framework is to provide a public realm led master plan for the area, showing how it could be developed as a series of quality streets, squares and new spaces, and might look once developed. The document sets out broad principles for the development of the area and provides a comprehensive Masterplan and urban design framework. It contains more detailed studies of the different quarters of the Masterplan area, the Hexagon Quarter, Minster Square, and Oxford Road/St. Mary's Butts.

4.5 The starting point for the framework was consideration of the wider area and how this area relates to the rest of the town centre and the area to the west. This involved examining the historical street pattern, how the Bridge Street/Gun Street crossroads was the Saxon origin of the town, and how this has gradually moved northwards. Much of the area away from Castle Street and the Oxford Road was covered by urban terraced housing fronting onto a

network of streets connected to the residential areas around Baker Street and Russell Street to the west. Since the 1960's the commercial elements of Reading Town Centre have expanded into this area and the area was cut off from the residential areas to the west by the building of the IDR.

- 4.6 In seeking to reconnect the development area to the town centre and to provide a setting and some open space for the development, the area includes the whole of the St Mary's Churchyard and the adjoining public realm, seeking to rediscover this, and reframe it as Reading's newest (and oldest) public space, drawing on the medieval buildings that lines its periphery. St Mary's Butts and Oxford Road are also included as a separate quarter of the area within which improvements to the public realm involving some rationalisation of the pedestrian pavements and highway carriageway is proposed. There are proposals to widen pavements and incorporate part of the wide carriageway at the southern end of St Mary's Butts into a much improved public realm that will also serve the new development in the area. The historic environment with Listed Buildings centred on Castle Street and St Mary's Butts has been an important constraint/consideration in developing the masterplan elements of the framework.
- 4.7 In order to link better to the areas to the west of the IDR, the strategy indicates a new footbridge over the IDR. The final framework will seek an investigation of more ambitious full or partial decking over the IDR between the Oxford Road and Castle Street, funded by the development. As a possible alternative, it will also seek investigation of forms of acoustic barrier that incorporate some landscaping.
- 4.8 The potential for tall buildings have been considered in some detail utilizing a 3D model of the local area, extracts from which can be seen in the framework document. Considerations relating to density and the heights of buildings have been led by the Council's policies on tall buildings as well as the impact of such buildings on the adjoining Conservation Areas and other heritage assets. Above the Broad Street Mall is the least sensitive location for tall buildings in the area and tall buildings including one building above 20 storeys (counting from podium level upwards) are proposed. There is also an opportunity next to the Hexagon adjacent to the frontage of the site with the IDR to locate a further tall building.
- 4.9 The site will be densely developed, structured around high quality public realm extending from St Mary's Butts along Hosier Street and Dusseldorf Way to a significant open space/area of public realm in front of the Hexagon through which a link from an enhanced Queens Walk to Castle Street will be formed. Blocks will be up to 8 storeys high to the south of Dusseldorf Way falling to lower levels adjacent to

the St Mary's Butts/ Castle Street Conservation Area. The layout and height parameters of the development have been developed with regard to sunlight and daylight levels.

- 4.10 Development will include enhancements to the retail offer of the Broad Street Mall and the development will seek to maximise active frontages onto the various public realm. The remainder will be primarily residential on upper floors with commercial and/or retail uses on the ground floors at street level. Servicing and storage will take place at the level below the podium which it is envisaged will largely be retained in its current form.
- 4.11 While primarily providing a design framework for the development of the site, the framework document includes policy context information outlining infrastructure and other Section 106 requirements. It highlights the importance of providing affordable housing and high quality public realm. It examines issues relating to implementation and delivery. Committee is asked to approve the draft framework for public consultation

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Adoption of the development framework will guide future development of the site in a way that will contribute to achieving the Council's priorities set out in the Corporate Plan through:
- Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities;
  - Ensuring access to local housing to meet local needs;
  - Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe.

This development framework and the subsequent development will contribute to generating job opportunities both in construction and the use of the development, Provide much needed affordable housing as well as other market housing to meet local needs and regenerate and improve an area that has now become tired and in need of high quality new development with a mix of uses that provides new facilities, attractions and public realm in the central area while ensuring that the historical and architectural character is preserved and enhanced.

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The Council's consultation process for planning policy, as set out in the adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI, adopted March 2014), is that the widest and most intensive community involvement should take place at the earliest possible stage, to allow the community a genuine chance to influence the document. Community involvement exercises.

- 6.2 A formal consultation led by the Council is expected to begin in mid-July and will last for a period of ten weeks (to allow for the summer holiday period) until early October. Responses received will be considered in preparing a final draft framework for adoption. The consultation will largely be based around making the document available for comment, although it is also expected to feature an exhibition/drop-in event. The possibility of holding a community event will also be explored, if resources allow.

## 7. EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 In line with assessments undertaken for the local plan it is not expected that there will be any significant adverse impacts on specific groups due to race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religious belief. An equality scoping assessment is included in Appendix 2 of this report.

## 8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from the report. The framework will be published as a Supplementary Planning Document under the Planning Acts. It will be subject to statutory consultation and a requirement to take account of representations. It will be adopted by the Council and will hold weight in the determination of planning applications for any development that occurs in the Hosier Street Area.

## 9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The framework has been prepared within the resources of the Planning Section.
- 9.2 Consultation exercises can be resource intensive and there are limited funds to undertake such exercises. The Council's consultation process is based mainly on electronic communication, which helps to minimise resource costs. Other more intensive forms of consultation or community involvement will be investigated as part of this consultation but can only be undertaken where resources are available.

### Value for Money (VFM)

- 9.3 The preparation of framework will ensure that developments are appropriate to the area, that significant effects are mitigated and that harmful effects are minimised. Production of a Supplementary Planning Document for a complicated site such as the Hosier Street Area is in line with best practice and therefore represents good value for money.

### Risk Assessment

9.4 There are no direct financial risks associated with the report.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

- National Planning Policy Framework;
- Reading Borough Core Strategy;
- Reading Borough, Reading Central Area Action Plan;
- Draft Reading Borough Local Plan





**\*\* DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION \*\***

**HOSIER STREET AREA**  
OUTLINE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**Reconnecting with Reading's Historic Town Centre**

JUNE 2018



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

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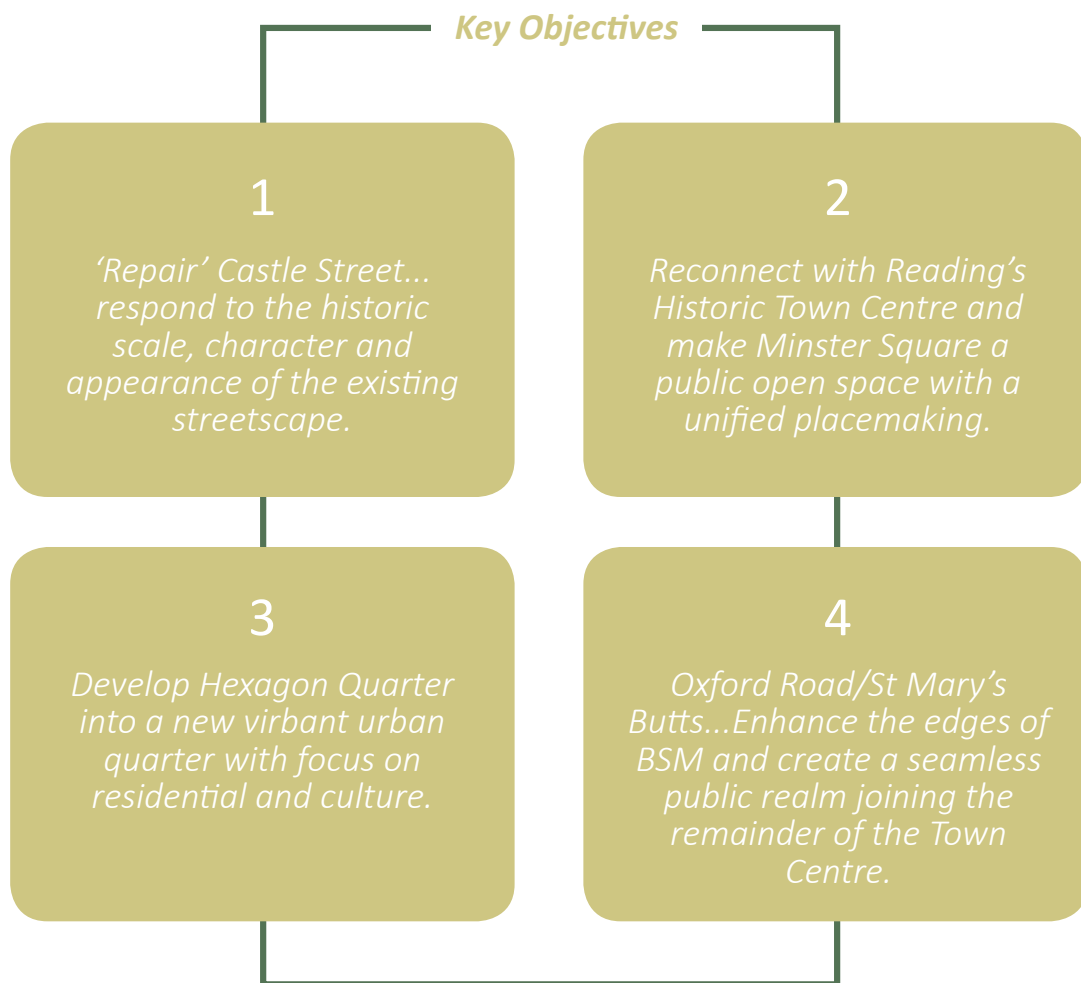
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## VISION STATEMENT

*The Hosier Street/Broad Street Mall Area will be a distinctive and high-quality, high density, mixed use area within Reading’s Central Core. The area will portray a unique character and sense of place retaining the historical associations of the area and providing high quality public realm, both through the enhancement of existing public spaces adjacent to the site and the provision of new spaces that provide a setting and focus for new development.*

*Development will contribute positively to conserving and enhancing the adjoining conservation area and to protecting and enhancing the listed St Mary’s Church and its setting.*

*The area will host a wide range of uses and activities that will contribute to an active, well designed public realm throughout daylight and evening hours. There will be a mix of residential, office/commercial/retail and leisure/community facilities, built to high densities that will include tall buildings, complemented by high quality open spaces that together will create a new destination and a desirable place to live and be at one’s leisure. The area will appeal to all sectors of Reading’s population as a place to live in, work in, study in and visit.*





# 1. SETTING THE SCENE

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Hosier Street/Broad Street Mall area provides a significant development opportunity for a major new mixed use scheme in the centre of one of the most buoyant and dynamic urban centres in the South East. The area forms part of the West Side Major Opportunity Area identified in the Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted in January 2009) which is being carried forward in the Draft Local Plan that was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2018. Under this plan, the area is identified for improvement and regeneration through the mixed use development of various sites.

The site contained the former Civic Offices. The Civic Offices were opened in 1971 but, partly because they contained high levels of asbestos, they had reached the end of their economic life and were demolished in 2016. This now enables the regeneration and redevelopment of the site and the

opportunity to deliver a high quality mixed-use development contributing to the high quality regeneration of the area and to the Council's aims and aspirations for this part of Reading.

At the same time as the former Civic Offices were demolished, adjoining land owners have also been considering the future of their sites. The owner of the Broad Street Mall (Moorgarth plc.) has ambitious plans to revitalise the shopping centre and at the same time intensify and develop the use of their holding by adding tower blocks above and adjacent to the existing structure of the Broad Street Mall. This framework addresses the possible development options for the Broad Street Mall.

Thames Valley Police has also indicated that it intends to vacate its existing Reading Headquarters building in the near term. The Police have requested that their landholding be included in any planning proposals/framework for the area.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this document is to set out a framework and principles for promoting the development of the area to ensure a co-ordinated, high quality, comprehensive development creating a multi-purpose urban quarter in Central Reading. This framework is intended to:

- set out a vision and framework for the future development of the area;
- secure improvements to the public realm in the wider area including providing new areas of public realm within the site;
- clarify planning policy in relation to the development of the area;
- to set out the Local Planning Authority's expectations;
- to identify and resolve constraints and other barriers to development;
- to provide a basis for community consultation.



Old Civic Offices



Hosier Street Area today

### 1.3 TOWN CONTEXT

Reading sits at the heart of the Thames Valley, one of the most successful sub regions in Europe. The sub region is economically buoyant, and has one of the UK’s highest economic activity rates at 85%. It is a magnet for inward investment, with a high concentration of ICT firms. It is home to 13 of the world’s top 30 global brands, with the likes of Vodafone, Prudential, Microsoft and Cisco all based locally.

Businesses are drawn to the area by the availability of a highly skilled workforce, access to London (with the Queen Elizabeth Line due to open in 2019) and international transport hubs (including Heathrow Airport), the high quality of life on offer and knowledge intensive business clusters based around a number of sectors.

Whilst the tight boundary of Reading Borough is home to a population of around 156,000, the wider urban area is home to a population of around 275,000 with a broader retail catchment of over 1.2m. This is a

significant aspect of the Reading of today: a sub-regional capital attracting large numbers of workers, shoppers and visitors from a wide area, adding to its vitality and success. This success is likely to continue, as the population of the Reading Urban Area grew by nearly 8% in the period 2001 to 2011, higher than the national average (SOURCE?). With significant housing development being proposed in the period up to 2036, the population of the area is forecast to continue to grow significantly.

Central Reading has experienced rapid growth in the last 20 years. Reading is now one of the UK’s top shopping destinations. The Town Centre has seen significant development in the last 20 years and planning permission has been granted for a number of major schemes. Further afield, there is significant development in south Reading and the development of a number of Strategic Development Locations is underway south of the Borough in the adjoining Wokingham Borough.

Reading is one of the most prosperous towns in the UK, with a high footprint of Tech Industries (KPMG 2015)<sup>1</sup> and high levels of productivity (Centre for Cities 2017)<sup>2</sup>. It is the capital of the Thames Valley Sub Region and the main centre for retail and leisure activity in addition to its importance as a transport hub and service centre.

The Submission Draft Reading Borough Local Plan, which plans the development of Reading up to 2036, seeks to provide over 16,000 new dwellings in that period, with 53,000<sup>2</sup>sqm offices, 148,000<sup>2</sup>sqm of industrial and warehousing floorspace and up to 45,000<sup>2</sup>sqm of new retail floorspace. The Hosier Street Area is an important development site within the Reading Central Area. Its development for a mix of uses can make a valuable contribution to meeting some of the future development needs identified in the local plan.

<sup>1</sup> KPMG Tech Monitor, 2015

<sup>2</sup> Centre for Cities, Cities Outlook, 2017

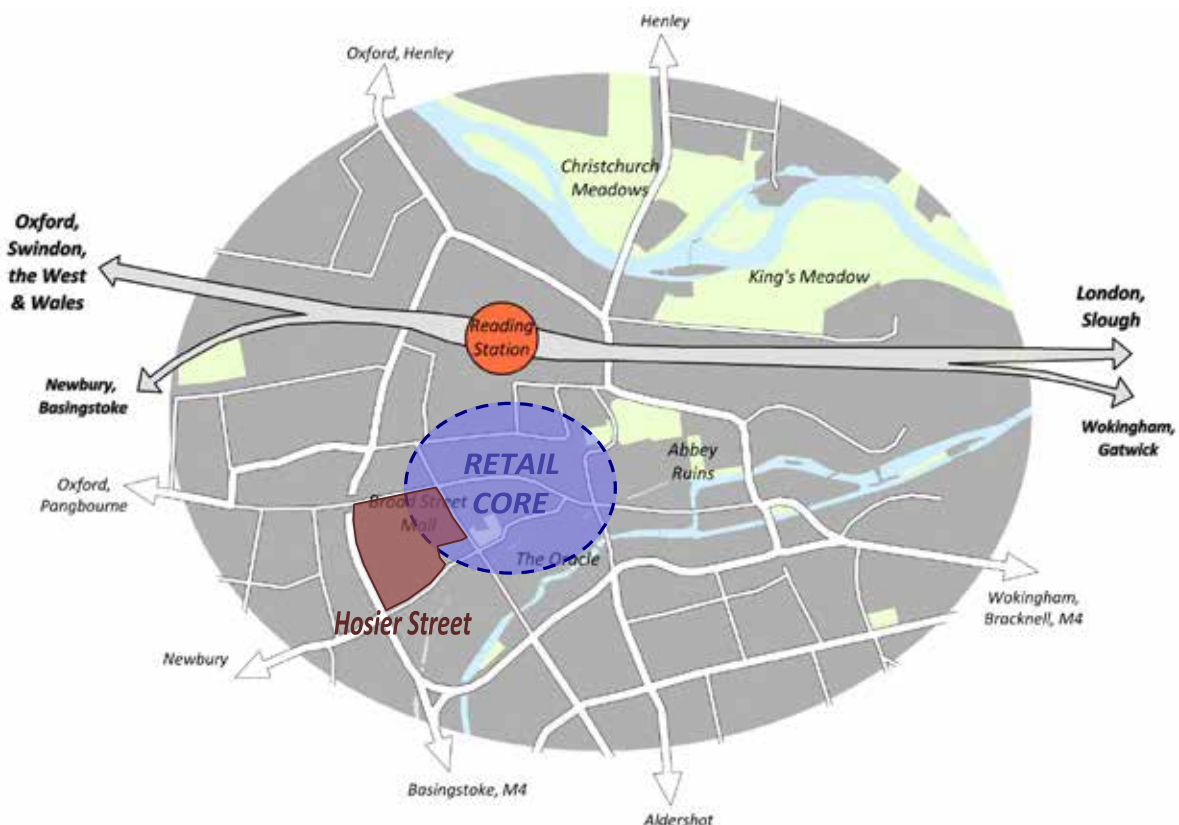


Figure 1 READING CENTRAL AREA



### 1.4 FRAMEWORK AREA DESCRIPTION

The wider “Hosier Street/Broad Street Mall Area” lies in the south west part of Central Reading. It is situated on the edge of the core retail area, and provides easy access to the Oracle shopping centre. The site is approximately ten minutes’ walk from Reading Station, and offers frontage onto the Inner Distribution Road. It also bounds Castle Street and St Mary’s Butts, which are historic streets that once formed part of the Saxon centre of Reading. Both streets fall within the St Mary’s Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The location of the Hosier Street/Broad Street Mall Area is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2 shows the extent of the wider site, which is bounded by 3 main roads - the IDR in the West, Oxford Road in the North, Castle Street in the South, and by the narrow yet busy pedestrian lane of Chain Street in the East. The site comprises:

- Broad Street Mall (including its associated multi-storey car park), the frontage to Oxford Road, St Mary’s Butts and the Minster of St Mary’s and adjoining churchyard/ graveyard;

- a sub area of approximately 2.1 hectares that includes the site of the previous Civic Offices and various areas of public realm and circulation space including Hosier Street, Düsseldorf Way and Queens Walk. This part of the site is in the ownership of the Council (shown in orange) and features a below ground podium and servicing level. It includes the current location of the Charter Market;
- Thames Valley Policy Headquarters (shown in yellow).

The site also features the Hexagon Theatre, the Penta Hotel, student housing and the Magistrates Courts, along with individual retail and food and beverage establishments, as well as listed buildings and land required for Town Centre servicing.

There are several adjoining properties within the wider area which could provide future regeneration opportunities. Developers should engage with owners of these adjoining properties to ensure a comprehensive approach to regeneration. The possibility of redeveloping these adjoining properties should be actively considered and planned for in any development proposals that come forward.

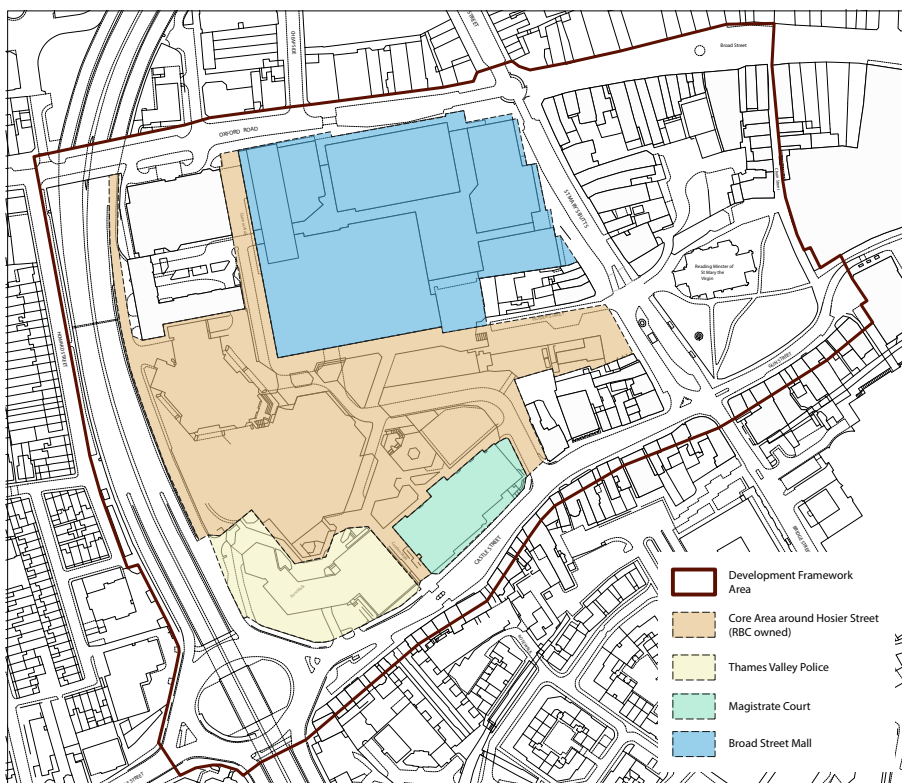


Figure 2 FRAMEWORK BOUNDARY WITH KEY OWNERSHIPS (DIAGRAMMATIC)



Reading Minster



Sun Inn Pub built in 1700s



Hexagon Theatre entrance



Hexagon Theatre and Broad Street Mall



Thames Valley Police Headquarters

## 1.5 PLANNING POLICY

The site falls within the central area of Reading, which is the main location for future development and change identified by the Reading Borough Core Strategy<sup>1</sup>. There are a range of policies in this document, including matters such as sustainable design and construction, affordable housing, infrastructure and open space, which apply to all development in Reading. It is supplemented by more detailed policies in the Reading Central Area Action Plan<sup>2</sup> and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document<sup>3</sup> that the Council adopted in October 2012. The Council has now submitted its Draft Reading Borough Local Plan<sup>4</sup>, which carries forward and updates the policies in the existing local plan documents to the Secretary of State. The Council anticipates that plan will be adopted around the end of 2018/ early 2019. The plan includes a specific and detailed allocation for the development of the site as follows:

**CR12d, BROAD STREET MALL:** *The site will be used for continued retail and leisure provision, maintaining frontages along Oxford Street and St Mary's Butts, and improving frontages to Hosier Street and Queens Walk, with uses including residential, with some potential for offices, on upper floors. This may be achieved by comprehensive redevelopment. Alternatively, a development which retains the existing mall with additional development above may be appropriate where it improves the quality of the existing mall frontages.*

**CR12e, HOSIER STREET:** *Development on this site will result in a new residential community centred around an improved area of public open space and a high quality environment, with an improved entrance to the site from St Mary's Butts. The edges of the open space will be activated with retail, leisure and/ or other main town centre uses such as hotel use, and development may also include some limited offices uses. The Hexagon theatre will only be developed if a replacement facility for Reading is provided, and approaches to the theatre will be improved. Development will also include a replacement site for the street market. The car parking below ground level will be retained and incorporated into the development.*

Appendix 1 provides further more detailed analysis of the planning policy position relating to the development of the site. Further information on development plan policies relevant to the consideration of planning proposals for the site is also provided.

### IMPLEMENTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

#### Works

The existing podium structure is envisaged to provide level access new development and facilities and to facilitate underground servicing and parking to serve the various developments. A survey of the podium has been commissioned. Any limited alteration to the podium through modification or extension should be designed to ensure that continuing and successfully dealing with the prevailing change in ground levels.

Phasing of development(s) shall allow plots to come forward in separate parcels, whilst delivering associated public realm and other associated benefits/requirements.

The redevelopment of the area provides an opportunity for new artwork/high quality public realm treatments, as well as the re-provision of existing artworks, as may be relevant

#### Section 106 Requirements

There will be standard Section 106 requirements relating to the provision of policy compliant levels of affordable housing within the residential elements of the development. Skills and training requirements will be provided in accordance with the Council's policies as set out in the Council's Employment, Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document.

Site related works may also be covered by any Section 106 agreement. These might include alterations to accesses and other transport works; works to provide a footbridge or decking over the IDR, works to the strengthen or alter the podium, works to provide parks and public realm and associated structures and facilities including works to enhance the open areas adjacent to the Minster of St Mary's; works to provide Conservation Area enhancements; the realignment and

enhancement of St Mary's Butts, Queens Walk, the Oxford Road and frontages to the IDR; works to provide and secure facilities and other benefits for the community and other works as may be identified such as the re-provision of the area for the market.

#### CIL Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy will be payable on all development in accordance with the relevant regulations and the Councils CIL Charging Schedule in place at the time any development is approved.

#### Planning Application Procedures

It is strongly recommended that any potential redevelopment proposals gain detailed pre-application advice from the local planning authority prior to submission of a formal planning application. Pre-application request forms can be found at:

[http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app\\_April\\_2018.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app_April_2018.pdf)

As part of the pre-application process, the Council will expect the prospective applicants to carry out consultation on the draft application proposals. Such consultation should be carried out in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, noting that it is currently being reviewed (2013 draft version)<sup>5</sup>.

Details on how to make a planning application and other planning advice can be found at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/planningadvice>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1046/Core-Strategy-Adopted-January-2008/pdf/Core-Strategy-Adopted-Jan08-Altered-Jan15.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1047/Reading-Central-Area-Action-Plan-Adopted-January-2009/pdf/Central-Area-Action-Plan-Jan09.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1049/Sites-and-Detailed-Policies-Adopted-October-2012/pdf/SDPD-Adopted-Oct12-Altered-Jan15.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/8649/LP001-Submission-Draft-Local-Plan/pdf/LP001\\_Submission\\_Draft\\_Local\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/8649/LP001-Submission-Draft-Local-Plan/pdf/LP001_Submission_Draft_Local_Plan.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/planning/planning-policy/general-information-on-planning-policy/sci/>

## 1.6 HISTORIC CONTEXT

The wider site occupies a unique position in the history of the town, although until now, this has declined in importance as first ecclesiastical, and later transport, retail and commercial foci in the town have drifted northwards.

Historically, the wider site was the epicentre of the town's development. The old Saxon Borough of Reading was centred on the Old Market and Old Street (the original name for St Mary's Butts) where the two main roads (Oxford to Winchester and London to Bath) crossed the lowest bridging point of the River Kennet around which the town grew.

The Castle Street/Gun Street/Bridge Street/St Mary's Butts cross-roads, would have been a busy centre of life in Saxon and medieval times, centred on the market, St Mary's Church and the churchyard. Hence some of Reading oldest surviving buildings (and pubs) are visible features of this historic legacy.

The Domesday Survey for Reading, undertaken in 1085-6, described the area as a large estate formerly held by King Edward and a church and estate held by the Abbot of Battle, evidence of a thriving urban community in the eleventh century.

The foundation of Reading Abbey to the east of the town in 1121, resulted in a shift of economic balance from the area round St Mary's Butts to the gates of the Abbey. This was also a shift from the unplanned original centre of "Old Street" (St Mary's Butts) to a more planned new centre towards the end of "New Street" (now Friar Street), incorporating a large new market place and a grid of streets between Friar Street and Broad Street. London Street and a new bridge over the Kennet were part of this plan.

During the medieval period Reading developed rapidly, based on the manufacture of woollen cloth, leather

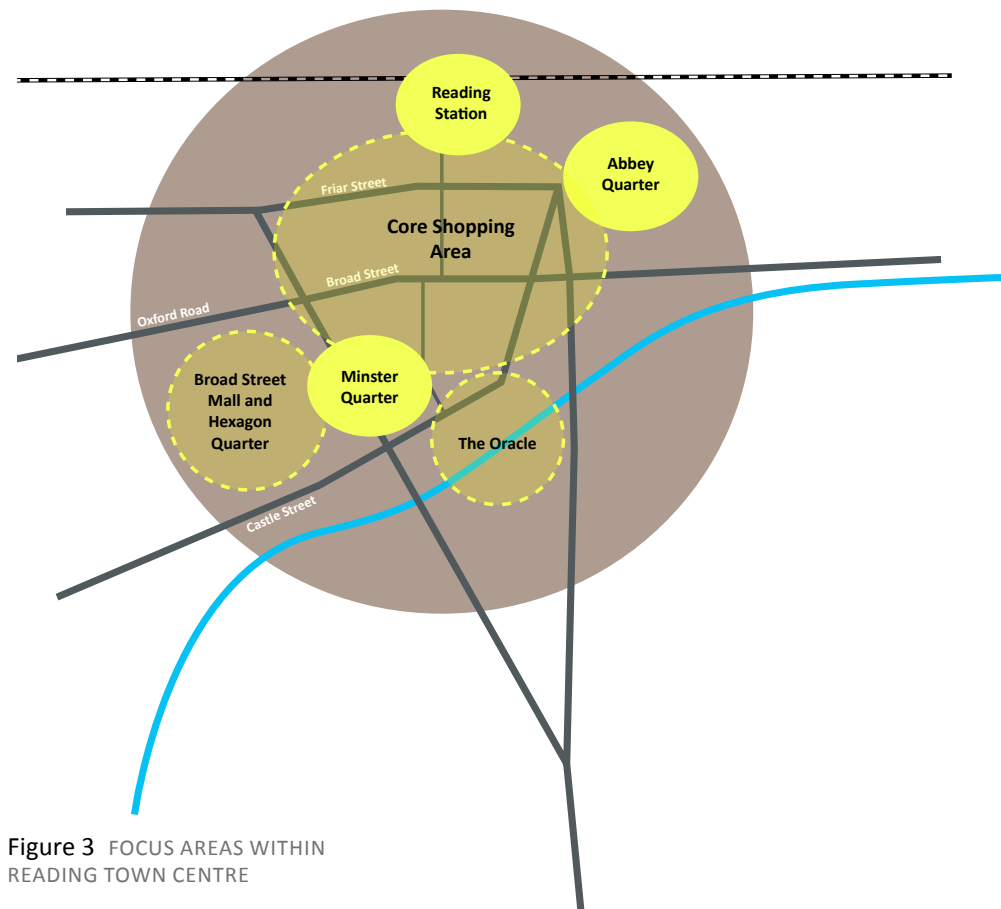


Figure 3 FOCUS AREAS WITHIN READING TOWN CENTRE

goods and silk weaving. This was encouraged by its good location on the crossing of major historic land routes, and by the proximity of the two waterways – the River Kennet and the River Thames.

The town was mostly contained within the medieval limits of the 'triangle' until the end of the 18th century when the town began to expand as a result of improved transport links and industrialisation.

The most significant changes to Reading's historic street pattern (and those which redevelopment of the site may allow to remedy) are fairly recent, and were caused by the construction in the 1970s of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) around the western and southern parts of the town centre.

The newer 1970s redevelopment of the Police Station/Magistrates

Courts/ Hexagon/Broad Street Mall and, later, The Oracle Shopping Centre, enclose the site periphery, but also present the redevelopment mechanism whereby it will be possible to re-discover the historic nature of this area of town and afford it the investment that, save for the 1970s, it has been lacking for the best part of a millennium.

The regeneration of the Hosier Street/ Broad Street Mall area, will allow for the rediscovery of St Mary's Church as the southernmost landmark building within the perimeter of the IDR. This will become the focus for a revitalised public realm, and create a new townscape that repairs aspects of the historic streetscape to the west whilst defining a new urban quarter, representing a unique opportunity to reinstate the historic 'triangle' of Reading's urban structure, and develop a destination for metropolitan living.



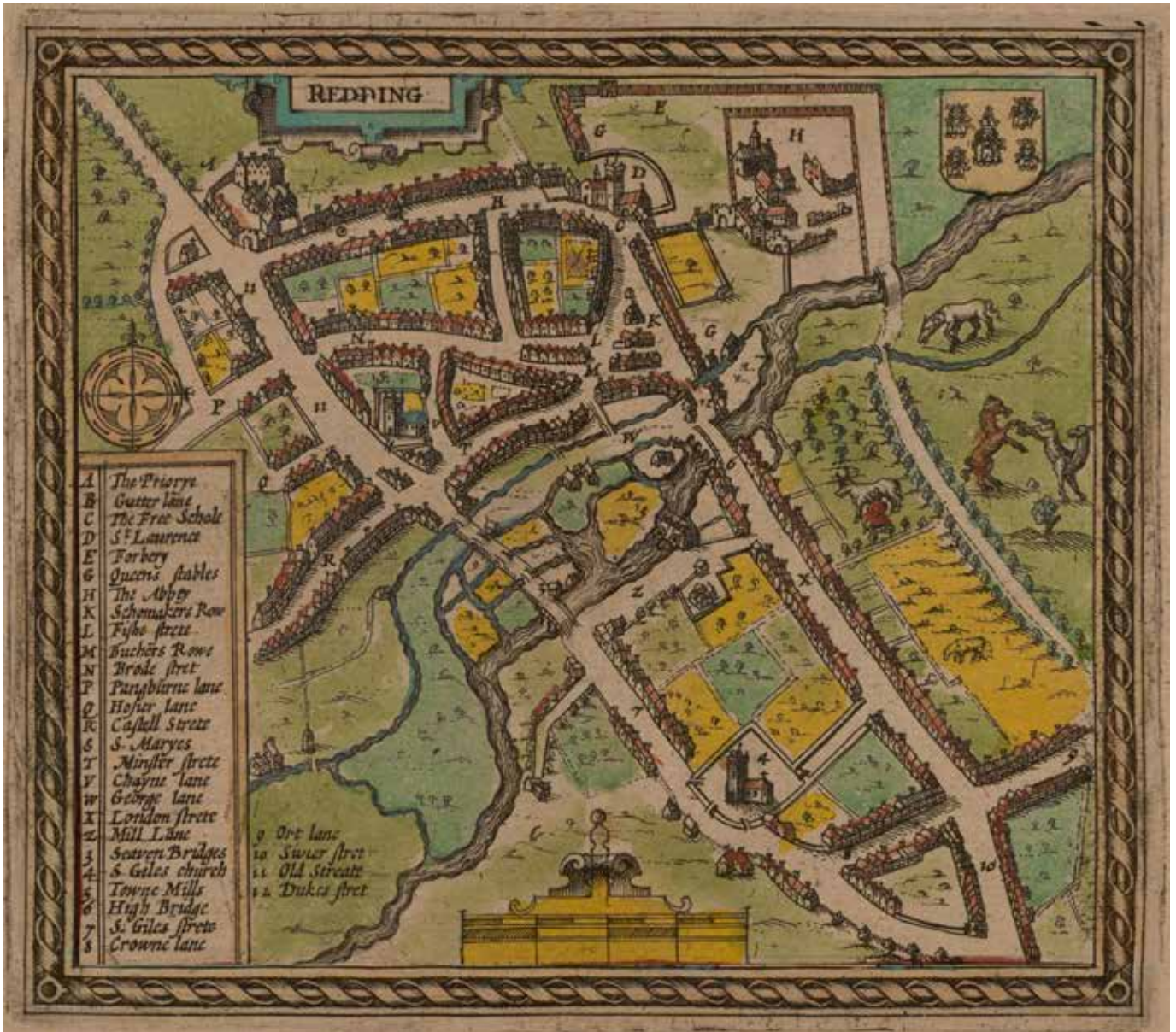


Figure 4 MAP OF 'REDDING' BY JOHN SPEED, 1611



Castle Street in 1890



St. Mary's Butts in 1912



St. Mary's Butts in 1887

Image source: <sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading,\\_Berkshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading,_Berkshire); <sup>2</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Castle\\_Street,\\_Reading,\\_1890.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Castle_Street,_Reading,_1890.jpg);

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.getreading.co.uk/lifestyle/nostalgia/pick-past-st-marys-butts-6240898>; <sup>4</sup> [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St.\\_Mary%27s\\_Butts,\\_Reading,\\_1887.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St._Mary%27s_Butts,_Reading,_1887.jpg)



### 1.7 SITE CONTEXT

The wider site presents both an opportunity and a constraint to redevelopment. The immediate environs of the Broad Street Mall/ Hosier Street area, represent one of the largest brownfield regeneration opportunities in the town centre, the largest, certainly within the IDR, and a significant area for growth within Reading and the Thames Valley as a whole.

The historic context of the site as outlined above, presents a rich tapestry of architecture and building frontages to respond to, but requires a sensitive response and the best possible architecture to succeed.

Good architecture responds positively to its context. Therefore, understanding the constraints and opportunities presented within the site is a critical element of achieving sustainable regeneration.

The primary constraints include:

- Noise and severance along the IDR to the west
- High percentage of historic buildings and sensitive townscape
- Views and vistas towards St Mary's Church
- Areas of blank frontage associated with the Broad Street Mall, Magistrates Courts and Police buildings
- Bus movement through the area
- High concentration of pedestrian movement to the north and through St Mary's Butts
- Land depression/excavation of basement area beneath the former Civic Centre podium
- The existing market

A number of the above can also be considered opportunities, to which it will be possible to positively respond. Additional opportunities include:

- Inclusion of the site in Reading's western cluster of tall buildings as per existing policy
- The historic focus of the area as the origin of the town, and the associated medieval frontage
- The 'forgotten' space of St Mary's churchyard
- Handsome building façades along Castle Street
- Creative articulation of building 'crowns' at upper storey levels
- Generous street width along St Mary's Butts
- Pre-existent car-free areas along Hosier Street/Düsseldorf Way
- High levels of public sector land ownership
- Willing and engaging landowners with appetite for regeneration and redevelopment
- Highly accessible public transport location

#### Height Classification Zones

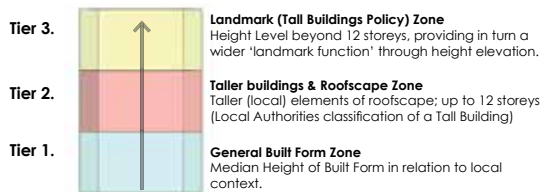


Figure 5 EXISTING 'MEAN' HEIGHT DIAGRAM AND TALLER BUILDINGS INDICATING BUILDING 'CROWN' CHARACTERISTIC

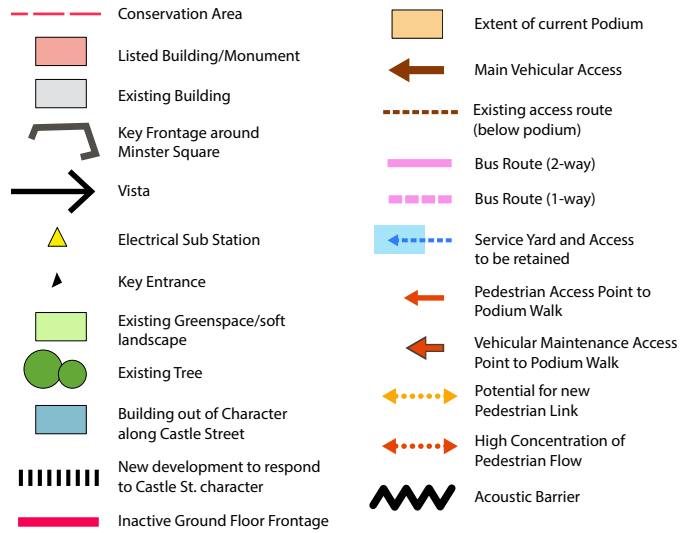


Figure 6 SITE CONSTRAINTS DIAGRAM



## 2. THE MASTER PLAN

### 2.1 PUBLIC REALM LED MASTER PLAN

The driver behind the redevelopment of the Hosier Street/ BSM area of Reading is to create a new destination from the void created by the demolition of the former Civic Centre and repair the fractured fabric of the peripheral townscape in the location.

The area houses some of Reading’s oldest and greatest buildings, 1970’s shopping centres, and municipal infrastructure, and was previously the centre-piece of the ‘brave new world’ of the 1960’s and 1970’s town regeneration.

The master plan is therefore both a celebration in retrospective, as well as a progressive strategy for re-integrating this former architectural set-piece, more robustly and sustainably into the town centre of the future.

Key to the success of this will be the extent to which the master plan is lead by, and delivers on, the creation of a

new public realm for the community to adopt as one of the most inclusive, safest and flexible pieces of townscape in the Thames Valley.

Towns and cities are best and most frequently experienced at the street level. The master plan, as a multi level environment will need to work harder than most to ensure that quality and safety of public and private realm are provided at the upper levels of podium on BSM, as well as the service areas below podium, plus everything in-between.

The 3 dimensional master plan that acknowledges the ambition of land owners (including RBC) to deliver tall buildings, necessitates a particularly high quality approach to design at street level.

In part, this will be achieved by leveraging value from the existing heritage assets on the site, creating a network of open spaces and destinations that seeks to work with the wider planning and distribution

of uses in the town centre, and which establishes a new profile for Reading alongside existing investments.

The development of the site will focus on providing a distinctive, high-quality multi-functional place within the western area of Reading’s Central Core. The area will convey its own unique character and sense of place as a tall and dense urban quarter, whilst retaining historical associations and conserving or enhancing the adjoining Conservation Area in a way that strengthens local identity and where possible re-knits the street pattern back into the surrounding area.



Figure 7 HISTORIC STREET PATTERN IN 1900 (BEFORE IDR)

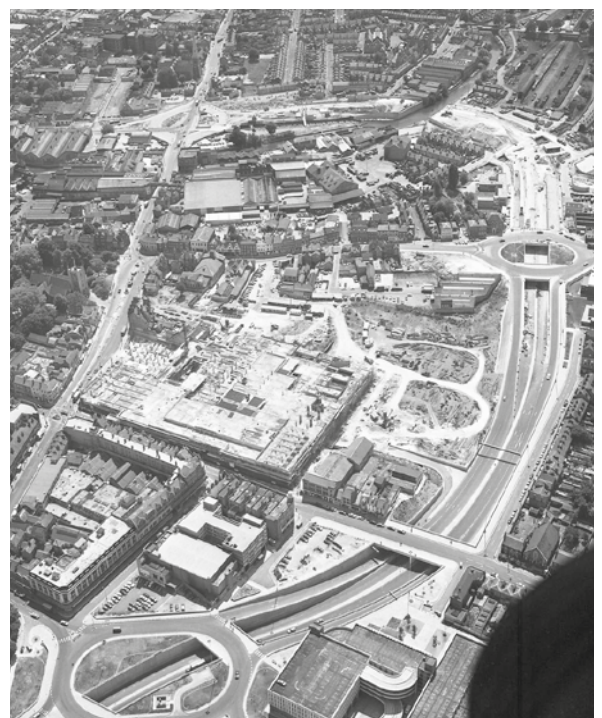


Figure 8 1970'S INTERVENTION (CIVIC CENTRE, IDR)

## 2.2 MASTER PLAN RATIONALE

The site has much to offer in as far as it occupies a major parcel of mixed-use land between the more specifically retail core of the town centre, and adjacent infrastructure/residential areas.

Consequently the pressure for quality public realm, new squares and spaces, and linkages thereto, resulting in a reconnected piece of townscape, is considerable.

The master plan rationale therefore, requires a solution that is greater than the sum of its parts. The strategy of quality buildings, around a network of squares, streets and spaces is greatest when delivered as a whole.

The master plan seeks to ‘borrow’ from heritage assets and adjacencies. Thus the churchyard of St Mary’s becomes the largest new greenspace in the town after Forbury Gardens, Düsseldorf Way becomes the key street

access linking the visual accents of the Hexagon Theatre and St Mary’s Minster, and Queen’s walk becomes Reading’s answer to the New York High Line aerial park and restored greenspace, maximising the value of this under celebrated space.

The range of block sizes seeks to tread a balance between the desire to reinstate the lost historical street pattern, and allow for larger, deeper format perimeter blocks to support town centre residential uses and above and retail at ground floor.

The site should be a place of discovery, where views and vistas both hold, but also lead the view, mixing grand avenues, with smaller, intimate lanes and spaces which will become the town centre streets for the communities of tomorrow.

Interfacing with almost all of Reading’s major communication arteries, the master plan will provide a ground-plane resource for a larger draw of citizens,

and at the upper levels, the site will make a valuable contribution towards Reading’s skyline and longer-term city-status aspirations.

Consequently, the redevelopment will add significant value to the town on a host of levels, establishing ‘community capital’ as the metric against which this success is measured. This will ensure the necessary balance between building heights, quality of materials, density, space afforded to the public realm and an affordable, dynamic and inclusive place to live and work.

The development will need to work harder than most to make financial contributions to the ambitious programme of public realm measures, and the scale of development will need to increase beyond historic growth.

The master plan framework combines quantum, mass and space to deliver this programme, whilst respecting the sensitive nature of the surrounding areas.

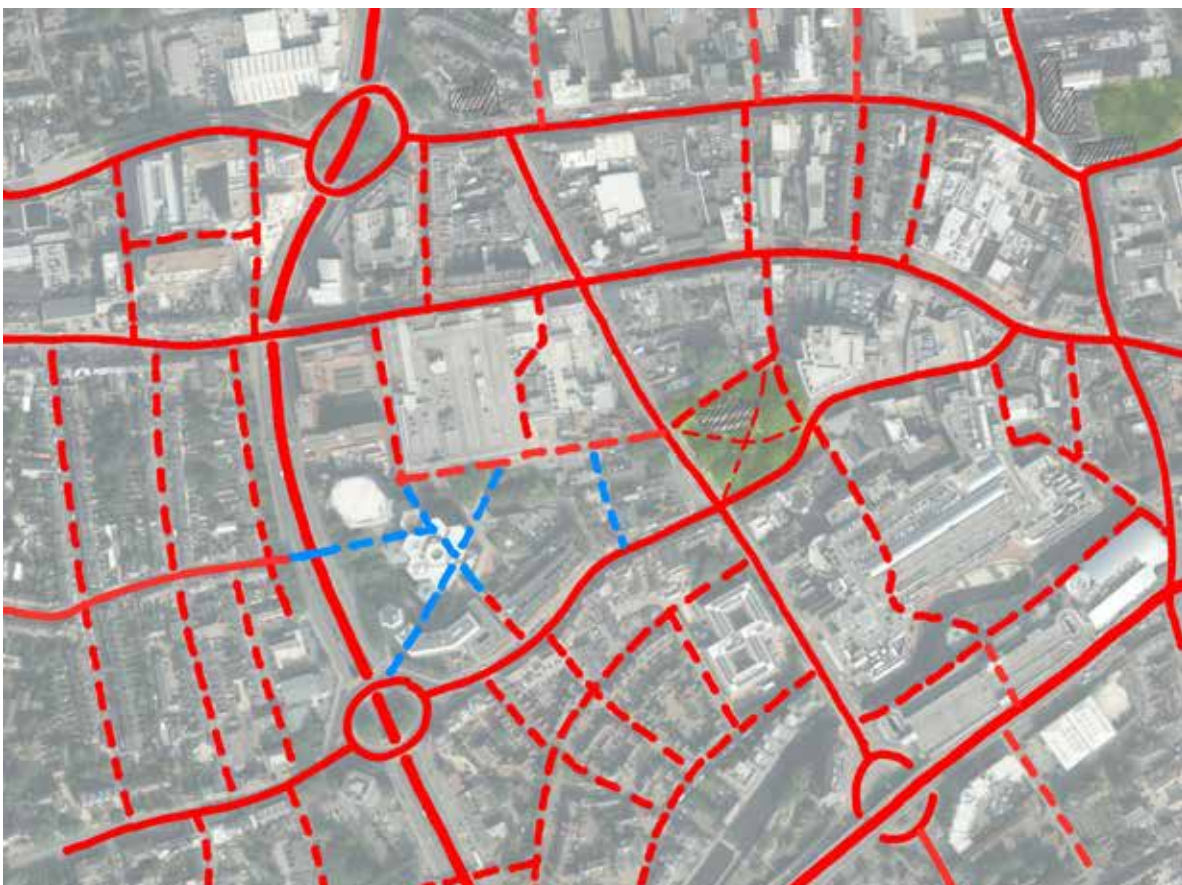


Figure 9 REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY





Figure 10 FRAMEWORK MASTER PLAN



- 1 Magistrate Site
- 2 Thames Valley Police Site
- 3 New Minster Square
- 4 Hexagon Plaza - flexible events space at podium level
- 5 Tower Square
- 6 Minster Place
- 7 Gun Street Square
- 8 Queens Walk 'Greenstreet'
- 9 20 storey residential landmark tower located on IDR
- 10 Vista to Landmark / Corner
- 11 Potential Areas for Local Market
- 12 New Lane Connection
- 13 Shoulder height set backs along Conservation Area/Castle Street
- 14 Indicative BSM Development
- 15 Residential with generous balconies and Garden Courtyards
- 16 5 storey mixed use block (commercial on ground floor, residential on upper floors)
- 17 7-9 storey mixed use block (commercial on ground floor, residential on upper floors)
- 18 6 storey residential block
- 19 Potential/opportunity for future bridge link
- 20 Direct pedestrian route
- 21 1 - 1.5 storey retail pods or permanent 'market stalls' wrapped around Sub Station
- 22 Vehicular (restricted) access possible
- 23 Improved entrance situation to the Hexagon... making it part of Hexagon Plaza
- 24 Improvements to pavements, carriageway and bus stops around BSM
- 25 Activation of southern facade along Dusseldorf Way/Hosier St. Provide spill out space for restaurants/cafes
- 26 Potential for outdoor space at the Hexagon lower ground floor level (below podium level)
- 27 Reduce the impact of the IDR to the development area in terms of noise, pollution, and visual intrusion. Consider acoustic barriers as part of the underground car park structure along the IDR edge.

## 2.3 CHARACTER AREAS AND KEY COMPONENTS

The architecture and historic evolution of the site can be reasonably proportioned into three character areas. Between them, they contain some of Reading's oldest buildings, the first large-scale shopping mall to be built in the town, and the former civic and municipal quarter.

Consequently, each of these lends itself to an alternative approach which is, (respectively) to:

- a) Conserve
- b) Enhance and refurbish, and
- c) Redevelop

The master plan will seek to preserve these differences in character, whilst unifying the wider site into a whole area regeneration opportunity.

Specific attributes for these character areas are described below:

### *Hexagon Quarter*

Hexagon Quarter will be a distinctive, dense and high-quality multi-functional urban quarter within Reading's Central Core. The site will provide a unique character and sense of place that will be unified by a high quality public realm.

The urban pattern of streets and blocks builds on existing connections and forms new links to make this quarter an integrated piece of townscape.

### *Minster Square*

Minster Square, the oldest part of Reading, will be enhanced as a public square and open space within its historic setting. Development will contribute positively to conserving and enhancing the adjoining conservation area in a way that strengthens local identity.

Particular attention will be paid to protecting and enhancing the listed St Mary's Church and its churchyard setting as public realm/open space to serve the development of the area. St. Mary's Butts will be brought into the square setting and improve the functionality of this street as a place for local markets.

### *3 - St. Mary's Butts / Oxford Road*

The streets and edges along Broad Street Mall will be enhanced to provide a coherent public realm, which will link the Development Framework Area to the remainder of the Town Centre and create a seamless appearance.



Indicative perspective view from Minster Square



Indicative perspective view from south



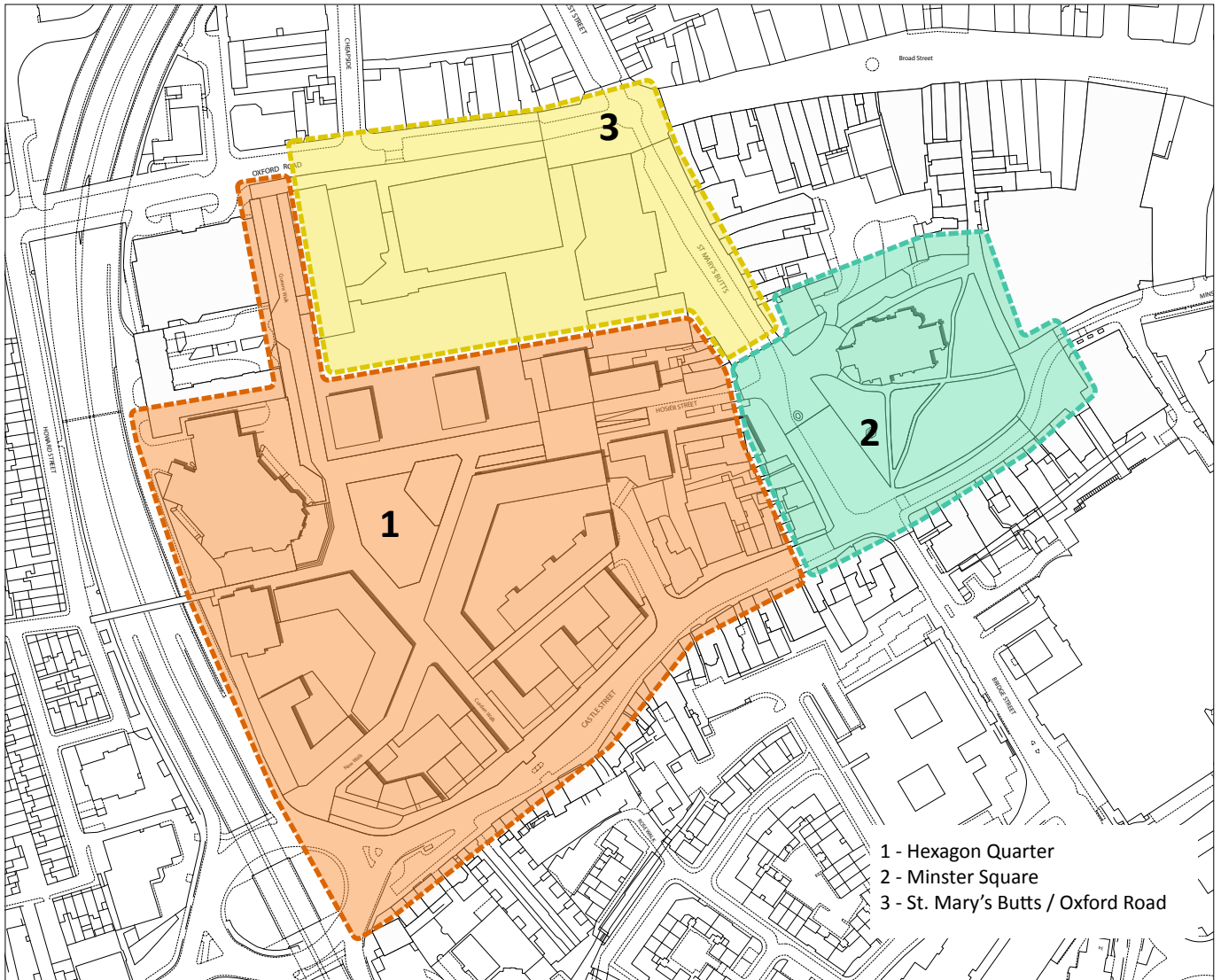


Figure 11 CHARACTER AREAS



Indicative perspective view from Castle St. roundabout



334 Indicative perspective view axis between Hexagon and Minster

## 3. PUBLIC REALM PARAMETERS

### 3.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Central Area of Reading has very limited open spaces and public realm and the site should ensure public open space is multifunctional and high-performing. Much of the open spaces and public realm in the Central Area

is also in need of enhancement and new development should contribute to providing high quality open space as part of their development. The public realm/open space strategy for the development will require:

- Areas of open space and interconnecting public realm to be well designed, functional, adaptable and capable of efficient maintenance. These spaces must be designed to ensure a vibrant, lively and thriving public realm.
- The public spaces will provide both a place to stop and reflect, while also acting as an important network of thoroughfares.
- Development to improve and enhance St Mary's Butts as a multi-functional shared public space that manages buses and other traffic within a shared surface area and integrates with an extended open space area including the graveyard, the churchyard, associated open areas and the historic structures in St Mary's Butts.
- The (possible) removal of the disabled/temp car parking from Hosier Street to provide a new shared surface market space.
- Private communal amenity areas within developments that also provide some visual benefits and sense of openness within the development.
- Significantly enhanced existing routes including Queens Walk and Düsseldorf Way as active multi uses spaces with high quality landscape treatment that mitigates against uncomfortable micro climatic impacts. Each space should have it's own distinctive character – soft landscape for Queens Walk and hard landscape (reflective of Düsseldorf's cobbled 'Altstadt') for Düsseldorf Way.
- Welcoming shared surface streets at podium level and that relate to the surrounding development in terms of active frontages and entrances and include appropriate lighting improvements. New streets should be comfortable and appropriate for their localised use in terms of wind/microclimate considerations
- Two principle 'pedestrian crossroads' within the development: the westerly junction will be to the south-west of the entrance to the Hexagon Theatre and the easterly one shall be within the open space park. Development shall front these key junctions and not intrude on sightlines, thereby maintaining legibility and way-finding throughout the development
- The new shared surface market space is likely to be restricted at its junction with St. Mary's Butts where the electricity sub-station is likely to be retained. There is potential here for the market to more visibly re-connect with the street pattern in this area, via hard surface improvements and could potentially mirror the triangular area to the west of The Minster, opposite. This area should include facilities to enable higher quality stalls to be erected quickly and then removed to allow this area to be used for other activities when the market is not operating. The tea hut could be relocated into this space into an enlarged kiosk with long opening hours, to help to animate this space.
- Designs that utilise existing trees as far as practicable. New street trees should be planted into the ground wherever possible, but where over the podium, planters or tanks should be used.



## DESIGN CODE

Development proposals will need to include details of layout and landscaping for all the areas of public realm to produce high quality streets and spaces that can be used by all members of the community. This will include proposals for hard and soft surfacing, tree and landscape planting, street furniture including seating and facilities for safe children’s play, signage, lighting, public art, interpretation boards to explain the history of the area and how the new development links back and connects to and/or rediscovers that history. Many of these elements will need to be considered as part of the development of a design code for the whole area which will be prepared and agreed as part of the first applications for development of the framework area. The design code will also cover building materials, architectural detailing, etc., with the intention of ensuring a high quality and coordinated approach to the detailed design and finishes for the area.

## MATERIALS

Reading town centre features a strong palette of paving and hard landscape materials defined in the late 1990’s and carried forward to this day. The combination of red brick paviors and granite detailing is a robust and recognisable hallmark of the town centre.

There is an ambition to more fully integrate the wider site area into the same, or similar palette, continuing to employ the same materials, although with variation around form and scale or paving units.

Complete reinvention of a new palette for the site should be avoided, although materials should respond to a hierarchy of movement, i.e. the best materials for the slowest and most discerning movement users with highest quality materials for pedestrian and cycle areas.

Paving types should be consistent for areas of primary routes, and change at key junctures, such as main spaces and movement nodes. Where possible, and expressed through a continuity of materials, pedestrian and cycle movement should be prioritised with materials continuing onto and through vehicle carriageways.

## STREET FURNITURE

Much of the street furniture in the town reflects the high percentage of Victorian architecture in the town centre, and this traditional approach contrasts with contemporary architecture and the regeneration of the Broad Street Mall/Hosier Street area. Consequently, a fresh approach to street furniture could be taken to the wider site, reinforcing the individual character of specific spaces (especially the area around St Mary’s Church, and the Hexagon), but ensure integration across the site as a whole.

This will necessitate different developers and land owners, agreeing and working to a common palette and site wide public realm code.



Indicative examples for public realm treatment

**LIGHTING**

Lighting will be expected to provide good levels of safety and performance to all areas. Poorly lit areas should be avoided and applicants bringing forward proposals within the area will need to provide a comprehensive lighting strategy that will need to integrate with surrounding land ownership areas.

The proposed residential areas may present a constraint to high level and excessive lighting, especially late at night, and care should be taken to achieve a balance between the amenity of residents, and the safety and functionality of the public realm.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the lighting of feature buildings, including St Mary’s Church, the Hexagon, and new towers/tall buildings on the site. Individual squares and spaces could develop an individual lighting strategy, unified via an overall approach to lighting connecting roads and streets.

**PLANTING**

The wider area is home to some of Reading’s greatest and most significant trees, particularly in the area around St Mary’s churchyard. These include both indigenous and exotic trees and their success over many decades or centuries of growth may prove an indicator for choice of planting street trees elsewhere.

However, it is also noted that several of these species (Indian Bean tree (Catalpa bignonioides) for example), are wide spreading trees and suited only to more generous public spaces and not the intimate streetscape envisaged for much of the area.

Street trees therefore will need to be predominately fastigate in form, although tree height need not be a constraint, with trees providing valuable cooling and shading during summer months in urban areas. Tree planting positions should be decided with orientation, shadowing and views/outlook in mind.

Additional planting, especially along the green corridor ‘highline’ route envisaged for Queens Walk, should be low maintenance, robust and drought tolerant. This may lead to the identification of grass and prairie species which work best planted in large swathes or groups for maximum effect.

In addition, planting can provide opportunities for playful interaction with the landscape. As followed in several towns and cities, edible planting strategies may be adopted and promote community gardening activity where space allows, encouraging social interaction and good neighbourhood.

**MAINTENANCE**

Material selection should be robust and durable, capable of withstanding vehicular traffic in areas, and avoid complex patterns or shapes that can cause issues with the replacement of materials after intervention from statutory providers.

Designs should allow for safe and continuous access to all areas of the public realm for maintenance and repair work but equally take a balanced



Indicative examples for public realm treatment



approach to the excessive introduction of maintenance corridors and access zones in the public realm that can have a detrimental effect on the achievement of quality places.

Sustainable material choices should be capable of replication and re-ordering in the case of fault/breakage, and all materials should be tested for fitness for purpose.

Where possible, low maintenance materials should be employed on both buildings and in the public realm that do not require treatment, preservation applications or complicated cleansing operations.

**PUBLIC ART/PLAY**

Historically, public art has most often been expressed through the ornament and decoration of great buildings, sculpture, water features and edifices such as steps and staircases in the public realm are additional elements that can make a contribution to the richness of the built environment.

As noted in the site's inclusion in the western tall building cluster, there is a requirement for high-quality architecture. This requirement places specific emphasis that where buildings meet the ground, the standard of architectural detailing needs to be particularly strong.

Public art as part of building definition and articulation can make a positive contribution to the public realm

and impression of the area as a quality destination and encourage inward investment, neighbourhood stewardship and community.

Beyond buildings themselves, public art and play should be integrated into the very essence of the public realm. This means extending beyond a 'catalogue' approach to design and specification, instead ensuring that all aspects of the street can make a contribution to forming a series of artistic pieces that are functional, playful and artistic.

Play, where specifically provided, should cater for all ages ranges (children and adult) as well as make provision for accessible and disabled play.



Figure 12 EXTENT OF PUBLIC REALM

### 3.2 HEXAGON QUARTER

*In common with Reading's renaissance to deliver new squares and spaces, the Hexagon Quarter will be a transformative event for this area of the town.*

*Largely driven by new residential development with mixed uses at ground floor, the sub-podium service level void created by the Civic Centre will allow for this to become Reading's primary car-free (at least on-street) residential community, and therewith, create a new place-typology of urban living and animated residential streets at ground floor, adjacent to vibrant town-centre uses.*

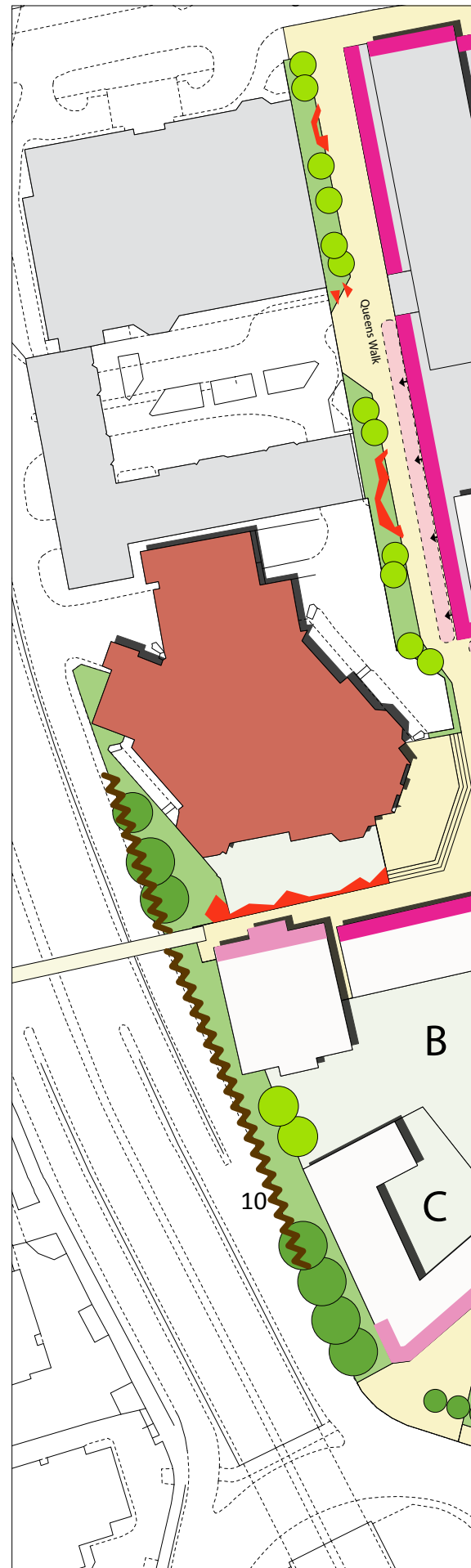
Above ground level, Hexagon Quarter will provide new tall buildings as part of the 'Western Cluster' in the RBC Tall Buildings Strategy, subservient to development at the mainline station, but nonetheless a significant landmark quarter for the town with long-range and skyline viability.

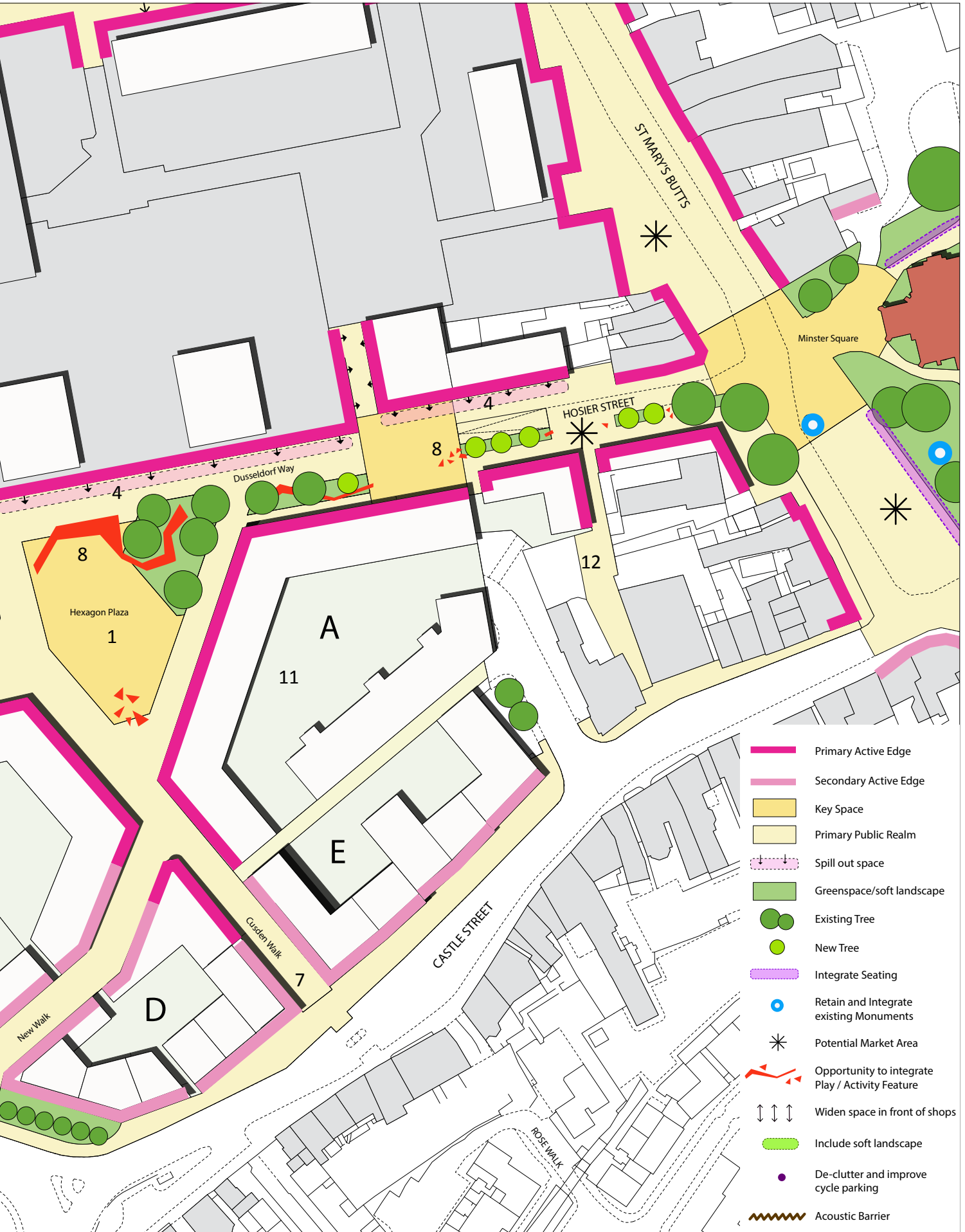
As will all areas of tall buildings in the town, additional care will need to be taken to maintain quality and reduce shading at ground level, whilst utilising materials that are safe, high quality and of lasting durability.

Public Realm Design Principles for Minster Square are as follows:

- 1 Hexagon Plaza will be at the heart of the new quarter. This space is a node of key movement routes, incorporates the main entrance to the Hexagon and is large enough to hold events. The triangle of mature trees will be retained and integrated into the new landscape design.
- 2 The entrance to the Hexagon will be improved with new broader steps leading to a more generous lower space...this will make the Hexagon part of the Plaza. The steps should be designed to allow seating and outdoor performances to take place.
- 3 A walkway at podium level should create a connection to the IDR and visual link from the Hexagon Quarter to Howard Street. There is potential for a pedestrian bridge or wider decking across the IDR to reinstate a physical link that used to exist historically.
- 4 The ground floor facade of BSM should be opened up and activated with restaurant/cafe and retail uses. The width of Dusseldorf Way and Queens Walk allow for spill out space that can capture the southerly aspect.

- 5 Queens Walk will be transformed into a greenway that incorporates extensive planting, seating and play features.
- 6 A new more direct pedestrian link will be created from Castle St roundabout. This new walk will guide people to the centre of Hexagon Quarter and Reading Town Centre beyond. The row of existing trees has been retained.
- 7 Cusden Walk will be retained in its current position.
- 8 Reading has a lack of play spaces in the Town Centre. Hexagon Quarter, being car free at podium level, has the opportunity to integrate imaginative play spaces as part of the public realm design. This can add to the sense of place and unique character of the quarter.
- 9 Due to the nature of the Hexagon a lower level space will be created along the south of the Theatre. This space should see a creative design solution as outdoor space for the Hexagon, which could include a climbing wall along the edge.
- 10 Reduce the impact of the IDR onto the development area in terms of noise, pollution and visual intrusion. Consider acoustic barriers as part of the built development, such as the basement car park. The edge to the IDR should be greened as much as possible integrating existing trees.
- 11 New urban blocks will be created with private garden courtyards.
- 12 There is potential to open up an alleyway from Hosier Street to Castle Street via the courtyard of the 'Sun Inn' pub. This would create a permeable townscape and could add to the existing character of alleyways with **339** shading.





340 Figure 13 HEXAGON QUARTER PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PRINCIPLES

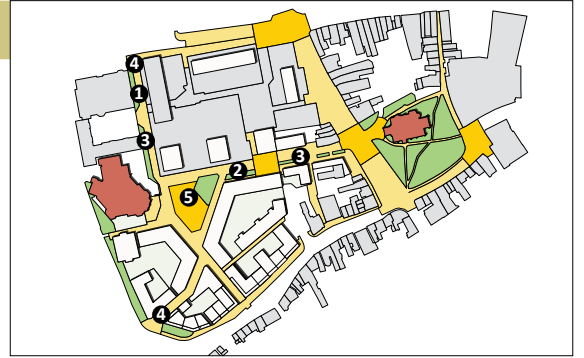


## HEXAGON QUARTER - ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

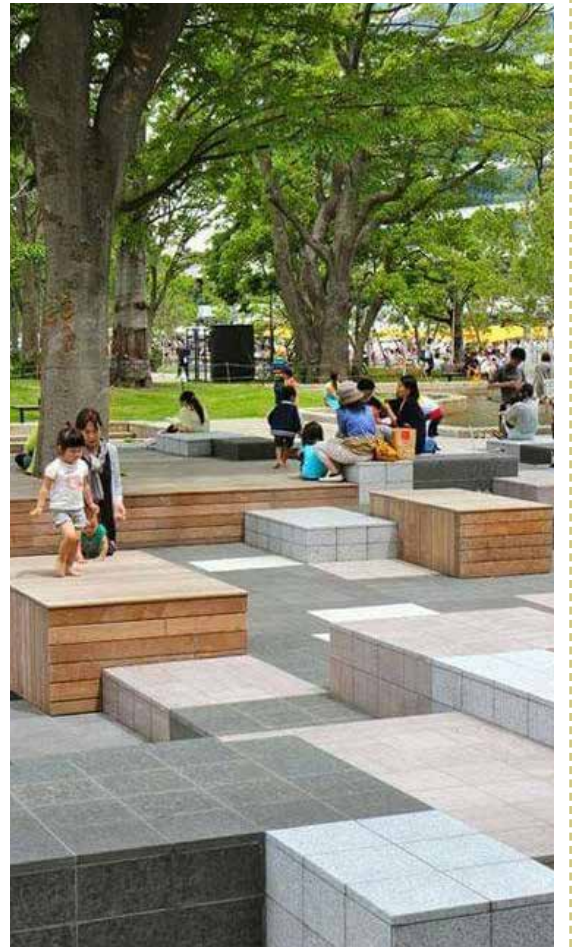
### Landscape and Public Realm



1 Create opportunities for soft landscape along Queens Walk



2 Planting combined with seating in well defined containers along Dusseldorf Way



5 Playful combination of hard and soft landscaped areas... could be of inspiration for Hexagon Plaza



3 Maximise opportunities for soft landscape



4 Consider colour as a means of creating a unique public realm...





Play and Activity Features



1 Imaginative play features can be part of the public realm concept



5 Consider a climbing wall for the lower ground facade facing the Hexagon (below podium)



2 Bespoke sculptural play / art pieces can give a unique sense of place....possible inspiration for Hexagon Plaza/Dusseldorf Way



3 Play may include a cultural theme reflecting the Hexagon



4 Consider play and activities for all ages and abilities....





## HEXAGON QUARTER - ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

### Flexible Events Space



**1** Consider the suitability for a variety of events in the design of spaces and architecture



**2** Create spaces that allow for temporary structures ... design in flexibility

**4** Consider seating steps to the Hexagon entrance suitable for performances



**3** Consider change in trends... allow for a space that can change with the times. Semi-permanent structures can be removed / replaced easily without affecting the principle structure of the space



New Urban Blocks



**1** Create a high quality urban living quarter with plenty of green within private garden courtyards or podium gardens (BSM), the architecture should be contemporary and allow for mix of units creating a varied occupancy



**2** Consider the needs of all residents within the garden courts as well as the microclimate and visual amenity



**3** Well-sized balconies or roof terraces should be a necessity for each apartment in order to generate well-being and comfort for residents



### 3.3 MINSTER SQUARE

Minster Square is a celebration of Reading’s oldest building in continuous use for over 1,000 years. As set out under Historic Context above, St Mary’s Minster occupies a major position in the historic heart of the town.

The Bridge Street/St Mary’s Butts/Gun Street/ Castle Street crossroads, marks the early commercial and spiritual heart of the town, yet since first Reading Abbey, and latterly the railway, the centre of gravity pushed northwards and then westwards.

St. Mary’s Minster is a magnificent building with links back to 979 AD. It is set within the context of a mature churchyard amidst spectacular trees and ancient stones.
















Although clearly a special and sacred space, the combination of Minster, medieval frontage and greenspace, could combine to reinstate one of the town’s forgotten, yet greatest spaces, enhancing public realm and carefully reconfiguring this as a ‘new’ square.

The public realm design principles for Minster Square are described below:

- 1 Create a square/focal space in front of St. Mary’s Church. A coherent paving should run across the street to link into the Hexagon Quarter. The Victorian Fountain must be retained and integrated into this space.
- 2 The widest part of St. Mary’s Butts should see a re-configuration and consolidation of movement routes to reduce traffic impact and create a space with greater functionality. A new market square should

be created along the western churchyard wall offering a new and more visible location for the daily market.

- 3 The existing monuments and features, such as the Victorian Fountain and War memorial will be retained.
- 4 Seating should be sensitively integrated along the existing churchyard walls. This is particularly desirable along the wall facing the new market square capturing the south-westerly aspect. The walls along the path to the north of the Minster are already used by people sitting on them... this should be formalised and enhanced.
- 5 The appearance of the service yard should be improved.

-  Primary Active Edge
-  Secondary Active Edge
-  Key Space
-  Primary Public Realm
-  Spill out space
-  Greenspace/soft landscape
-  Existing Tree
-  New Tree
-  Integrate Seating
-  Retain and Integrate existing Monuments
-  Potential Market Area
-  Opportunity to integrate Play / Activity Feature
-  Widen space in front of shops
-  Include soft landscape
-  De-clutter and improve cycle parking

#### Illustrative Examples



Create opportunities for seating along the churchyard wall and towards the new market square



Sensitively integrate seating along the churchyard edges



Figure 14 MINSTER SQUARE PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Re-configure the movement routes along St. Mary's Butts to integrate a new market square



Provide a new pavement for Minster Square that enhances its historic importance, aids pedestrian priority and calms traffic.



### 3.4 ST. MARY'S BUTTS / OXFORD ROAD

*Rounding off the site and presenting a northern facade to the existing town, the primarily public realm enhancements to both St Mary's Butts and the Oxford Road, will be a welcome refresh to an area dominated by tarmac and service vehicles.*

*Widening pavements, and integrating a palette of materials common to the new quarter as a whole will strengthen the integrity of the site and encourage footfall from the main east west route of Broad Street/Oxford Road.*

Smaller squares at road junctions and a redefinition of streets as spaces, achieved by widening and decluttering, will contribute to enhancements in this area, and lead to a recognition of the significant investment above ground.

The public realm design principles for St. Mary's Butts / Oxford Road are described below:

- 1 The northern edge of BSM is currently constrained by the location of bus stops along Oxford Road leaving little space for pedestrians and no spill out space for retail units. The footpath should be widened and bus stops located within the carriageway.
- 2 The public realm of the junction of Broad Street/St Mary's Butts has potential for some improvement. Soft landscape, unified street furniture and formal cycle parking should be provided. The removal of the railings and signal posts should be explored.
- 3 The pavement to the east of BSM should see a continuation of material from the south of St. Mary's Butts. Space for market stall should be retained.
- 4 The pavement west of BSM feels undefined with street clutter and pinch points. Improvements to bus stops and routing should be explored to create a more continuous public realm along this street.
- 5 Improve street surface, pavement and bus stops along Oxford Road.



#### Illustrative Examples



Consider combined Planter and seating units



Larger trees would have more impact

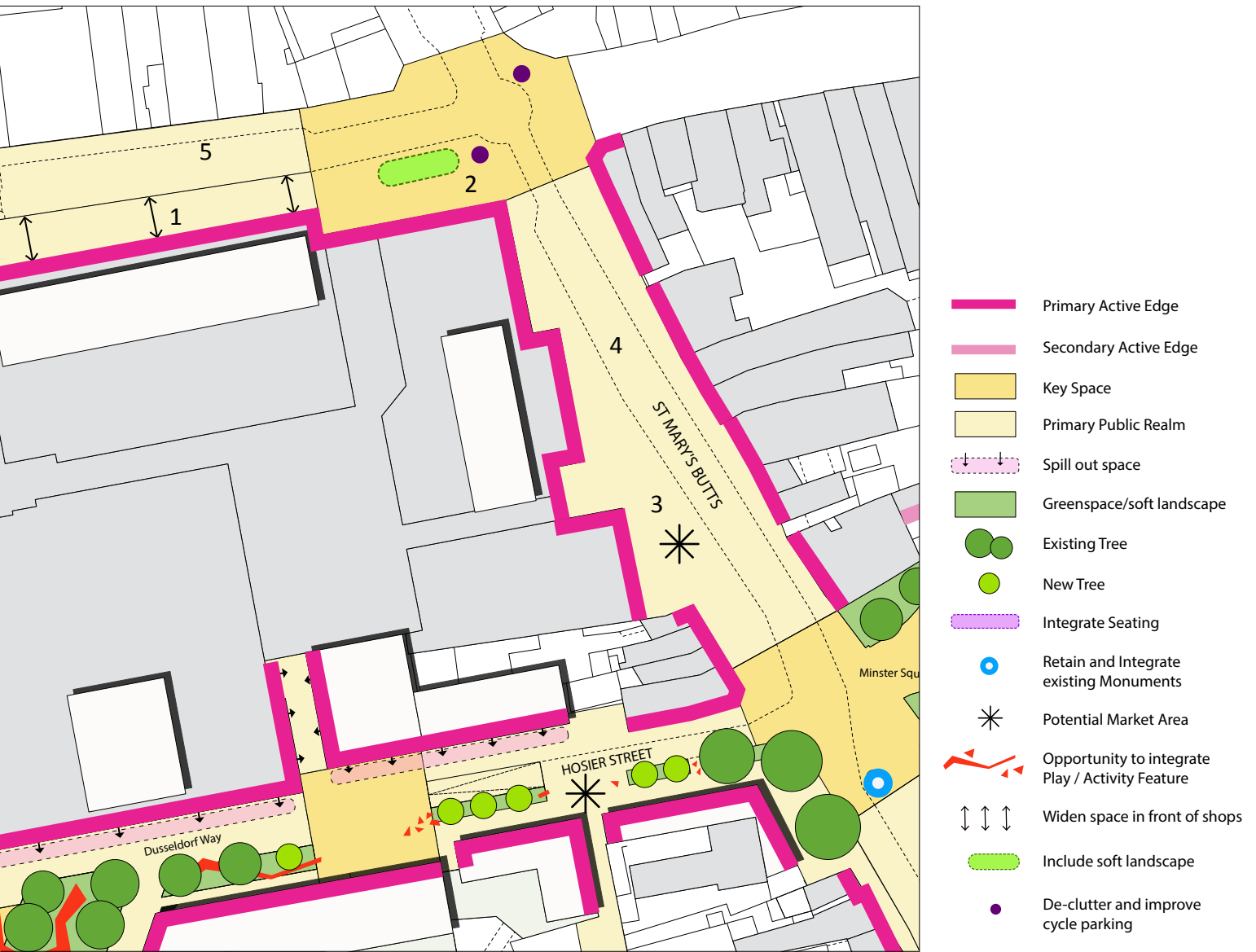


Figure 15 ST. MARY'S BUTTS/OXFORD ROAD PUBLIC REALM DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Small landscape space with seating



Simple clutter free, timeless cycle hoops





# 4. MOVEMENT PARAMETERS

## 4.1 PEDESTRIAN CYCLE MOVEMENT

The development of the site shall provide legible, permeable streets and spaces, linking into existing access points and spaces adjacent to the site and investigating, where possible the reinstatement of the historic street pattern of the area including the repairing and forming new links to Castle Street. This includes examining the potential to link the development area to the Baker Street/Howard Street area to the west of the Inner Distributor Road (IDR). This could be via a new pedestrian/cycle bridge or other form of decking over the IDR provided as part of the development.

The development of the area should also look to enhance links to the west of the IDR for both pedestrians and

cyclists to provide better access to the facilities and attractions within the development area. The development of the area should also look to enhance links to the other parts of the Town Centre for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Pedestrian/Cycle movement principles should aim to provide the following:

- Access within the area by foot and cycle will be improved and barriers to this improved access will be overcome;
- Provision of an accessible and welcoming street pattern to pedestrians and cyclists, successfully linking and integrating with the surrounding areas, both visually and physically;
- Provide enhanced access to the

Hexagon and its environs;

- The removal of the present market storage area will provide an opportunity to open up a new route from Broad Street Mall, southwards to link into Castle Street via the Sun Inn yard area;
- Upgrading of the pedestrian/cycle surfaces and re-surfacing of Hosier Street as a shared surface which acts as an entrance to the Hexagon Quarter linking to spaces and public realm within the development area;
- Provide new shared public realm for pedestrians/cyclists at the podium level throughout Hexagon Quarter, providing north-south links to the Mall, Queens Walk and

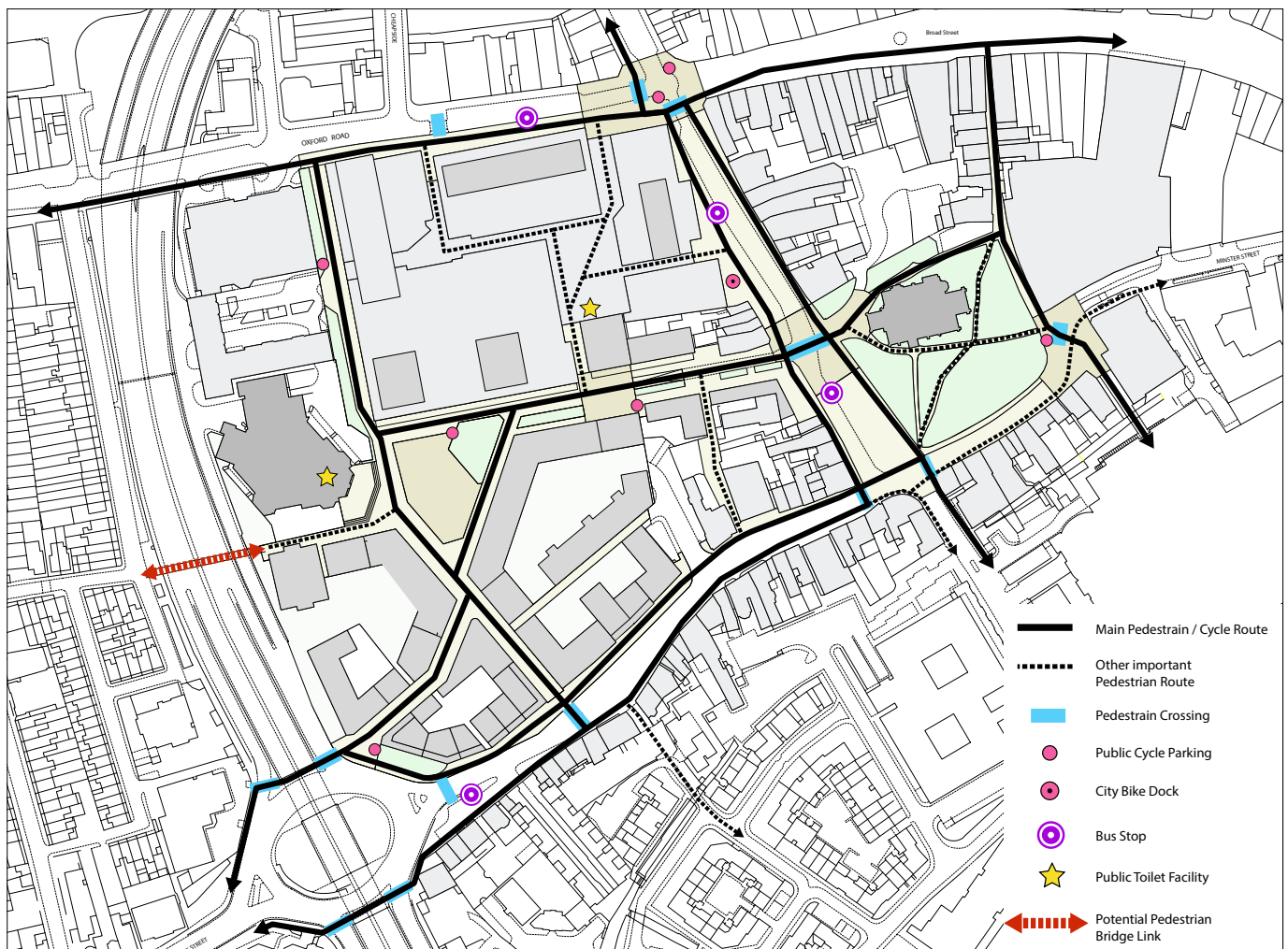


Figure 16 PEDESTRIAN CYCLE MOVEMENT DIAGRAM



linking through at various points to Castle Street;

- Permitted cycle access throughout Hexagon Quarter.
- Development shall deliver improved pedestrian connectivity between the basement and podium levels, for pedestrians and

cyclists and those with mobility difficulties;

### 4.2 VEHICULAR MOVEMENT

The principles for vehicular access build upon the existing routes and access points creating public vehicular access to the edges of the Town Centre, but limiting vehicular access within the central areas to taxis, buses and servicing/emergency vehicles.

The existing undercroft parking and servicing zones (under the podium level) will be utilised and enhanced to provide residents and customer parking areas and delivery/service zones to cater for the development area.

Vehicular movement principles should aim to provide the following:

- Development in the area will benefit from and contribute

towards forthcoming major transport improvements;

- Provision of a new shared surface enhancement of St Mary’s Butts which remains a primary bus route and dropping off point.
- Integrate bus stops into the public realm in a way that minimises a negative impact onto the environs of public spaces. This is particularly important along St. Mary’s Butts and the space close to Reading Minster.
- The existing access/service road linking Castle Street with the multi-storey car park to the Broad Street Mall and exiting onto the slip road off the IDR should be maintained. Opportunities should be taken to enhance pedestrian access and the environment of the road;

- Limited vehicular access to the Hosier Street area primarily for servicing only.

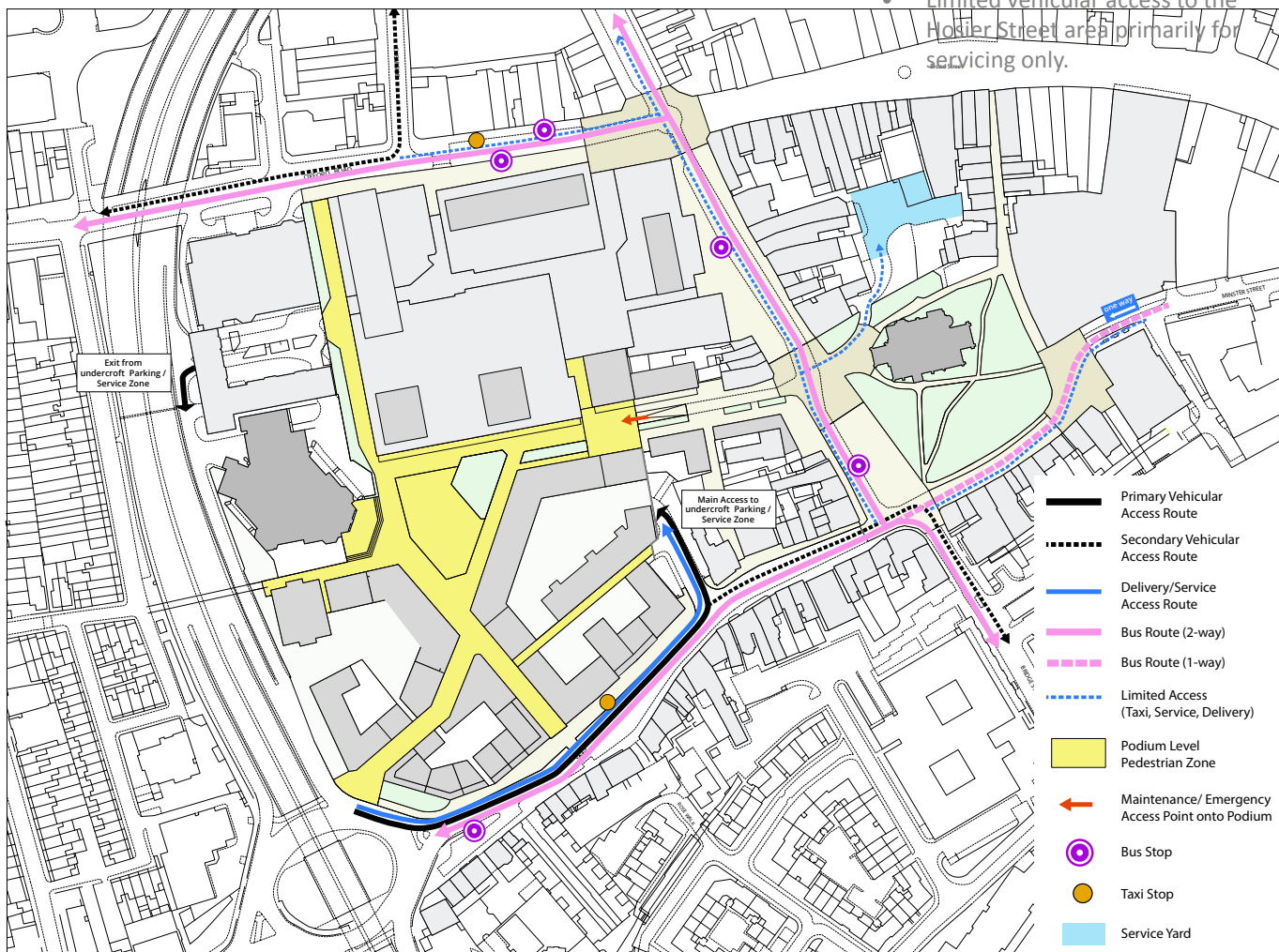


Figure 17 VEHICULAR MOVEMENT DIAGRAM

### 4.3 CAR PARKING

The area already provides significant numbers of car parking spaces, with the Broad Street Mall Car parking providing important public car parking for the users of the town centre. The Council will be reluctant to see any significant loss of public car parking facilities in this location albeit the development above the Broad Street Mall will affect spaces within the existing decked car park and the spaces on the roof, most of which will be needed to for amenity areas to serve the proposed residential development.

New and replacement car parking will be required both to serve existing uses, new proposed commercial and

community uses and the significant new residential development that may occur in line with this framework. The following general principles apply:

- New and replacement car parking will be provided underneath the existing and any extended podium
- utilise the existing vehicular route for access
- Where located adjacent to the IDR, these car parking structures should be utilised to provide a barrier to noise

- Car parking areas should be naturally ventilated, as feasible
- There should be no parking at or above the existing podium level.

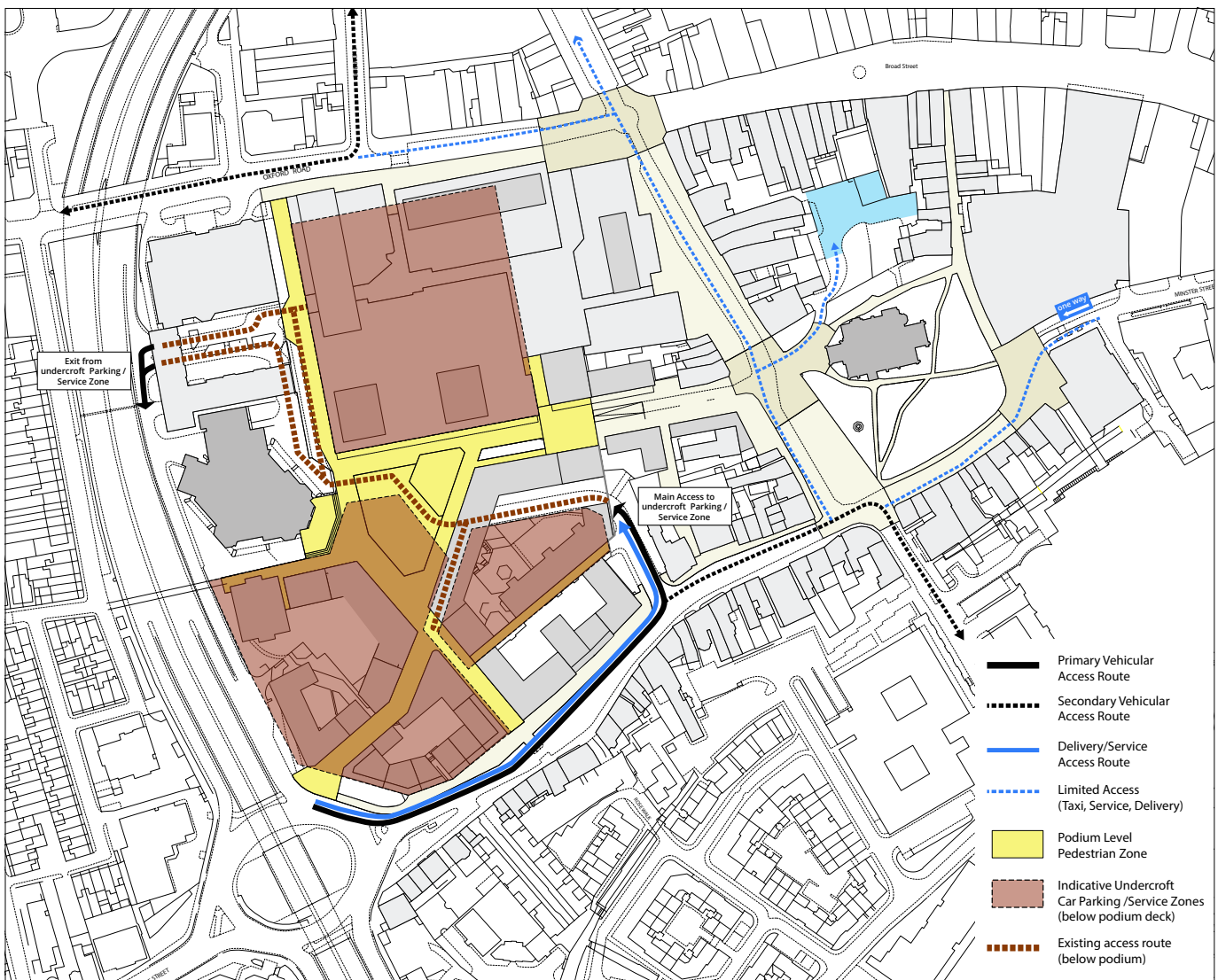


Figure 18 PARKING DIAGRAM (INDICATIVE)

**POLICY REQUIREMENT**

Car parking for new development should be provided in accordance with Policy TR5 in the Submission Draft Local Plan:

*CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING: Parking standards are contained in the Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD<sup>1</sup>. This notes that for town centre sites such as in this location, relatively low levels of parking provision will be acceptable. Any additional parking provided to serve new development will need to be carefully designed as part of schemes with access off the lower level access road. The policy also requires that such parking is capable of providing electrical charging points.*

The site lies within Zone 1 of the car parking zonal system where because of the accessibility to the transport hub in the central area, car parking standards can be relatively relaxed. The SPD provides indicative standards for car parking provision but in practice, the council will accept lower levels of provision. The Council will expect any application to be accompanied by a Travel Plan, which will include encouragement of car club vehicle usage with the provision of spaces to accommodate vehicles owned by such clubs. Parking provision should also give consideration to taxi parking and provision for dropping off.

The Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document also sets out standards for the provision of:

- Delivery and Servicing
- Cycle & Motorcycle/ Moped Parking
- Accessibility Parking including Disabled Parking provision
- General Parking Design and Layout

**4.4 GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

**SERVICING AND REFUSE**

Developments should provide appropriate storage facilities including appropriate storage for refuse facilities to serve the development and to enable easy and safe collection from the site in accordance with Policy H10 of the Submission Draft Local Plan. Applicants are recommended to discuss refuse disposal at an early stage in the pre application process.

**HEXAGON**

The Hexagon Theatre will be retained and enhanced as a cultural focus within the master plan. Access for deliveries and coach parking need to be integrated into the new development proposals and remain accessible during construction stages.

**MAGISTRATE’S COURT / POLICE STATION**

It is likely that the Magistrate’s Court and Police Station may come forward at different development stages. Their functionality needs to be maintained during the development.

**DELIVERIES**

The detailed development proposals will be required to set out a delivery strategy for the various uses within the master plan.

**TAXIS**

There is currently no taxi rank existing within the vicinity of the framework area. With the proposed increase in mixed uses within the framework area it is proposed to include parking bays for taxis along Castle Street and Oxford Road.

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY ACCESS**

Adequate access solutions for fire and rescue and emergency vehicles needs to be demonstrated by the future development proposals.

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<sup>1</sup> The current version can be found at: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1065/Revised-Parking-Standards-and-Design-Supplementary-Planning-Documents-Adopted-October-2011/pdf/Revised-Parking-Standards-And-Design-Supplementary-Planning-DocumentsOct11.pdf>



## 5. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS

### 5.1 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

#### LAND USE OBJECTIVES

The area has now lost much of its Civic function with the loss of the Civic offices and the likely vacating of the Thames Valley Police Headquarters building in the near future. However, the retention of the Hexagon Theatre (which may in the longer-term involve its replacement or enhancement) and the Magistrates' Courts means that the site retains important public facilities that complement the main attraction provided by the facilities of the Broad Street Mall.

The development of the site should maximise the value of existing and proposed public open spaces. These open spaces will provide a focus for additional retail and leisure uses within frontages to the Broad Street Mall, the Hexagon Theatre and the Magistrate Courts, but also create new spaces from under-utilised public realm in St Mary's Butts and in the Church Yard of St Mary's Minster.

The owners of the Broad Street Mall have recently invested in upgrading the shopping centre and intend to develop those facilities further. It is understood that they have purchased adjoining sites for future expansion. They have recently obtained planning permission for a pop-up facility that will include shops and restaurant/ bar facilities. In the longer term they intend to provide a cinema and other facilities within and on the edges of the shopping Centre.

The owners of the Broad Street Mall have other ambitious plans for the shopping centre and to develop significant residential development above the Mall building and its multi-storey car park. The Council welcomes and supports continued additional retail provision, with emphasis on and restaurants located around the edges of the Mall taking advantage of new public realm and open spaces. It also

welcomes and supports additions to the existing leisure provision within the area.

The development of the site will enhance St Mary's Butts as a shared space/public realm in conjunction with the churchyard around the Minster of St Mary's in order to provide an appropriate linking feature and setting between The Minster, the areas beyond the Minster, and the development site and to act as an attractive entrance to the development site.

The provision of a space of suitable size, agreed with the Council, for the Charter Market needs to be incorporated within the development area. It is possible that this might be linked to the open public realm area on the frontage of the site with St Mary's Butts. The position of the market should be within or adjacent to the thoroughfare into the site and to the entrances to the Broad Street Mall so that it provides a continuous shopping experience linking St Mary's Butts with the Mall.

While retaining and enhancing the existing civic, retail/commercial and leisure uses, the development of the site is likely to be largely residential-led although offices remains an appropriate use for this Town Centre location. Development will support retail uses at podium level, alongside new open space/park, multi-functional civic/market space and associated community facilities. The upper levels of development will create opportunities for private and affordable housing in the form of flats and possibly duplexes/maisonettes. Vertical integration of different uses in single buildings will be encouraged.

The owners of BSM currently propose the development of various blocks and towers above the existing Mall building. This could include 2/3 towers of increasing height westwards that will continue above the multi-storey car park that sits above a large part of the

Mall building. The site of the former Civic Offices and that of Thames Valley Police are likely to be predominantly developed for residential uses. The opportunities for tall buildings within these sites has been explored in relation to the various constraints affecting the site and 3-5 tall buildings of varying heights are proposed.

Residential uses should provide a range of sizes and tenures of units and meet the Council's policies in terms of the provision of affordable housing.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

There is a high expectation that the development in the area will provide policy compliant levels of affordable housing which include high proportions of social rent and affordable rent dwellings to meet the identified needs of Reading. Developers should seek to meet the requirements in relevant policies and comply with the requirements and considerations set out in the Council’s Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

**HOUSING MIX**

The development of the area will provide a mix of different sized units within the development. In accordance with policy CR6 in the Submission Draft Local Plan this should comprise a mixture of one, two and three bedroom units. As a guide, a maximum of 40% of units should be 1-bed/studios, and a minimum of 5% of units should be at least 3-bed units.

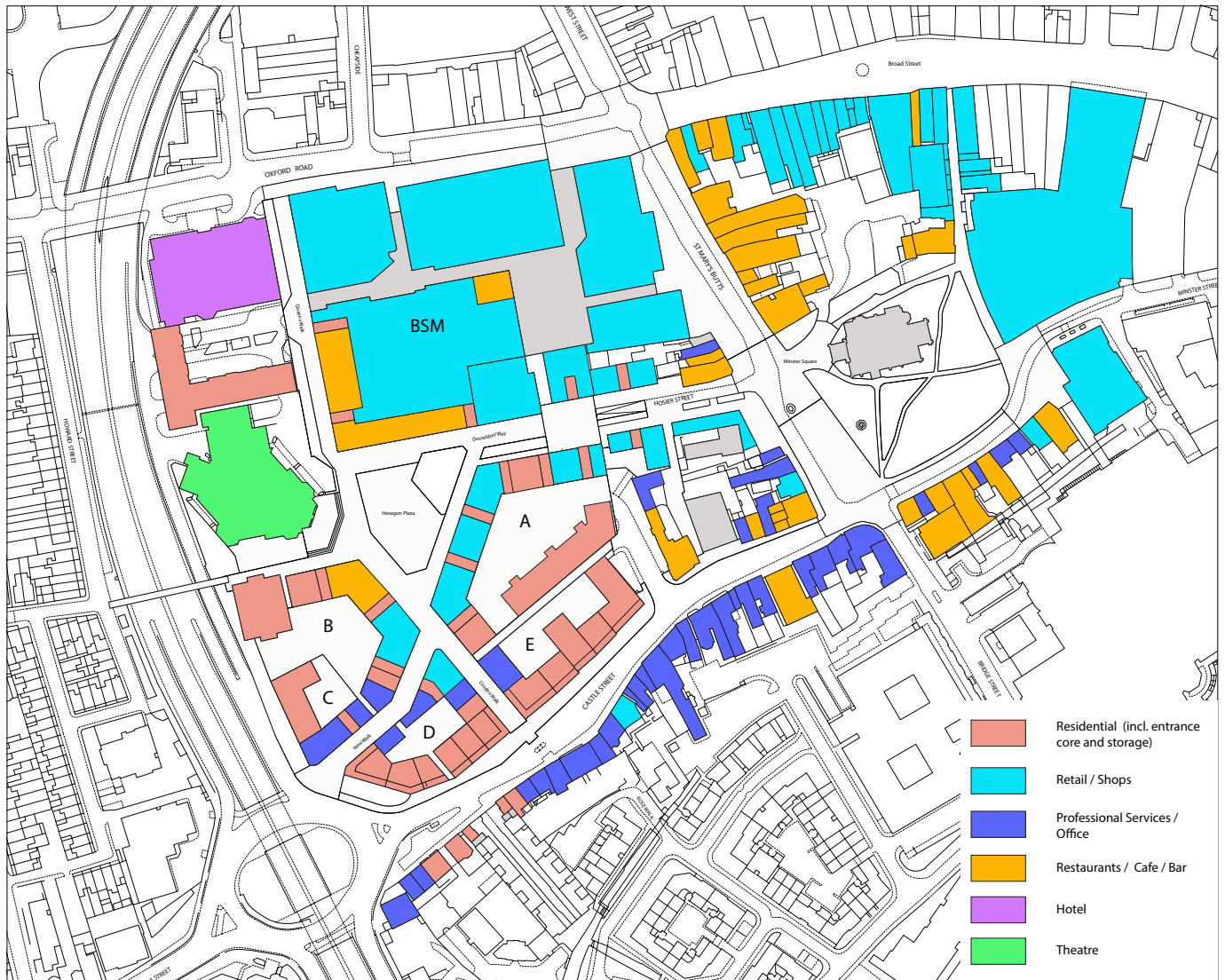


Figure 19 INDICATIVE GROUND FLOOR USES (EXISTING AND PROPOSED)



## 5.2 FORM, SCALE AND HEIGHT

Existing building heights in, and surrounding the site, have been extracted from LIDAR measurements from purchased Zmapping data informing a three dimensional model of the site.

These have been analysed against prevailing building heights to establish a mean building height (in storeys), taller buildings, and 'tall' buildings, in accordance with RBC's definition in the adopted tall buildings strategy defining a tall building in the town as 12 storeys or more.

In recognition of the "Western Cluster", primarily focused at Chatham Street, and the existence of the 10-12 Storey Fountain House, support is given to tall buildings on this site in accordance with the approved principle that all tall buildings clusters on the town's periphery, are to be subservient to building heights at the Station.

The master plan has been based on the principle of accommodating 2-3 tall buildings on the site, one of which falls on the former civic site, whilst the remaining 2 form new towers on the BSM upper podium level.

A nominal building height capacity of 20 storeys above podium has been arrived at, in recognition of the height of revised consents at Station Hill.

Application for tall buildings on the site should be accompanied by 360 degree townscape analysis from viewpoints agreed with RBC planning officers, and assess impact on skyline, interruption of historic views of Reading's Church Spire, and truncation of existing views at street level.

Interface with historic buildings, especially St Mary's Minster and the Castle Street Conservations area, will be expected to demonstrate sensitivity and appreciation for historic assets. The dominance or over-bearing of new buildings, in terms of massing, scale

and volume, in the immediate and distant sky-scape is to be avoided. The principle of a 'grading down' of scale and massing towards the conservation area has to be applied.

The setting back of building shoulder heights will afford some relief to building dominance and should be used along primary pedestrian and historic streets.

### TALL BUILDINGS

The specific area of the Broad Street Mall/ Hosier Street area has been identified as part of the Western Cluster of tall buildings, as set out in planning policy.

The hub and spoke approach to tall buildings in the town assigns pre-eminence and dominance to the central cluster at Station Hill. Consequently buildings on the site will need to perform a supporting function to the central cluster at the station.

This is primarily to be achieved through a capping and monitoring of building



Figure 20 BUILDING HEIGHTS PARAMETER

heights to ensure that these are subservient to consented buildings at Station Hill. Applicants promoting tall buildings in the site area will be required to provide 360 degree views analysis (from viewpoints agreed with RBC planning officers) to demonstrate the impact on Reading’s skyline and fit with adopted tall buildings policy.

Additionally, primacy of a central tall building and supporting tall buildings providing a stepped transition to the high point is the preferred configuration for tall building distribution within the site and takes into account:

- The high percentage of listed buildings locally, especially;
- St Mary’s Grade 1 Listed Church and views thereto
- St Mary’s Grade II\* Listed Church (on Castle Street)
- Adjacent residential development in the Baker Street Area across the IDR
- Shading and overshadowing of proposed residential development within the site
- Shading and overshadowing of proposed public realm within the site

**PROPORTION OF TOWERS**

The proposed concentration of (up to) 4 tall buildings within the site, will require a coordinated approach to building height and form across all applications/ land ownerships.

Existing building clusters in the town to the east (Kings Point) and to the west (Chatham Place) currently feature planned/completed buildings of up to 19 storeys. A threshold of 20 storeys above podium is considered the maximum permissible height for tall buildings generally within the site and this should be considered as a maximum to which other buildings step up to.

It is accepted that buildings above the podium on the Broad Street Mall will increase overall building heights above this level. However, an approach which considers the datum for measuring building heights beginning at podium in this location, is considered acceptable and will self-regulate an overall hierarchy of building heights across the wider site.

Within the accepted building height envelope, individual structures should seek to achieve efficient floor plates but avoid excessive mass. Slender building forms are encouraged, for reasons of overall skyline appeal, reduction of overshadowing and improvements to distances between blocks.

All buildings should be designed to meet the ground and express their singularity as building elements, as well as communicate as a group, utilising similar and complementary materials.

**STREET WIDTH TO BUILDING HEIGHT RATIO**

Prevailing building heights within the wider area generally top out at six to seven storeys.

The default measure for building shoulder heights should therefore not generally exceed this limit, save for areas fronting onto primary open spaces. Additional building heights are permissible above this level for buildings that are not considered ‘tall’ in accordance with the RBC definition, but should be set back from the building line to achieve building shoulder set back.

This upper storey set back can be seen on buildings within the site, notably the upper storey setbacks of John Lewis on Chain Street, and the crenelated articulation of the upper storeys of the McIlroys building on the Oxford Road.

Consequently, buildings that seek additional height above the accepted street line should provide a rationale for building ‘crown’ design that seeks to emulate local tradition and add variety and expression to the streetscape.

**TOWER SETBACK AND PLINTH**

Along Düsseldorf Way, the proposed master plan for the site suggests three towers. The definition of the building plinth (the level up to podium) should be read as a defined retail edge, but not divorce itself from the extended mass of the towers above. Resolving this ambition will ensure that buildings adequately meet the ground, but that the double-height scale of the ground floor can provide presence and interface with the street.

Consequently, towers in general should be read as a whole, and not seek to break the vertical flow of the building form, whilst maintaining activity, function and interface with the street.

This approach allows for the exploration of buildings with a bottom, middle, and top (although artificial ‘topping off’ of tall buildings is to be avoided without a strong and clear architectural rationale and assessment of impact on skyline).

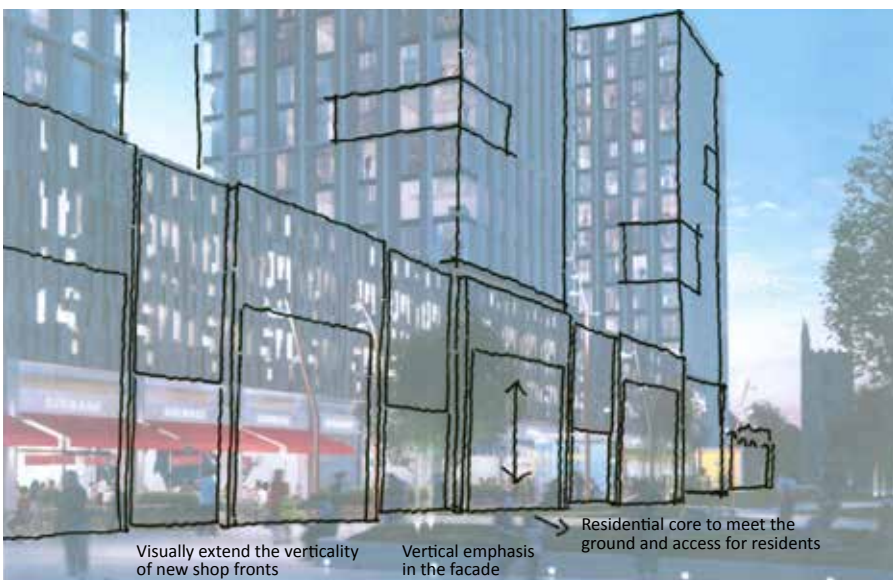


Figure 21 RECONFIGURATION OF BSM PLINTH FACADE

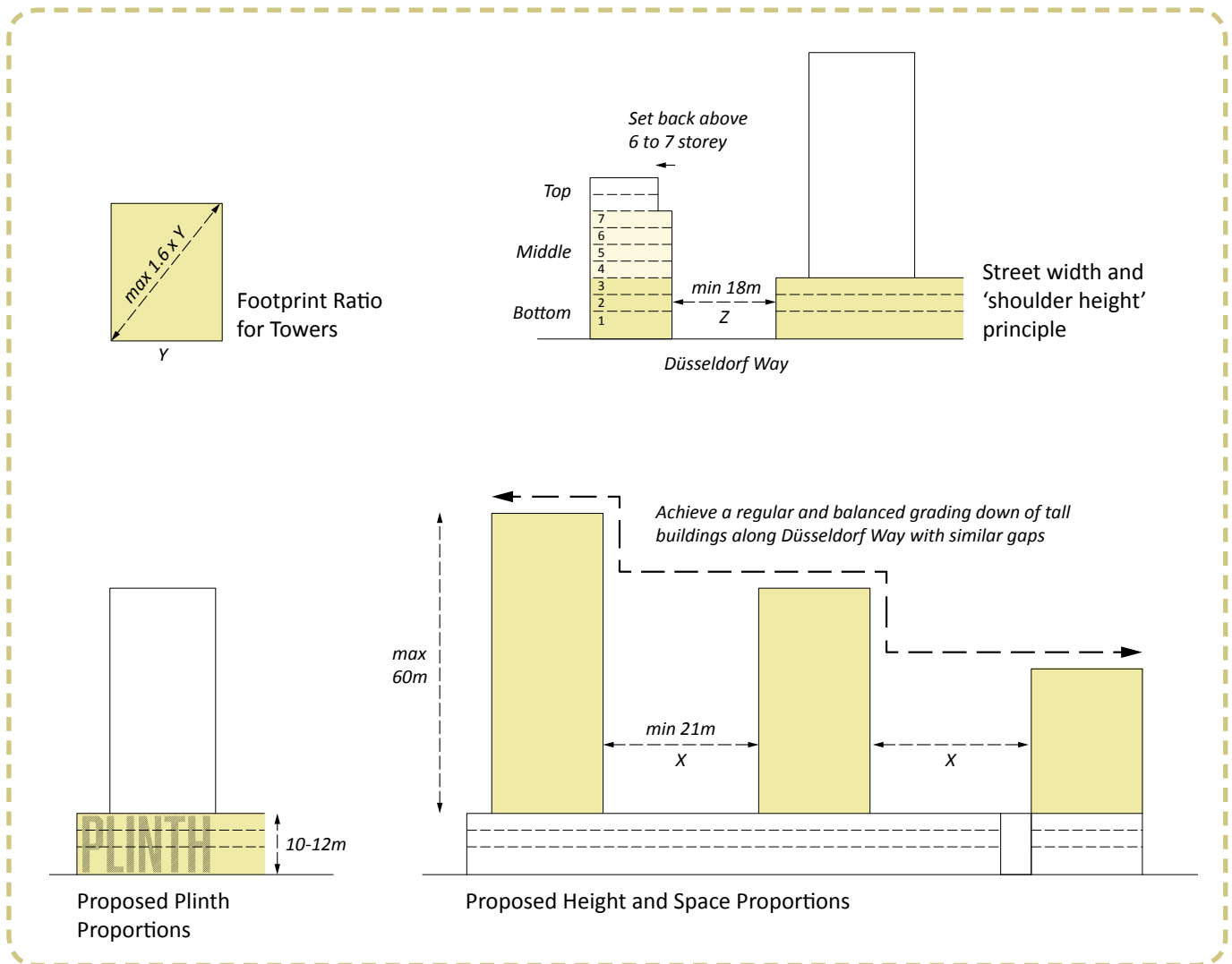


Figure 22 BUILDING PARAMETER DIAGRAMS



Figure 23 BUILDING HEIGHT CLASSIFICATION



It is especially important along the most sensitive areas of the site, notably the Castle Street area, where existing buildings achieve a vertical division of scale and use. New build will be required to deliver the same level of ground floor articulation, mid-range simplicity and elegant finishing off of the roofscape.

Additional guidance on tall buildings was published by Historic England in 2015 (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/tall-buildings-advice-note-4/heag037-tall-buildings.pdf/>), superseding previous guidance published jointly by CABE and English Heritage in 2007.

Page 6 of the guidance makes reference to the need for an urban design framework when promoting tall buildings that can:

1. Identify those elements that create local character and other important features and constraints, including:

- Natural topography
- Urban grain
- Significant views of skylines

- Scale and height
- Streetscape and character assessment (including the history of the place)
- Materials
- Landmark and historic buildings and areas and their settings, including backdrops, and important local views, prospects and panoramas

2. Identify opportunities where tall buildings might enhance the overall townscape

3. Identify sites where the removal of past mistakes might also achieve such an enhancement

Paragraph 3.8 goes on to state:

3.8 The NPPF design policies stress that poor design 'that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions' should be refused (paragraph 64). So, the existence of a tall building in a particular location will not of itself justify its replacement with a new tall building on the same site or in the same area, as it may improve the area to replace it with a lower building. A rigorous process of analysis and

justification will be needed in each case. Nor will an existing single tall building naturally justify further tall buildings so as to form a cluster. Each building will need to be considered on its merits, and its cumulative impact assessed. There may be good planning reasons to seek an increased development density in an area, but tall buildings represent only one possible model for delivering higher density development. Alternative forms may relate more successfully to the local context.

**RBC will require all tall building applications to be presented to the Design South East (DSE) Design Review Panel for independent consideration.**



Figure 24 PRINCIPLE OF BUILDING HEIGHTS GRADING DOWN TOWARDS CONSERVATION AREA

### 5.3 QUALITY AND APPEARANCE

The creation of a new urban quarter will require a specific commitment to quality architecture and design quality in general. The NPPF (paragraph 59 of ‘the Framework’) states that design policies should “avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally. The Framework also recommends the use of design codes and cautions against the imposition of “architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative” (paragraph 60).

Consequently, design guidance for the site focuses on the creating of a comprehensive master plan and development strategy, and leaves the creation of architectural detail to applicants and their design teams.

Nonetheless, there is a requirement for coordination of design quality across the wider site, and the Council will require all applicants in the wider site undertaking major schemes, to collaborate on the production of comprehensive design code that addresses a site wide strategy for the following:

- Street Character
- Architectural character areas
- Building Materials (facing)
- Roofscape
- Interfaces with the Existing Townscape
- Interfaces between Application Areas
- Tall Building Design Rationales
- Skyline and Silhouette

Design quality is not the sole reserve of tall buildings (although paragraph 4.9 of Historic England guidance (<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/tall-buildings-advice-note-4/heag037-tall-buildings.pdf/>) sets a requirement for exemplary standards for these structures.

Tall Buildings, Historic England Advice Note 4, Paragraph 4.9:

*“Tall buildings need to set exemplary standards in design because of their scale, mass, wide impact and likely longevity. Good design will take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and respond to local character and history (NPPF paragraphs 58 and 64). It is important that the required high standard of architectural quality is maintained throughout the process of procurement, detailed design, and construction, through the use of conditions and reserved matters.”*

**The Council will require all buildings to demonstrate, how they meet high quality design, by means of providing a design rationale that illustrates compliance with the site-wide design code and a response to context.**



Examples of quality dense urban living block



Examples of tall building 359



Example of dense urban quarter with tall buildings and high quality public realm



## 5.4 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### QUALITY OF URBAN LIVING

The design and planning of high density urban neighbourhoods presents specific challenges for the integration of mixed-tenure living, adjacent to public open space, town centre servicing, parking and other mixed uses. Typical planning standards such as overlooking, quantum and composition of public open space, amenity levels and noise, may compete with the desire to create vibrant, and successful urban neighbourhoods.

RBC will adopt a pragmatic approach that will require an evidence based strategy to achieving acceptable standards for urban living that maintain fair and reasonable standards and will engage with application over a quality vs. quantity approach, where efforts to reach high levels of design quality in the public and private realm can be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction.

### PRIVATE/COMMUNAL SPACE

Rear courtyards to residential blocks should be designed to maximise the provision of high quality, flexible spaces that can be enjoyed by all residents without adversely affecting neighbourhood amenity.

Particular attention should be given to the siting of play equipment, which should generally be avoided within private blocks, but substituted by stimulating landscapes designed to encourage community participation.

Internal ground floor residents should be provided with level access to communal areas and separate defensible private space. Balconies capable of accommodating chairs and tables for all occupants should be provided for all residents.

Where flat roofs of units below can be used as roof terraces, these should be assigned to individual properties. Terraces should seek to maximise the private amenity for residents and minimise space given over to roof levels service infrastructure.

Views into and out from residential units should seek to provide positive views and focus on key features in the townscape where possible. The

orientation of balconies and terraces should also consider this alongside orientation, shading and solar gain.

Care should be taken to avoid the cluttering of communal areas with refuse/cycle storage which should be accommodated at sub-podium level.

Internal courtyards should therefore become garden spaces for residents to enjoy and utilise to the full.

### PODIUM LANDSCAPE FOR BSM

Where very tall buildings are proposed, podium level gardens should be maximised to ensure a sense of 'living in green' is achieved, and generous garden space at residential ground floors is created. Where there is a demonstrable and agreed requirement for utilisation of podium levels for additional uses (e.g. parking and servicing), these should be integrated into a landscape design setting, and include (inter alia):

- Containerised tree planting
- Pergola/arbour's planted with climbing species
- Separate surface treatments for footways and service routes
- Podium level lighting



Residential green courtyard incorporating variety of private and communal outdoor spaces



Residential green courtyard incorporating variety of private and communal outdoor spaces



## 6. IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

### 6.1 PHASING

Development phasing in the wider area is anticipated to follow the sequence below:

1. Residential and retail redevelopment of Broad Street Mall and Oxford Road public realm
2. Phase 1 public realm improvements to St Mary's Courtyard and St Mary's Butts open space
3. Hosier Street/Düsseldorf Way redevelopment (RBC land)
4. Phase 2 public realm improvements to St Mary's Courtyard and St Mary's Butts open space
5. Queen's Walk 'Highline'

6. Hexagon Square
7. Police Station redevelopment
8. Magistrates Court/Castle Street Redevelopment
9. Baker Street IDR pedestrian/cycle bridge

This is a complex site in terms of ownership, access and storage for construction operations with the potential for significant conflicts where more than one development is occurring at the same time. It will be vitally important to consider the construction process at an early stage to ensure that deliveries, storage and construction operations can take place while at the same time public access to car parking and the services and facilities provided by the site and the operations of other users is not detrimentally affected. Full construction plans should be submitted as part of any application.

### 6.2 SUSTAINABILITY

Developments will be expected to meet the requirements of Policy CC2 in relation to non-residential development and Policy H5 in relation to Housing development in the in the Submission Draft Local Plan. Note that for residential development, the policy requires that these are designed to achieve zero carbon homes. This will mean as a minimum a 35% improvement over the 2013 Building Regulations plus a contribution of £1,800 per tonne towards carbon offsetting within Reading (calculated as £60 per tonne over a 30 year period).

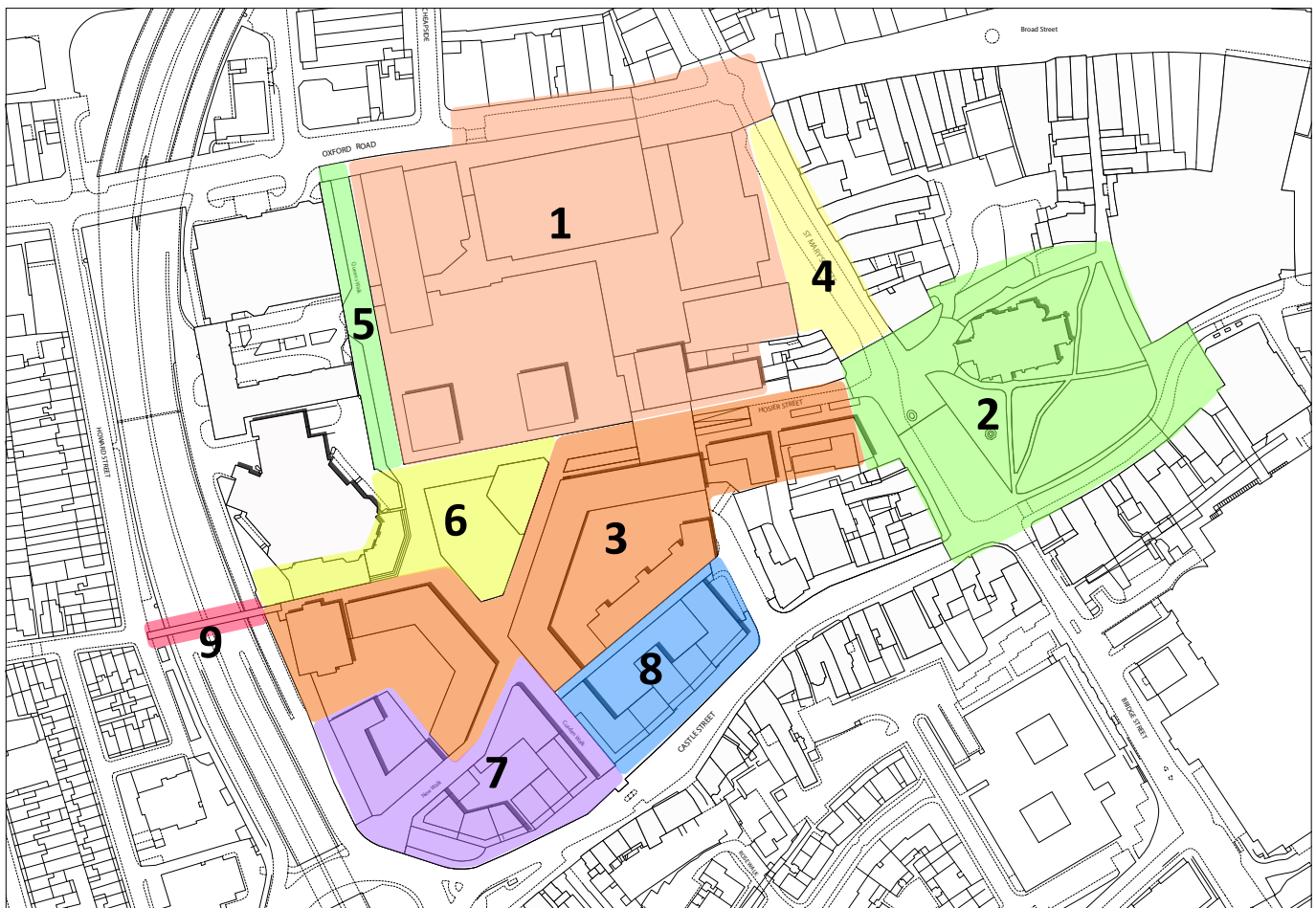


Figure 25 INDICATIVE PHASING PLAN

### 6.3 APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Comprehensive town centre development projects require many interfaces with adjacent land ownerships and a range of uses/stakeholders. With a commitment to tall buildings and a unified palette of public realm materials, Reading has a strong ambition to welcome innovative proposals for the regeneration of the wider site area.

Requirements set out in this document for improvements to the public realm of the wider town-fabric, necessitate a broader approach to redevelopment that is within the redline of a planning application. Applications for proposals in the Broad Street Mall/Hosier Street area will be required to collaborate with RBC over the production of a site-wide Public Realm Strategy and Design Code to ensure complementarity of materials, public space phasing and building adjacencies, as well as subterranean issues of servicing, access and parking.

The council provides a (paid for) pre application advice service and encourages prospective applicants to make full use of that service prior to the submission of a planning application. Further details on the service and the form can be found at: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app\\_April\\_2018.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app_April_2018.pdf)

Applicants should view the Councils Validation Checklist to find out what information will be needed to submit with your application. The checklist can be found at: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2660/Validation-Checklist-Updated-Dec-2016/pdf/Validation\\_Checklist\\_Final\\_Dec\\_16.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2660/Validation-Checklist-Updated-Dec-2016/pdf/Validation_Checklist_Final_Dec_16.pdf)

The information that will need to be submitted as part of any planning application will be reviewed in detail as part of the pre-application advice provided.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The scale of probable planning (major) applications within the site area is likely to trigger requirements for an Environmental Assessment. All individual applications will be individually screened, and scoped where applicable.

In the context of tall buildings applications, applicants will be required to provide specific details of the following issues (inter alia):

- Noise (associated with the IDR, public squares and spaces and communal private space)
- Wind (especially effects caused by tall buildings, gusts, drafts and eddying at the base of buildings, as well as cumulative effects of several tall buildings in a single location)
- Heating/cooling (urban heat island effect, solar gain, northern orientation and heating/cooling mechanisms)
- Overshadowing (to adjacent existing residents, between buildings, and onto public open space)
- Townscape Visual Assessment, Skyline and 360 degree View Analysis (with agreed viewpoints, independently verified 3D model and winter/summer views from short and long range sensitive receptors).

# 7. APPENDIX

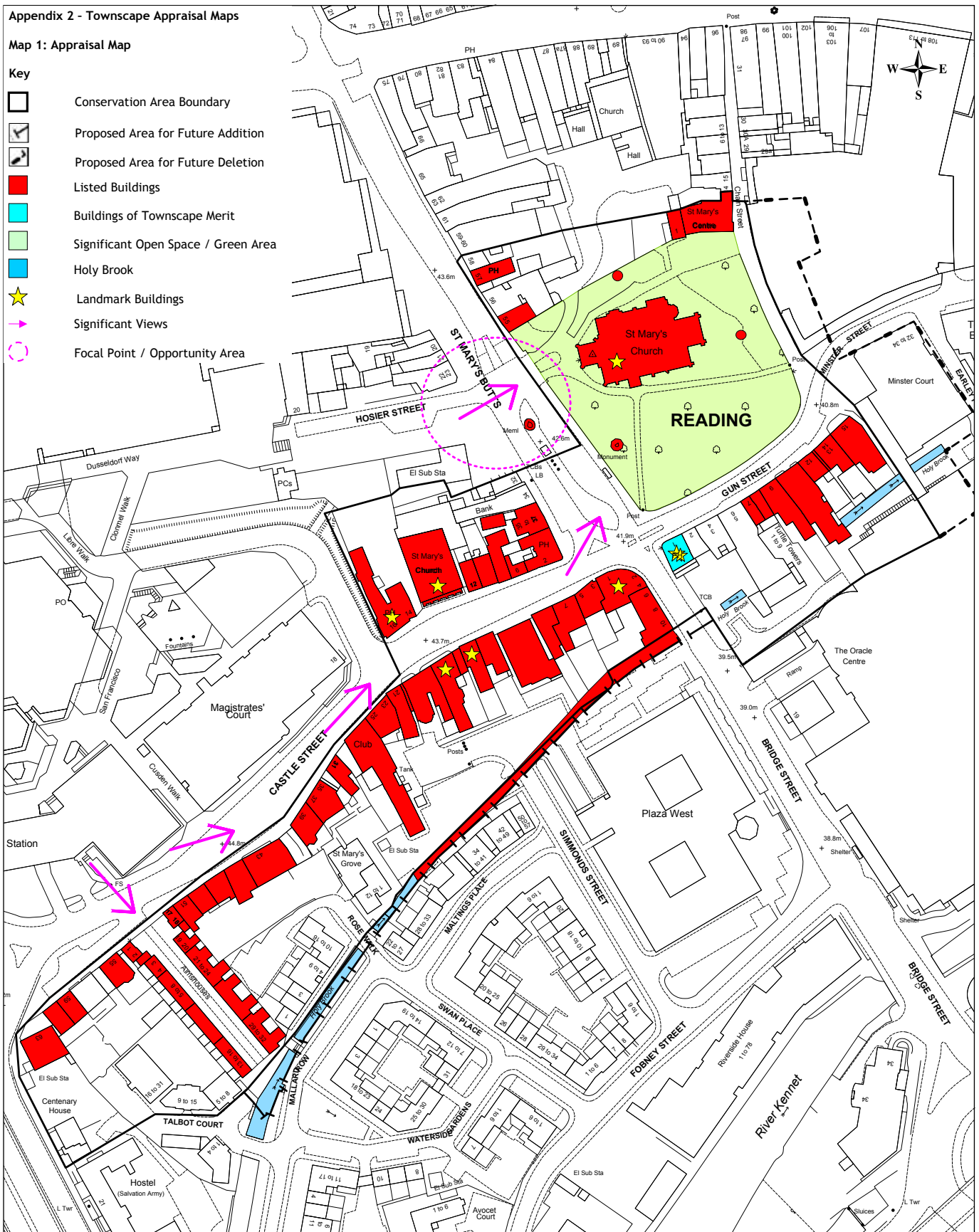


Figure 26 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL MAP (EXTRACT FROM ST. MARY'S BUTTS/ CASTLE STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL DOCUMENT)



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