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To: Councillor Gavin (Chair)
Councillors Davies, Dominguez, Ennis, Foster, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, McCann, Moore, Saadat, Stevens, Williams and Yeo

Direct ☎ : 0118 9372744

14 July 2026

Your contact is: Andrew Wood - Committee Services (Committee.Services@reading.gov.uk)

NOTICE OF MEETING - PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 22 JULY 2026

A meeting of the Planning Applications Committee will be held on Wednesday, 22 July 2026 at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

AGENDA		ACTION	WARDS AFFECTED	PAGE NO
1.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	-		
2.	MINUTES	-		9 - 12
3.	QUESTIONS	-		
4.	POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS	Decision		13 - 16
5.	PLANNING APPEALS	Information		17 - 20
6.	FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2026-2027	Information		21 - 26

PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

7.	PL/26/0573 (FUL) - THE ORACLE, BRIDGE STREET	Decision	ABBEY	27 - 58

Proposal: Full planning application for the removal of the existing rooftop safety lines and handrails and replacement with rooftop safety rails and installation of fixed ladder.

Recommendation: Grant, subject to conditions.

CIVIC CENTRE EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.

8. PL/26/0785 (REG3) - READING CENTRAL LIBRARY, ABBEY SQUARE — Decision — ABBEY — 59 - 68

Proposal: Installation of temporary security hoarding, mesh screens and associated security measures to the Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, to secure the vacant building against unauthorised access, vandalism and anti-social behaviour pending determination of its future use.

Recommendation: Grant, subject to conditions.

9. PL/26/0614 & PL/26/0617 (REG3) - CAVERSHAM COURT, CHURCH ROAD, CAVERSHAM — Decision — CAVERSHAM — 69 - 84

Proposal: Repair and conservation work to the Gazebo, Causeway, Stable Block boundary wall and gate piers, East (screen) wall gates and gates opening and buttress to the adjacent garden wall.

Recommendation(s): PL/26/0614 - Grant, subject to conditions.
PL/26/0617 - Grant, subject to conditions.

10. PL/25/1338 (VAR) - 9 UPPER CROWN STREET — Decision — KATESGROVE — 85 - 148

Proposal: Application under Section 73 to vary Condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission ref. PL/23/0814: (Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated re-use of frame with basement level used for car parking and servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access) to add dormers to the front roof slope of building 1 (terrace houses) and to the top floor of building 2 (central block), addition of ensuites to a number of the 2b3p units in building 2, other minor changes to the layouts of all three buildings, addition of 2 tandem vehicle parking spaces at basement level which will include EV charging and to reduce the affordable housing provision of the development.

Recommendation: Grant, subject to conditions and Section 106.

11. PL/26/0550 (REG3) - WILSON PRIMARY SCHOOL, WILSON ROAD — Decision — NORCOT — 149 - 156

Proposal: Full planning application for a new storage building in school playground (retrospective).

Recommendation: Grant.

12. PL/25/0697 (VAR) - FORMER GAS HOLDER SITE, ALEXANDER TURNER CLOSE — Decision — THAMES — 157 - 326

Proposal:	Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space without complying with conditions 2 (approved plans), 11 (noise mitigation), 12 (ventilation strategy), 26 (SuDS) and 35 (vehicle parking) of planning permission ref. PL/19/0627 for changes to design, layout, unit mix, vehicle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, noise mitigation, ventilation strategy and energy strategy.
Recommendation:	Grant, subject to conditions.

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Members of the public who participate in the meeting will be able to speak at an on-camera or off-camera microphone, according to their preference.

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any queries or concerns.

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GUIDE TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

1. There are many different types of applications processed by the Planning Service and the following codes are used to abbreviate the more common types of permission sought:

   FUL – Full detailed planning permission for development or change of use
   OUT – Principal of developing a site or changing a use
   REM – Detailed matters "reserved matters" - for permission following approval of an outline planning application.
   HOU – Applications for works to domestic houses
   ADV – Advertisement consent
   APC – Approval of details required by planning conditions
   VAR – Significant change to a planning permission previously granted
   NMA – Insignificant change to a planning permission previously granted
   ADJ – Consultation from neighbouring authority on application in their area
   LBC – Works to or around a Listed Building
   CLE – A certificate to confirm what the existing use of a property is
   CLP – A certificate to confirm that a proposed use or development does not require planning permission to be applied for.
   REG3 – Indicates that the application has been submitted by the Local Authority.

2. Officer reports often refer to a matter or situation as being "a material consideration". The following list tries to explain what these might include:

   Material planning considerations can include (but are not limited to):

   - Overlooking/loss of privacy
   - Loss of daylight/sunlight or overshadowing
   - Scale and dominance
   - Layout and density of buildings
   - Appearance and design of development and materials proposed
   - Disabled persons' access
   - Highway safety
   - Traffic and parking issues
   - Drainage and flood risk
   - Noise, dust, fumes etc
   - Impact on character or appearance of area
   - Effect on listed buildings and conservation areas
   - Effect on trees and wildlife/nature conservation
   - Impact on the community and other services
   - Economic impact and sustainability
   - Government policy
   - Proposals in the Local Plan
   - Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
   - Archaeology

   There are also concerns that regulations or case law has established cannot be taken into account. These include:

   - Who the applicant is/the applicant's background
   - Loss of views
   - Loss of property value
   - Loss of trade or increased competition
   - Strength or volume of local opposition
   - Construction noise/disturbance during development
   - Fears of damage to property
   - Maintenance of property
   - Boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights
   - Rights of way and ownerships disputes over rights of way
   - Personal circumstances

Glossary of usual terms

Affordable housing - Housing provided below market price to meet identified needs.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) - Area where air quality levels need to be managed.
Apart-hotel - A use providing basic facilities for self-sufficient living with the amenities of a hotel. Generally classed as C1 (hotels) for planning purposes.
Article 4 Direction - A direction which can be made by the Council to remove normal permitted development rights.
BREEAM - A widely used means of reviewing and improving the environmental performance of generally commercial developments (industrial, retail etc).
Brownfield Land - previously developed land.
Brown roof - A roof surfaced with a broken substrate, e.g. broken bricks.
Building line -The general line along a street beyond which no buildings project.
Bulky goods – Large products requiring shopping trips to be made by car:e.g DIY or furniture.
CIL - Community Infrastructure Levy. Local authorities in England and Wales levy a charge on new development to be spent on infrastructure to support the development of the area.
Classified Highway Network - The network of main roads, consisting of A, B and C roads.
Conservation Area - areas of special architectural or historic interest designated by the local authority. As designated heritage assets the preservation and enhancement of the area carries great weight in planning permission decisions.
Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Competent Authority - The Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH) and their amendments 2005, are the enforcing regulations within the United Kingdom. They are applicable to any establishment storing or otherwise handling large quantities of industrial chemicals of a hazardous nature. Types of establishments include chemical warehousing, chemical production facilities and some distributors.
Dormer Window - Located in the roof of a building, it projects or extends out through the roof, often providing space internally.
Dwelling- A single housing unit – a house, flat, maisonette etc.
Evening Economy A term for the business activities, particularly those used by the public, which take place in the evening such as pubs, clubs, restaurants and arts/cultural uses.
Flood Risk Assessment - A requirement at planning application stage to demonstrate how flood risk will be managed.
Flood Zones - The Environment Agency designates flood zones to reflect the differing risks of flooding. Flood Zone 1 is low probability, Flood Zone 2 is medium probability, Flood Zone 3a is high probability and Flood Zone 3b is functional floodplain.
Granny annexe - A self-contained area within a dwelling house/ the curtilage of a dwelling house but without all the facilities to be self contained and is therefore dependent on the main house for some functions. It will usually be occupied by a relative.
Green roof - A roof with vegetation on top of an impermeable membrane.
Gross floor area - Total floor area of the house, including all floors and garage, measured externally.
Hazardous Substances Consent - Consent required for the presence on, over, or under land of any hazardous substance in excess of controlled quantity.
Historic Parks and Gardens - Parks and gardens of special historic interest, designated by English Heritage.
Housing Association - An independent not-for-profit body that provides low-cost "affordable housing" to meet specific housing needs.
Infrastructure - The basic services and facilities needed for the smooth running of a community.
Lifetime Home - A home which is sufficiently adaptable to allow people to remain in the home despite changing circumstances such as age or disability.
Listed building - Buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Consent is required before works that might affect their character or appearance can be undertaken. They are divided into Grades I, II and II*, with I being of exceptional interest.
Local Plan - The main planning document for a District or Borough.
Luminance - A measure of the luminous intensity of light, usually measured in candelas per square metre.
Major Landscape Feature - these are identified and protected in the Local Plan for being of local significance for their visual and amenity value

Public realm - the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces whether publicly or privately owned.
Scheduled Ancient Monument - Specified nationally important archaeological sites.
Section 106 agreement - A legally binding agreement or obligation entered into by the local authority and a land developer over an issue related to a planning application, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
Sequential approach A method of considering and ranking the suitability of sites for development, so that one type of site is considered before another. Different sequential approaches are applied to different uses.
Sui Generis - A use not specifically defined in the use classes order (2004) – planning permission is always needed to change from a sui generis use.
Sustainable development - Development to improve quality of life and protect the environment in balance with the local economy, for now and future generations.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) - This term is taken to cover the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management.
Tree Preservation Order (TPO) - An order made by a local planning authority in respect of trees and woodlands. The principal effect of a TPO is to prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of trees without the LPA's consent.

Guide to changes to the Use Classes Order in England.

Changes of use within the same class are not development.

Use	Use Class up to 31 August 2020	Use Class from 1 September 2020
Shop - not more than 280sqm mostly selling essential goods, including food and at least 1km from another similar shop	A1	F.2
Shop	A1	E
Financial & professional services (not medical)	A2	E
Café or restaurant	A3	E
Pub, wine bar or drinking establishment	A4	Sui generis
Takeaway	A5	Sui generis
Office other than a use within Class A2	B1a	E
Research & development of products or processes	B1b	E
For any industrial process (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area)	B1c	E
Industrial	B2	B2
Storage or distribution	B8	B8
Hotels, boarding & guest houses	C1	C1
Residential institutions	C2	C2
Secure residential institutions	C2a	C2a
Dwelling houses	C3	C3
Small house in multiple occupation 3-6 residents	C4	C4
Clinics, health centres, creches, day nurseries, day centre	D1	E
Schools, non-residential education & training centres, museums, public libraries, public halls, exhibition halls, places of worship, law courts	D1	F.1
Cinemas, theatres, concert halls, bingo halls and dance halls	D2	Sui generis
Gymnasiums, indoor recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	E
Hall or meeting place for the principal use of the local community	D2	F.2
Indoor or outdoor swimming baths, skating rinks, and outdoor sports or recreations not involving motorised vehicles or firearms	D2	F.2

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 1 JULY 2026

Present: Councillor Gavin (Chair);

Councillors Dominguez, Ennis, Foster, Hornsby-Smith, Leng, McCann, Moore, Saadat, Stevens, Williams and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors Davies

RESOLVED ITEMS

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

9. POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS

The Committee considered a report setting out a schedule of applications to be considered at future meetings of the Committee to enable Councillors to decide which sites, if any, they wished to visit prior to determining the relevant applications. The report also listed previously agreed site visits which were yet to take place.

It was reported at the meeting that the site visit to Hemdean House School had been included in Appendix 2 in error, as the site visit had already taken place, and that the site visit to 80 Whitley Wood Road, which had been scheduled to be held on 25 June 2026, had been deferred because of the hot weather and would be rearranged.

It was also reported that it was planned to arrange an accompanied site visit for 16 July 2026 to PL/26/0415 Station Hill as an extra Planning Applications Committee was being held on 12 August 2026 to consider this application.

Resolved -

That the following application be the subject of an accompanied site visit on 16 July 2026 or an alternative date:

PL/26/0415 – STATION HILL
Reserved Matters application pursuant to Outline Planning Permission ref. 192032 for the development of Plots A, B and D at Station Hill, Reading, comprising the erection of two buildings to provide residential units (Use Class C3), including affordable housing, ground floor flexible commercial units (Use Class E), resident amenity space, associated landscaping and public realm works, including Station Hill Gardens and to Station Hill Square, new pedestrian routes, cycle parking, servicing, refuse storage, plant and ancillary infrastructure, with all associated works. Discharge of conditions which are triggered with the Reserved Matters Application including Conditions 54(iii), 63, 75, 76, 86, 94, 95, 96, 99, 107 and 112.

10. PLANNING APPEALS

The Committee received a report on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decisions made and providing summary reports on appeal decisions of interest to the Committee.

Appendix 1 to the report set out details of one new appeal lodged since the last Committee. Appendix 2 to the report set out details of four appeals decided since the last Committee.

Resolved –

(1) That the new appeal, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted;

(2) That the outcome of the recently determined appeal, as set out in Appendix 2, be noted.

11. PL/26/0237 (FUL) - BATTLE INN PH, 2 BEDFORD ROAD

Demolition of the former public house and the erection of a part five-storey building comprising six self-contained residential flats (Use Class C3) with a Commercial, Business and Service unit at ground floor (Use Class E) and associated works.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

An update report was tabled at the meeting that gave details of: amended plans and documents received; plan amendments; an additional consultation response received from the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board; building control comments on accessible and adaptable homes; Town Centre Public Realm Strategy; leisure contribution; highways comment on delivery hatch; ecology and noise matters. The update report recommended adding an additional healthcare contribution to the Section 106 Heads of Terms.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Objector Evelyn Williams, on behalf of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee, and Chris Keen (online via Microsoft Teams), on behalf of the applicant, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this application.

Resolved –

(1) That the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission for application PL/26/0237 (FUL), subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 31 July 2026 (unless a later date be agreed by the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the original report, with the additional healthcare contribution set out in the update report;

(2) That the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may reasonably be required to issue the permission;

(3) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;

(4) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended in the original report, subject to the following:

- **Condition 3. Materials, including samples to be approved (pre-commencement) – details to be approved in consultation with Ward Councillors.**
- **Condition 7. Refuse and Recycling to be approved, including pest control and waste management strategy (pre-occupation) – details to be approved in consultation with Ward Councillors.**

12. PL/26/0603 (FUL) - ST MARY'S HOUSE, 66-68 ST MARYS BUTTS AND 75-77 BROAD STREET

Change of use of first to third floors from office (Class E) to provide serviced apartments (Class C1). Addition of fourth floor to provide serviced apartments (Class C1) and various associated alterations.

The Committee considered a report on the above application.

Comments and objections were received and considered.

Resolved –

(1) That the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to grant planning permission for application PL/26/0603 (FUL), subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement by 23 July 2026 (unless a later date be agreed by the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services) to secure the Heads of Terms set out in the report;

(2) That the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may reasonably be required to issue the permission;

(3) That, in the event of the requirements set out not being met, the Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services be authorised to refuse permission;

(4) That planning permission be subject to the conditions and informatives as recommended.

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.42 pm)

Planning Applications Committee **22 July 2026**	Reading Borough Council Working better with you

Title	**POTENTIAL SITE VISITS FOR COMMITTEE ITEMS**
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager and Acting Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Council priority	Not applicable, but still requires a decision
Recommendations	The Committee is asked to: 1. note this report and any officer recommendations for site visits. 2. confirm if there are other sites Councillors wish to visit before reaching a decision on an application. 3. confirm if the site(s) agreed to be visited will be arranged and accompanied by officers or can be unaccompanied but with a briefing note provided by the case officer.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 To identify those sites where, due to the sensitive or important nature of the proposals, Councillors are advised that a Site Visit would be appropriate before the matter is presented at Committee and to confirm how the visit will be arranged. A list of potential sites is appended with a note added to say if recommended for a site visit or not.

2. The Proposal

2.1 A site visit helps if a proposed development and context is difficult to visualise from the plans and supporting material or to better understand concerns or questions raised by a proposal.

2.2 Appendix 1 of this report provides a list of, mainly major, applications recently received that may be presented to Committee for a decision and which Officers consider Councillors would benefit from visiting to inform decision making. If agreed, you will be advised whether the visit should be accompanied or not and then later advised of a date when Officers are ready to bring a report to Committee. Appendix 2 lists those sites that have previously been agreed by Committee should be visited before making a decision.

2.3 Accompanied site visits are appropriate when access to private land is necessary to appreciate matters raised. These visits will be arranged and attended by officers on the designated date and time. Applicants and objectors may observe the process and answer questions when asked but lobbying is discouraged. A site visit is an information gathering opportunity to inform decision making.

2.4 Unaccompanied site visits are appropriate when the site can be easily seen from public areas and allow Councillors to visit when convenient to them. In these instances, the case officer will provide a briefing note on the application and the main issues to assist when visiting the site.

2.5 Often it is during consideration of a report on a planning application that it becomes apparent that Councillors would benefit from visiting a site to assist in reaching the correct decision. In these instances, Officers or Councillors may request a deferral to allow a visit to be carried out.

2.6 It is also possible for officers to suggest, or Councillors to request, a visit to a completed development to assess its quality.

3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

3.1 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:

1. Promote more equal communities in Reading
2. Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
3. Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
4. Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
5. Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

3.2 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

1. Putting residents first
2. Building on strong foundations
3. Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
4. Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
5. Being proudly ambitious for Reading

3.3 Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - Council plan - Reading Borough Council. These priorities and the Council Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.

3.4 The processing of planning applications contributes to delivering a sustainable and healthy environment and helping the economic, cultural and vibrant success for Reading Borough.

3.5 The processing of planning applications contributes to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helping the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan.

4. Environmental and Climate Implications

4.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

4.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods.

5. Community Engagement

5.1 Statutory neighbour consultation takes place on planning applications.

6. Equality Implications

6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
2. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 None arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The cost of site visits is met through the normal planning service budget and Councillor costs.

9. Timetable for Implementation

9.1 Site visits are normally scheduled for the Thursday prior to committee. Planning Administration team sends out notification emails when a site visit is arranged.

10. Background Papers

10.1 There are none.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Potential Site Visits. List of applications received that may be presented to Committee for a decision in due course

- None

Appendix 2 - Previously Agreed Site Visits with date of PAC when requested

- PL/26/0415, Station Hill – agreed by PAC on 29 April 2026 that an accompanied site visit be arranged – scheduled for Thursday 16 July at 12.30pm
- PL/26/0277, Garden of 80 Whitley Wood Road – agreed by PAC on 29 April 2026 that an accompanied site visit be arranged – TBC

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Planning Applications Committee **22 July 2026**	Reading Borough Council Working better with you

Title	**PLANNING APPEALS**
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager and Acting Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Corporate priority	Inclusive Economy
Recommendations	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

1. Executive Summary

1.1 To advise Committee on notifications received from the Planning Inspectorate on planning appeals registered with them or decision made and to provide summary reports on appeal decisions of interest the Planning Applications Committee.

2. Information provided

2.1 Please see Appendix 1 of this report for new appeals lodged since the last committee.

2.2 Please see Appendix 2 of this report for appeals decided since the last committee with summary reports provided.

3. Contribution to Strategic Aims

3.1 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:

1. Promote more equal communities in Reading
2. Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
3. Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
4. Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
5. Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

3.2 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

1. Putting residents first
2. Building on strong foundations

3. Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities

4. Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents

5. Being proudly ambitious for Reading

3.3 Defending planning appeals made against planning decisions contributes to creating a sustainable and healthy environment with supported communities and helping the economy within the Borough as identified as the priorities within the Council Plan.

4. Environmental and Climate Implications

4.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

4.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods.

5. Community Engagement

5.1 Planning decisions are made in accordance with adopted local development plan policies, which have been adopted by the Council following public consultation. Statutory consultation also takes place on planning applications and appeals, and this can have bearing on the decision reached by the Secretary of State and his Inspectors. Copies of appeal decisions are held on the public Planning Register (lists of applications viewable on our website).

6. Equality Implications

6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.

2. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 It is considered that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decision on whether sites need to be visited by Planning Application Committee. The decision will not have a differential impact on people with the protected characteristics of; age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Public Inquiries are normally the only types of appeal that involve the use of legal representation. Only applicants have the right to appeal against refusal or non-determination and there is no right for a third party to appeal a planning decision.

8 Financial Implications

8.1 Public Inquiries and Informal Hearings are more expensive in terms of officer and appellant time than the Written Representations method. Either party can be liable to awards of costs. More guidance about costs awards is in MCHLG's Planning Practice Guidance.

9 Timetable for Implementation

Not applicable.

10 Background Papers

There are none.

APPENDIX 1

Appeals Lodged:

WARD:	Abbey
APPEAL NO:	6011841
CASE NO:	PL/25/1116
ADDRESS:	4 Mason Street, Reading
PROPOSAL:	Change of use from one dwelling to three flats comprising 2x 1-bed flats and 1x 2-bedroom flat. Proposed part two- part single- storey rear extension and internal alterations.

WARD:	Katesgrove
APPEAL NO:	6012571
CASE NO:	PL/25/1307
ADDRESS:	Hawk Cottages, Silver Street, Reading
PROPOSAL:	Detached single storey dwelling with private amenity space

WARD:	Thames
APPEAL NO:	6012583
CASE NO:	PL/26/0601
ADDRESS:	28 Coldicutt Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DU
PROPOSAL:	Retrospective permission for the demolition of an outbuilding and erection of a replacement outbuilding

APPENDIX 2

Appeals Decided:

WARD:	Katesgrove
APPEAL NO:	6006433
CASE NO:	PL/25/1836
ADDRESS:	2A, 2B and 2C, West Hill, Reading, RG1 2PN
PROPOSAL:	Retrospective development for the erection of 3no. dwellings to be used as 3no. C4 - small HMO's with associated parking & landscaping, including cycle and bin storage
CASE OFFICER:	Marcelina Rejwerska
METHOD:	Written representations
DECISION:	Dismissed

Planning permission was previously granted under application reference PL/15/0517 for the demolition of existing garages and erection of three 3-bedroom dwellings. However, the development undertaken does not accord with the approved plans. The deviations include the provision of three additional front doors, removal of recessed entryways, an extra gable end front extension, an enlarged front gable, and internal alterations. The inclusion of part of the rear gardens and an increase in height of the rear boundary wall structure of 112-120

Southampton Street and the siting of the access gate also appear to be deviations from the approved plans.

The Inspector found there to be five main issues:

1. That the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area including a lack of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement.
2. That the proposal would harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers in respect of privacy, outlook and a reduction in the amount of outdoor space available to them.
3. That the proposal offers inadequate sunlight, daylight, natural ventilation and internal space to serve the needs of occupiers of the development.
4. Harm to highway safety due to the positioning of access gates meaning that vehicles accessing the site would block the highway whilst waiting for the gates to open, although the Inspector agreed that this could be resolved via a suitable condition.
5. The Inspector agreed that the S106 financial contribution towards Affordable Housing is necessary.

Overall this is a very positive decision which supports the Council's approach to ensuring suitable standards of development and supports ongoing enforcement action to resolve the existing situation on site.

Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**First Quarter Performance Report 2026-27**
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Mark Worringham, Planning Policy Manager / Acting Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
Lead Councillor	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
Council priority	Secure Reading's economic & cultural success
Recommendations	To note the report.

1. Executive summary

1.1. To advise Committee on the work and performance of the Planning Development Management team over the first quarter (April to June) of 2026-27, including comparison to the relevant quarter of the previous year.

2. Policy context

Planning

2.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF). The NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12). The Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 places national development management policies on an equal footing with the development plan (with conflicts to be resolved in favour of the national development management policies) but these provisions are yet to come into force.

2.2. The current approach for measuring the performance of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when dealing with applications was introduced by the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013. It is based on an LPA's performance on the speed of determining applications and the quality of their decisions. The **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government** (MHCLG) collects data from LPAs to enable performance tables to be published on a quarterly basis. LPAs are at risk of being designated as "underperforming" if targets are not met over the preceding 24 months. If an LPA is designated as underperforming applicants can submit their applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate (who act on behalf of the Secretary of State) to make the decision.

Building Control

2.3 Local authorities have a duty under the Building Act 1984 to enforce the Building Regulations 2010 in their area. To do this they are obliged to undertake a range of functions aimed at securing the health, safety, welfare, and convenience of people in and about buildings.

2.4 There has also been a series of regulatory changes brought forward by the Building Safety Act 2022, with one being the requirement for all building control surveyors to be registered, to practice. The Building Safety Regulator has responsibility for the oversight of all building control professionals in terms of their competence, ensuring building control teams have appropriate levels of competence to perform their roles. In addition to this, there are operational standards, which all building control bodies are expected to work within and report on. These operational standards include several broad themes including:

- Systems and controls
- Risk management
- People
- Building Control functions
- Enforcement and intervention activity

2.5 A range of key performance indicators (KPI's) has been established to monitor performance against these themes to ensure building control bodies are operating efficiently and effectively and delivering their intended purpose. It should be noted the Building Safety Regulator will have the power to intervene in cases where Building Control Bodies (including local authorities) are failing to meet requisite standards.

3. Planning Development Management Team Performance

3.1 As set out in paragraph 2.2, performance is measured on the speed of determining applications and performance at appeal. The criteria for designation as "underperforming" are:

a. Major development: less than **60 per cent** of an authority's decisions on major applications made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as agreed in writing with the applicant;

b. Non-major development: less than **70 per cent** of an authority's decisions on non-major applications made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as agreed in writing with the applicant;

c. For applications for both major and non-major development, above which a local planning authority is eligible for designation, is **10 per cent** of an authority's total number of decisions on major and non-major applications respectively made during the assessment period (previous 24 months) being overturned at appeal. We generally report this on an annual basis as there are not enough appeals to make quarterly performance meaningful, and it is not therefore included in this report.

Speed – criteria a & b

3.2 Once a planning application is valid the local planning authority should issue a decision on the proposal within the statutory time limits set. The statutory time limits are normally 13 weeks for applications for major development (when an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment a 16 week limit applies) and 8 weeks for all other types of development.

3.3 Local planning authorities can agree with the applicant to extend the time needed. In most cases a written agreement is sufficient when it becomes apparent that more time is needed to address details. For more significant developments, where it is clear from the start that more than 13 weeks is needed, a formal Planning Performance Agreement can be used to set a timetable. When an applicant has agreed to extend time the "Planning Guarantee", which requires the planning application fee to be refunded to applicants if no decision has been made within 26 weeks, does not apply (Regulation 9A of the 2012 Fees Regulations).

3.4 Table 1 below shows the performance on decisions issued in the first quarter of the year and how many were decided within the statutory timeframe or an agreed extended timeframe for the different types of planning applications handled. Data for the first quarter of 2025/26 is provided for comparison.

Table 1: Application performance in the first quarter of 2026/27 compared to 2025/26

Description	MHCLG Target	Overall 25/26	Q1 25/26	Q1 26/27
Number and Percentage of major applications decided within statutory 13 weeks or an extended period agreed with the applicant.	60%	7/11 64%	1/3 33%	2/3 67%
Number and Percentage of minor applications decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed with the applicant.	70%	151/180 84%	42/50 84%	63/69 91%
Number and Percentage of other applications (including householder applications) decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed with the applicant.	70%	388/452 86%	105/122 86%	117/141 83%
Total decisions issued	N/A	643	175	213
Number and Percentage of householder applications decided within statutory 8 weeks or an extended period agreed with the applicant.	70%	239/284 84%	62/77 81%	84/102 82%

3.5 The performance on speed of making decisions in the first quarter of 2026/27 was comparable to the same period in the previous year. Performance for both minors and majors (with the caveat that there are a very small number of major decisions in the period) is higher, but performance on others is very slightly lower. Speed of decisions for all application types exceed the targets set by MHCLG.

Planning fee income

3.6 Table 3 shows fee income to the planning service from Major, Minors and Other applications in the first quarter of the year and compares it to the corresponding quarter in 2025/26. It shows that fee income is lower compared to the same period last year, in particular for minor applications and for pre-application enquiries, and suggests that there may be a lower overall income in 2026-27, albeit it is very dependent on when a small number of major applications are received.

Table 2: Development management fee income in first quarter 2026/27 compared to last year

Quarter 25/26	Overall 25/26	Q1 25/26	Q1 26/27
Major applications	420,521.50	25,474.00	25.949.00
Minor applications	453,649.72	121,256.42	65,795.80
Others/householders	211,096.52	46,992.80	52,521.50
Total applications	**1,085,267.74**	**193,723.22**	**144,266.30**
Pre-application enquiries	209,713.49	24,500.00	3,400.35
Total development management fee income	**1,294,981.23**	**218,223.22**	**147,666.65**

4. Building Control team performance

4.1 Table 3 shows the case load for the first quarter of 2026/27 compared to the same quarter last year and last year's total. An explanation for the work carried out is given after the table.

4.2 The figures show that there are higher levels of fee earning work in the first quarter of 2026/27 compared to the equivalent quarter last year, in particular for regularisations, and that fee income is significantly higher.

Table 3: Building Control work for first quarter 2026/27

Case work	Total 25/26	Q1 25/26	Q1 26/27
Fee earning			
Building notices	137	36	40
Regularisations	111	20	42
Full Plans	177	57	60
Demolition notices	14	3	4
Partnerships	9	1	1
Fee Income	£351,294	£67,076	£110,107
Non-Fee earning			
Dangerous structures attended Non fee work	53	2	6
Competent Persons	57,977	17,718	2,409
AI Initial Notices	421	118	113
Advice & Quotes	1	1	2
Unauthorised work checks	106	10	42

Building notices - Submitted to the local authority building control (LABC) to notify them of planned minor building works, allowing the work to start within 2 days with minimal plans. Normally followed by a regularisation application. Work is inspected as it progresses to ensure compliance with regs.

Regularisations – submitted to obtain building control approval for works carried out already. Inspectors will check that the works met regs in operation at time of completion.

Full Plans applications – involves submitting all plans and details to ensure works comply. Plans will be checked and relevant authorities (water providers etc) consulted. A notice will be provided to confirm plans are approved and works can proceed as per the approved plans. When work finishes a completion certificate can be issued if work complies.

Demolition notices - Section 80 Demolition notices of intended demolition need to be served on an LABC giving 6 weeks to be approved. If not approved by then works can proceed by default. A counter notice can be issued if concerns raised or to impose conditions.

Partnership – Partnership Schemes allows companies to just use one LABC to process all their applications all over the country. This provides consistency with agent and fees for the company. That LABC then applies and usually pays the fee to the home authority to carry out inspections and to provide completion certificates.

NON-FEE EARNING

Unauthorised works – Enforcement notices are issued if works are carried out without first notifying the local authority of the works or getting approval for it if needed. Can lead to Regularisation applications.

Competent Persons schemes – scheme allows trade people to self-certify their work complies with building regs. Does not need an application but trades person should let the local authority know when complete.

5. Contribution to strategic aims

5.1 The Council Plan (2025-2028) identifies five priorities for the Council over the next three years. These are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading
- Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
- Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce Reading's carbon footprint
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future.

5.2 The processing of planning applications (also for work to trees and listed buildings) and associated enforcement work and building control activities contribute to securing Reading's economic and cultural success, delivers sustainable development and healthy environments, including reducing the carbon footprint through application of our policies and national regulations on energy efficient buildings.

6. Community engagement

6.1 Statutory consultation takes place on most planning applications and appeals. The Council's website also allows the public to view information submitted and comments on planning applications and on the decision once it is reached. There is also information on our planning policies. Facilitating engagement can influence the quality of public involvement and thereby the quality of the eventual decision.

7. Equality impact assessment

7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that the development management performance set out in this report has no adverse impacts.

8. Environmental and climate implications

8.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers). The Planning and Building Control functions are essential in helping to address the Climate Emergency through ensuring that development is undertaken to the highest possible environmental standards in line with national regulations and local policies.

8.2 There are no direct environmental or climate implications of this report.

9. Legal implications

9.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators and publication of financial performance is a statutory requirement. In addition, a number of the functions of the service are mandatory requirements including the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the development plan.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report although we continue to monitor fee income and look for ways to improve our efficiency and boost fee income.

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Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0573 - Full planning application
Site Address:	The Oracle, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LR
Proposed Development	Full planning application for the removal of the existing rooftop safety lines and handrails and replacement with rooftop safety rails and installation of fixed ladder
Applicant	The Oracle Limited Partnership
Report author	Matthew Burns
Deadline:	12/08/2026
Recommendations	Grant full planning permission subject to conditions as set out below.
Conditions	1. Time Limit for implementation – 3 years. 2. Approved plans. 3. Materials as proposed
Informatives	1. Positive and Proactive Working – approval 2. Terms and conditions 3. Building Regulations 4. Complaints about construction 5. Community Infrastructure Levy – not liable

1. Executive summary

1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the replacement and upgrading of existing rooftop safety infrastructure at The Oracle, including the installation of new safety railings and a fixed access ladder. The works are required to ensure compliance with current health and safety standards and to facilitate the safe maintenance of rooftop plant and equipment.

1.2 The proposed railings would be modest in scale, located at roof level and largely replace existing safety features. Officers consider that the development would have a negligible visual impact on The Oracle, the surrounding townscape including riverside areas and nearby heritage assets. No objections have been raised by the Council's Conservation Officer, and no public representations have been received.

1.3 The proposal would support the continued operation of The Oracle as a key retail and leisure destination within Reading town centre and is not considered to result in any unacceptable impacts on heritage assets, residential amenity, biodiversity or flood risk. The development is therefore considered to comply with relevant local and national planning policies, and approval is recommended subject to conditions

2. Introduction and site description

2.1. The application site comprises the entirety of the Oracle Shopping Centre and some surrounding buildings, consistent with the red-line application site boundary of the original permission (PL/97/0419) from 1997. This extends from Broad Street in the north, Duke Street, Yield Hall Place and London Street in the east, Mill Lane to the south and Bridge Street to the west. This is shown below in figure 1. The application form submitted with the application confirms that the applicant has served notice on various other landowners on part of land or buildings to which this application relates.

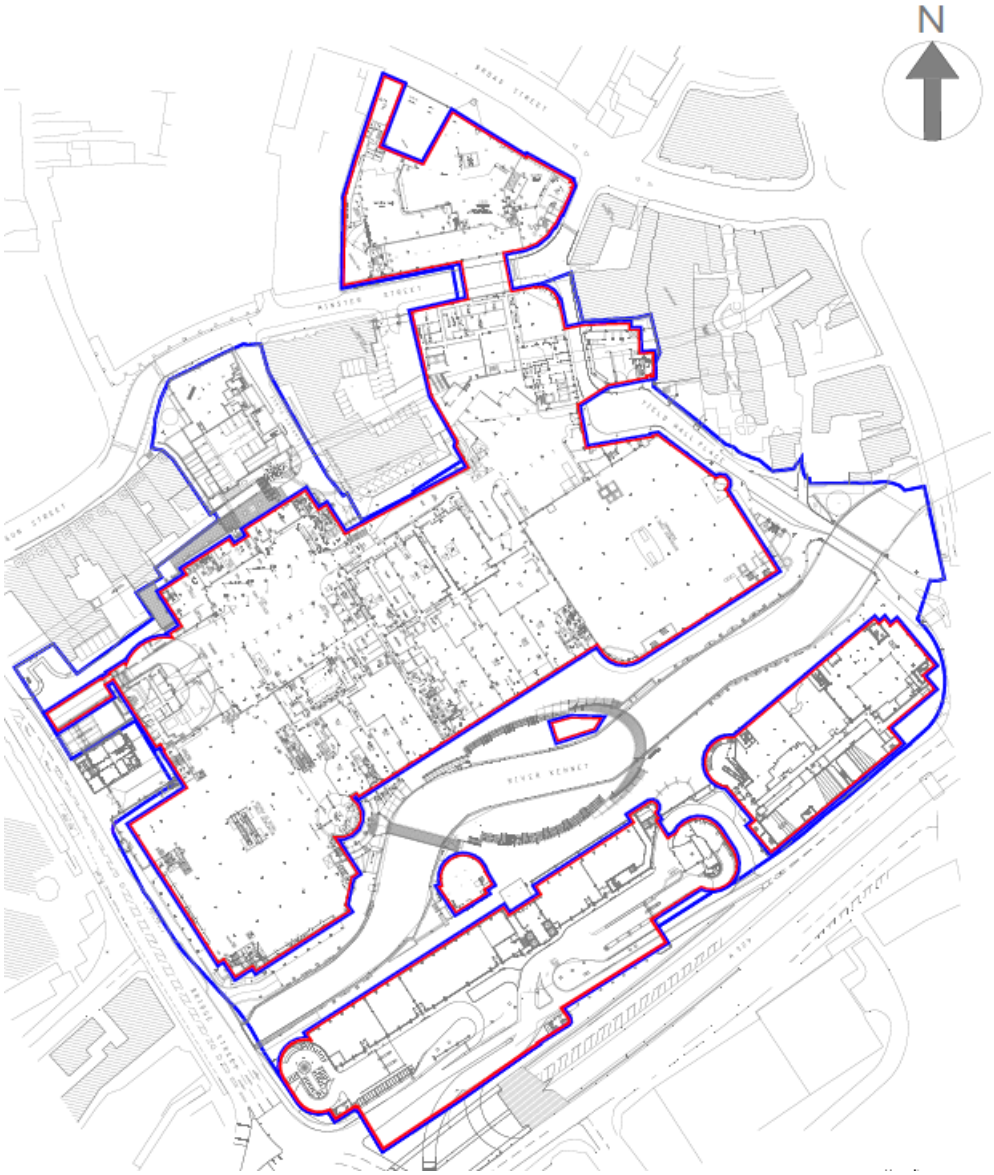


Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

2.2 Th Oracle opened in September 1999 and comprises a two-level shopping centre, with further uses either side of the River Kennet riverside. The Oracle is managed by Hammerson (the applicant for these proposals) and consists predominantly of national retailers providing a variety of retail, restaurant and leisure uses.

2.3 The Local Plan (2019) at paragraph 5.1.4 specifies that the opening of The Oracle helped to establish Reading as one of the leading shopping locations in the UK. The application site is subject to the following site constraints / designations:

- Part of the site is allocated for development under Policy CR14g – The Oracle Extension, Bridge Street and Letcombe Street, which specifies development of the area between the River Kennet and Mill Lane for retail, with use of the site at Letcombe Street for a public car park.
- Within the boundary of Reading Central Area (Policies CR1-10)
- Inside the primary shopping area (Policy CR1)

- Inside the central core (Policy CR1)
- Inside the office core (Policy CR1)
- The Riverside frontages are designated primary frontages in Central Reading (Policy CR7)
- The site is partly within two separate conservation areas (Policies EN1 & EN3), namely Market Place / London Street to the east and St Mary's Butts / Castle Street to the west.
- On site Grade II listed buildings, namely 2&4 London Street, Seven Bridges House (19 Bridge Street) and the Telephone Exchange at 41- 47 Minster Street
- On site Grade II* structure, namely the culvert on the Holy Brook to the rear of Gun Street / Castle Street
- High Bridge (Duke Street) is a scheduled ancient monument (Policy EN1)
- Within the viewing corridor of view 2 within Policy EN5 (Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest) – the view northwards down Southampton Street from Whitley Street towards St Giles Church, St Mary's Church and Greyfriars Church.
- Includes parts of the classified highway network and a series of cycle routes (e.g. Mill Lane is an orbital route, Bridge Street, Broad Street, Minster Street and Duke Street are local routes, the southern Riverside is a leisure route, all as per the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan)
- The River Kennet is an area of identified biodiversity interest (Policy EN12) and waterspace (Policy EN11)
- A number of parts of the site are subject to potential contaminated land (Policy EN16)
- Within areas of Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3 (Policy EN18)
- Within an area with archaeological potential (Policy EN2)
- Within an air quality management area (Policy EN15)
- Within a British Waterways consultation area
- Within a smoke control area
- Within a licensing cumulative impact area

2.4 In the surrounding area there are a wide mix of uses (both commercial and residential) and building types, including a number of other listed buildings (e.g. fronting Gun Street). As per the aerial view provided at figure 2 below, the site and surrounding area is within the heart of Reading town centre.

Figure 2 – Aerial view looking north of the site and surrounding area

2.5 The application is being considered at Planning Applications Committee as the proposal constitutes a 'major' development, given the red line site area exceeds 1 hectare.

3. The Proposal

3.1 Full planning permission is sought to partially remove some of the existing rooftop lines and handrails and replace them with rooftop safety rails. Due to regulatory changes, the proposal is sought to replace the existing safety lines with safety handrails which are compliant with the latest safety regulations.

3.2 The Oracle is an operational shopping centre and at roof top level there is a range of ancillary equipment to support the operation of the shopping centre including mechanical plant, lift shafts, stair core overruns and roof top car parking. The existing rooftop lines (see figure 3 below) allow workers safety equipment to be attached by harness when accessing and maintaining rooftop-based equipment.

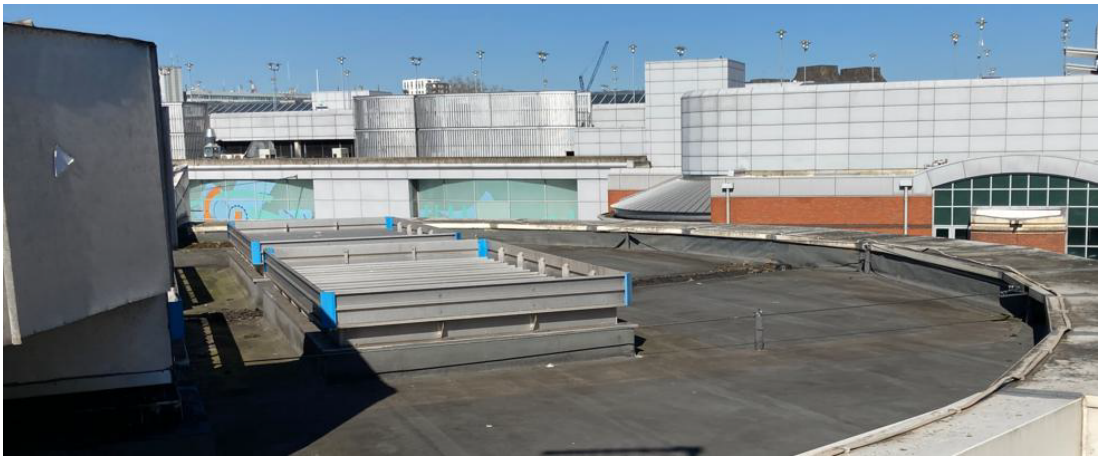


Figure 3 – Photograph of existing rooftop lines

3.3 The supporting statement submitted with the application explains that the applicant has undertaken a health and safety assessment and identified that the existing rooftop lines are reaching the end of their operational life and due to regulatory changes (to BS 13700 - the official UK standard for permanent, freestanding roof guardrails and lines), the proposals are sought to partially replace the existing rooftop lines and handrails with equipment that is compliant with the latest safety regulations. The new replacement rails are required to prevent workers and any people moving around on the roof from the risk of falling and minimise the risk of accidental injury. The new rails would create a physical barrier that prevents people from entering hazardous areas of the roof edge to ensure the safety of employees and contractors when accessing rooftop infrastructure.

3.4 The proposed replacement rails would be affixed to the roof by a mix of short and long led counterweight based with a height a maximum height of 1.1m to the top of the rail (see figure 4).

(Illustrative image of long leg counterweight system)

(Illustrative image of short leg counterweight system)

Figure 4 – Proposed rail counterweight bases

3.5 The counterweights would be connected by silver metal bars forming rails around the perimeter of the roof of the buildings as shown in figure 5 below.

Figure 5 – Proposed rails

3.6 Where existing roof top lines and rails meet latest standards, these are to be retained. The replacement roof top rails are proposed various locations spread across the rooftops of The Oracle complex and adjoining buildings within the application site. The proposed location of new rails is shown delineated and annotated in red on the plan in figure 6 below and on the plans attached at the end of this report. Existing lines and rails to be retained are shown delineated and annotated in green and existing rails and lines to be decommissioned and removed that no longer adhere to latest safety standards are shown delineated and annotated in blue on the same plan.

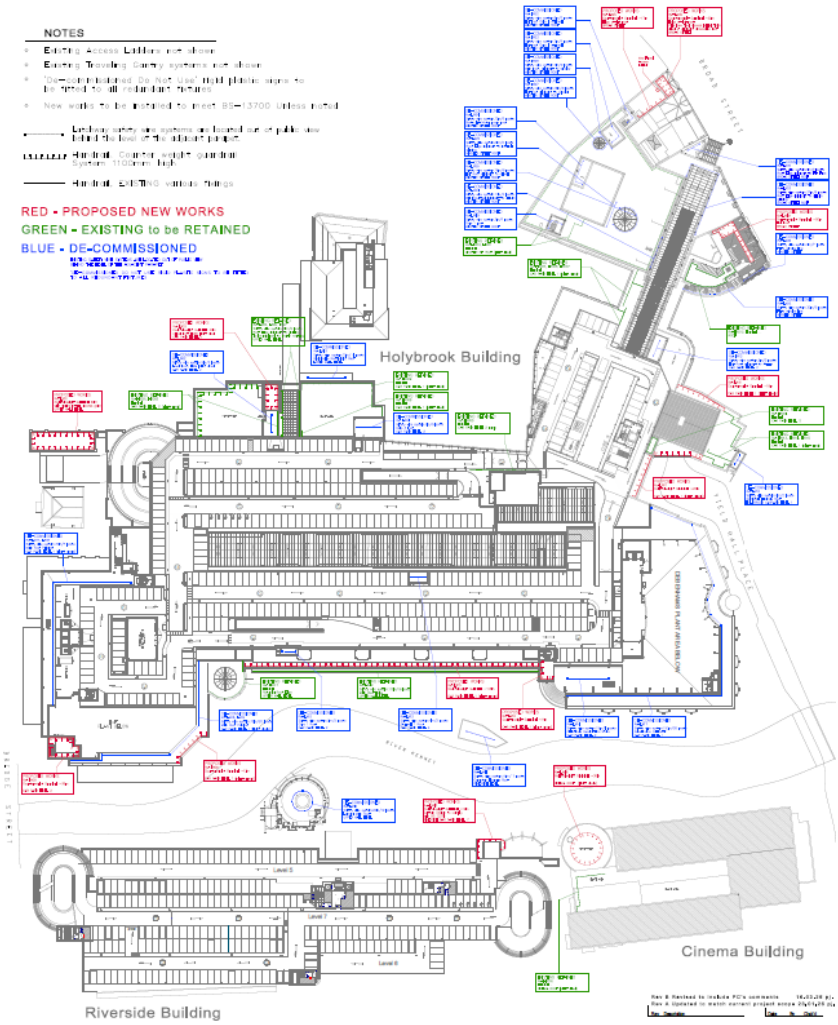


Figure 6 – Location of existing and proposed rails and lines

3.7 The proposals also include the additional of a fixed ladder to provide access to the roof top level on the shopping centre roof above the Broad Street entrance to The Oracle.

3.8 Submitted plans and documentation:

Application form, certificates and fee
Turley Planning CIL Form
Turley Planning Covering Letter and Contents ref. HAMS3038
Turley Planning Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement ref. HAMS3038
Site Location Plan ref. SITE.LOC.01A JLL
Existing Block Plan ref. EX.BP.08A JLL
Proposed Block Plan ref. PRO.BP.58A
Edge Protection – Existing Roof Plan ref. EP.EX.RP.101.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Roof Plan ref. EP.PRO.RP.100.B
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (A, B, C) ref. OSC.EP.EX.01A
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (D) ref. OSC.EP.EX.02.A
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (F, G, H) ref. OSC.EP.EX.03.A
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (J, K, L) ref. OSC.EP.EX.04.A
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (M, N) ref. OSC.EP.EX.05.A
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (P, Q, R) ref. OSC.EP.EX.06.A
Edge Protection – Existing Elevations (S, T, U) ref. OSC.EP.EX.07.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Elevations (A, B, C) ref. OSC.EP.PRO.51.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Elevations (D) ref. OSC.EP.PRO.52.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Elevations (F, G, H) ref. OSC.EP.PRO.54.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Elevations (M, N) ref. OSC.EP.PRO.55.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Elevations (P, Q, R) ref. OSC.EP.PRO.56.A
Edge Protection – Proposed Elevations (S, T, U) ref. OSC.EP.PRO.57.A JLL
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 29th April 2026.

4 Planning history

4.1 There have been numerous planning applications at the wider Oracle site since the original permission to which this application relates.

4.2 97/0017/FD / 970419 – Demolition of existing buildings, redevelopment and change of use to provide: shopping centre (Class A1, A2 & A3), 41 residential units, leisure facilities including multi screen cinema (Class D2), car parking (2390 spaces) and community uses together with associated landscaping etc. Granted following the completion of a s106 legal agreement 04/04/1997.

4.3 98/00137/VARIAT / 980719 - Relaxation of condition No 3 of consent reference 97/0017/FD to substitute plans relating to House of Fraser lifts, Debenhams lift, Debenhams high level wall, Holy Brook lift, Broad Street canopy. Granted 02/04/1998.

4.4 98/00143/FUL - 980127 - Substitution of approved drawings submitted pursuant to condition 75, the South Bank Car Park elevations of consent reference 97/0017/FD. Granted 10/06/1998.

4.5 98/00255/VARIAT / 980652 - Relaxation of condition 59 of application 97/0017/FD to allow 24 hour working in specified areas for 6 weeks commencing 27 April 1998. Granted 17/04/1998.

4.6 98/00238/VARIAT / 980695 - Variation of condition 75 re cinema elevations. Granted 23/04/1998.

4.7 98/0939/VC / 980841 - Relaxation of condition 3 of planning application 97/0017/FD to substitute plans relating to the internal layout and external elevations of phase 3. works. Granted 10/02/1999.

4.8 98/00578/FUL / 981047 - Substitution of plans pursuant to condition 3 of app 97/0017/FD re the ground floor of south bank car park which previously showed 3 restaurants the

gallery & disabled parking bays to show 4 restaurants, the gallery & the creche and relocating disabled parking bays on Level 3. Granted 10/07/1999.

4.9 98/00808/VARIAT / 981053 - Town & Country Planning Act 1990 - Section 73 Variation of Condition 59. Granted 17/04/1998.

4.10 98/00408/VARIAT / 981059 - Application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to vary condition 3 attached to planning permission 97/0017/FD to allow for changes to the proposed 'circular' restaurant on the South Bank. Granted 10/09/1998.

4.11 99/00764/VARIAT / 991435 - Variation of conditions 18 and 19 of planning permission 97/0017/FD to allow obscure glazing of selected windows of the department stores. Granted 22/09/99.

4.12 99/00073/VARIAT / 991769 – Vary condition 59 attached to Planning Permission 97/0017/FD to allow for 24hr working to enable internal works only from 6.00pm to 8.00am. Granted 05/10/1999.

4.13 05/00222/VARIAT / 050162 - New access and external seating area to House of Fraser Restaurant. Granted 29/04/05.

4.13 Current Next unit only: 171726/CLP - Internal alterations associated with amalgamation of units L12 & LX, Yield Hall East Mall internal access space (all at Level 2) and units U16, U17 and U18 (all at Level 4 on Town Mall East) into a single retail unit (Class A1). Certificate of Lawfulness Granted 15/11/2017. This was implemented and combined a number of existing units to create the existing single unit occupied by Next.

4.14 Current House of Fraser unit only: 191841/FUL - Subdivision of three-storey retail unit (Class A1) and change of use to form: 1x flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit (Class A1/A3/A4), 1x flexible retail/restaurant unit (Class A1/A3) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at Riverside level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at lower ground level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) at upper ground level, together with alterations to the Riverside frontage and associated plant, car parking and external alterations at car park levels. Granted following completion of s106 legal agreement on 31/07/2020. Not implemented and the 3 year period for works to commence expired on 31/07/2023.

4.15 Former Debenhams Department Store, West of Yield Hall Place: 221916/FUL - Mixed use development comprising part demolition of former department store and erection of new building comprising up to 202no. build to rent residential dwellings (Class C3) and 1,209 sqm commercial uses within Uses Class E and / or bar (Sui Generis Use). Reconfiguration and change of use of up to 5,866 sqm remaining department store floorspace (Class E) to uses with within Use Class E and / or bar (Sui Generis Use) and / or experiential leisure use (Sui Generis Use). Associated public realm, infrastructure works and external alterations to shopping centre, including creation of new shopping centre entrance. PAC resolution to grant awaiting completion of s106 agreement before planning permission can be issued.

4.16 Existing Vue Cinema Complex, Land West of Yield Hall Place / London Road, The Oracle: 221917/FUL - Mixed use development comprising demolition of existing buildings and erection of new building comprising up to 247 no. build-to-rent residential dwellings (Class C3) and up to 3,046 sqm commercial floorspace comprising cinema (Sui Generis) and ground floor commercial uses within Use Class E and /or Bar (Sui Generis Use). Associated public realm. PAC resolution to grant awaiting completion of s106 agreement before planning permission can be issued.

5 Consultations

5.1 RBC Conservation Officer – No objection.

5.2 RBC Ecology Adviser – No objection.

Public Notification

5.3 4 x site notices were displayed at the application site on 20th May 2026. No letters of representation have been received.

6 Legal context

6.1 Section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF December 2024) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.4 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.5 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

NPPF (December 2024, incorporating changes February 2025)
Section 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

NPPG (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, policies:
CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest
EN11: Waterspaces
EN18: Flooding and Drainage
RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres
CR1: Definition of Central Reading
CR2: Design in Central Reading
CR14g: The Oracle Extension, Bridge Street and Letcombe Street

Other relevant guidance:
Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
St Mary's Butts / Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2008)

Local Plan Update

6.6 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination.

6.7 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

6.8 Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

7 Appraisal

7.1 The proposed safety rails and fixed ladder would facilitate safe access for employees of The Oracle and contractors to the rooftop parts of the site and rooftop-based plant equipment, ongoing maintenance of which are key to the operation of The Oracle and adjoining buildings within the site containing various shops and restaurants.

7.2 Supporting the ongoing operation of The Oracle would align with Policy RL1 (Network and Hierarchy of Centres) which seeks that the vitality and viability of the Reading Central Area as a Regional Centre is maintained and enhanced, noting that as per paragraphs 5.1.1 and 5.1.4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) Reading town centre is one of the UK's most important centres and that its importance for retail, boosted by the opening of the Oracle in 1999, is long established, but it is also significant for leisure and culture, and, increasingly, as somewhere to live. In this respect the proposals would also align with relevant paragraph 90 of the NPPF (February 2025) which states that planning decisions should promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres.

7.3 The other main considerations considered relevant to the determination of this application are:

i) Design impact on the character of the host building, surrounding area and heritage assets
ii) Other Matters

i) Design impact on the character of the host building, surrounding area and heritage assets

7.4 The proposed replacement safety rails would either replace or add to the existing safety rails and lines to the rooftop of The Oracle complex. The rails would be of similar appearance and scale and be located in similar locations to the existing rooftop safety rails and lines. The maximum height of the safety rails proposed would be 1.1m on top of the existing flat roof of the various buildings within The Oracle complex. The height and siting of the rails to the roofs of the buildings have been determined in order to adhere to the latest relevant health and safety standards (BS13700) to facilitate safe access and manoeuvrability at roof level.

7.7 Existing and proposed elevation drawings of the site have been provided as part of the application showing the proposed new roof top rails. A selection of these plans is shown below, and the full set of elevation drawings are attached at the end of this report.

Figure 7 - Existing south elevation of The Oracle building to the north side of the Kennet visible from The Oracle riverside area

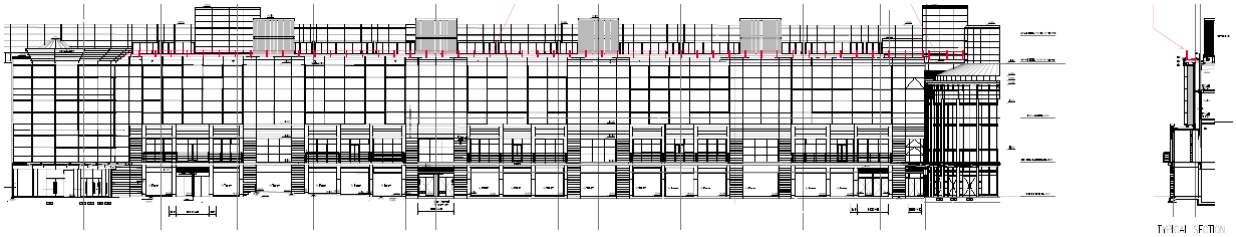


Figure 8 - Proposed south elevation of The Oracle building to the north side of the Kennet visible from The Oracle riverside area (additions shown in red)

Figure 9 – Existing north, south and east elevations of The Oracle Buildings to the north of the Kennet visible from Yield Hall Place (existing rails to be retained shown in green)

Figure 10 – Proposed north, south and east elevations of The Oracle Buildings to the north of the Kennet visible from Yield Hall Place (proposed additions shown in red)

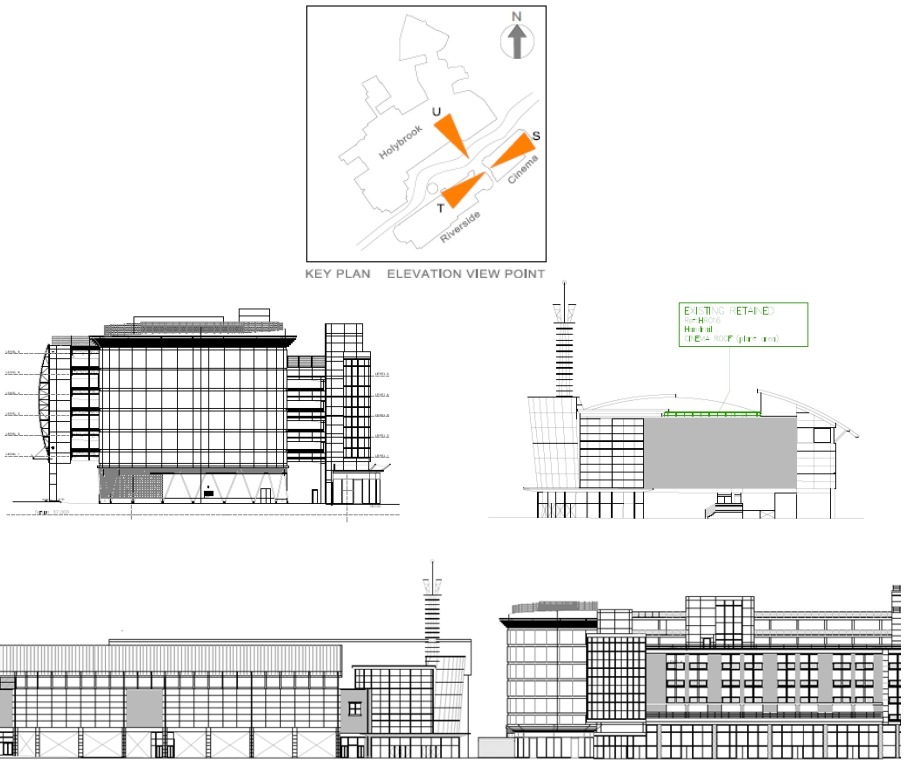


Figure 11 – Existing north, east and west elevations of The Oracle buildings to the south of the Kennet visible from The Oracle riverside area (existing rails to be retained shown in green)

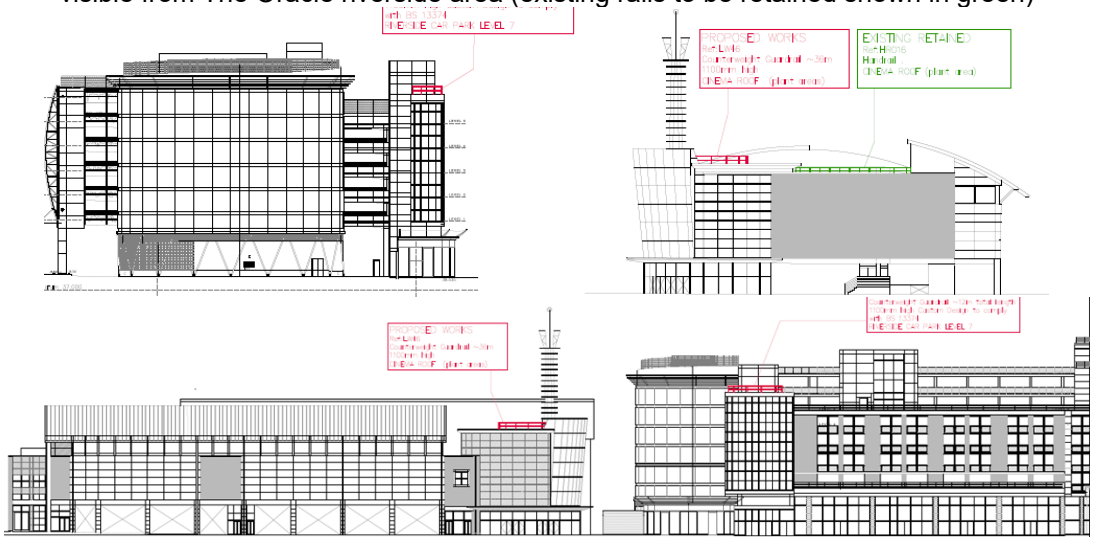


Figure 12 – Proposed north, east and west elevations of The Oracle buildings to the south of the Kennet visible from The Oracle riverside area (proposed additions shown in red)

Figure 13 – Existing north elevations of The Oracle entrance and linked building on Broad Street (existing rails to be retained shown in green)

Figure 14 – Proposed north elevations of The Oracle entrance and linked buildings on Broad Street (additions shown in red)

7.5 As a result of their rooftop location, limited height, set back from the roof edge and in some cases positioning behind parapet roof edges it is not considered that the proposed rails would appear readily visible from street level views within and surrounding The Oracle complex. Furthermore, the nature of the proposed rail structures consisting of thin vertical and horizontal bars means that even when partial views of glimpses of the rails would be obtained, they would not appear obtrusive or prominent. Some of the existing safety rails and lines are visible to certain views when looking towards The Oracle but the grey/silver colour finish of the rails/lines, which is the same as is proposed for the new rails, means that they do not appear prominent within the views and tend to blend into the sky, into views of the taller elements of The Oracle such as roof top plant enclosures and lift overruns or into views of other buildings surrounding The Oracle. For example, figure 15 below shows some of the existing roof top railings adjacent to the roof level of the Holybrook Car Park that are to be retained a part of the proposals when viewed from Gun Street to the north of The Oracle.

Figure 15– view of existing safety rails to roof of The Oracle looking south from Gun Street

7.6 The grey/silver material finish of the railings also reflect that of similar infrastructure/equipment to external areas of The Oracle such as the safety rails along the banks of the Kennet within the riverside areas of the site and that to the edges of the upper floor multistorey car parks areas within The Oracle. The proposals also include provision of a fixed ladder to roof no. 120-121 Broad Street which is part of the buildings either side of The Oracle entrance on Boad Street which are under the same ownership as the shopping centre. The proposed fixed ladder is shown in figure 14 above and would be located to the rear of the flat roof of this building such that it would not be visible from street level of public realm areas within the town centre.

7.7 The proposed replacement and additional rooftop safety rails (and fixed ladder) are by their nature utilitarian and functional additions but are considered to be sited and have an appearance such that they would integrate with the existing rooftop spaces, equipment and structures at The Oracle. Their siting at roof level as per existing rooftop rails and lines at the site is such that it is not considered the rails would be prominent to views from street-level areas within and surrounding The Oracle. Where glimpses of the rails would be viewed, such as from The Oracle riverside, Yield Hall Place, Bridge Street and Broad Street the visual impact would be minor and would be seen in the context of the variety of roof top plant and structures present to The Oracle and other buildings within the Reading Central Area. The proposals would suitably integrate with and not have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of The Oracle, linked buildings and areas surrounding the site, including riverside areas, and in this respect are considered to accord with Policies CC7 (Design and Public Realm), CR2 (Design in Central Reading) and EN11 (Waterspaces).

Heritage Matters

7.8 As set out and described under paragraph 2.3 above the application site contains a number of Grade II Listed buildings, a Grade II* Listed culverted section of the Holy Brook to the rear of Gun Street and the very edges of the northeast and southeast corners of the site are located within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The parts of the Conservation Area within the application site are those along Yield Hall Place where both The Oracle and the Conservation Area traverse the Kennet. The Market Place / London Street Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) identified features making a positive contribution to the historic significance of the Conservation Area with the presence of the river being the most relevant feature in relation to the application site whilst also identifying that The Oracle dominates this part of the Conservation Area. Development at the application site also could impact upon the setting of a number of listed buildings surrounding the site including the Grade II Listed no.s 2, 3, 24, 26 and 28 Broad Street, the Telephone Exchange building 41-45 Minster Steet, The George Hotel 8, 9 & 12 King

Street, no.s 2 & 4 and the Coroners Court 1 London Street, High Bridge and nos. 7-15 Gun Street.

7.9 The western end of The Oracle and application site (closest to Bridge Street) also lies partly within an identified view of heritage interest as defined under Policy EN5 (Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest). This relates to view 2 as described under the Policy looking northwards down Southampton Street from Whitley Street towards St Giles Church, St Marys Church and Greyfriars Church.

7.10 The application is accompanied by a short heritage statement which describes the presence of the heritage assets surrounding the site and concludes that the proposals would have a neutral impact upon the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area and setting of listed buildings within and surround the site and does not identify any resulting heritage harm. This conclusion is reached given the small scale of the proposed safety rails which would be similar in scale and appearance to existing rooftop safety rails and lines at The Oracle and given the rails would be viewed in the context of the various existing plant equipment and associated service infrastructure also found to the roof of The Oracle and to surrounding buildings, such that the proposals would integrate with the existing context at the site and have minimal visual impact.

7.11 The RBC Conservation Officer concurs with the conclusions of the applicant's heritage statement, raises no objection to the proposals and considers that impacts upon historic character, appearance and setting of heritage assets at and surrounding the application site would be negligible given the minor nature of the proposals. In this respect the proposals are not considered to result in harm to and would protect the historic character and setting of heritage assets at and near the site in accordance with Policy EN1 (Enhancement of the Historic Environment), would conserve the setting of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area in accordance with Policy EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas) and would not harm the identified significant view of heritage interest northwards down Southampton Street in accordance with Policy EN5.

ii) Other Matters

7.12 The closest residential accommodate to the application site are the serviced apartments at Minster Court on Minster Street. The nature of the proposals and small scale, form and rooftop siting of the proposed safety rails is such that no adverse impacts upon the residential amenity of any nearby residential occupiers are considered to result and no conflict with Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) is identified.

7.12 The application site is located either side of the river Kennet and partly within both flood zones 2 and 3 which are areas at medium and highest risk of flooding. Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems) requires that development does not increase the risk of flooding. The proposals are for new and replacement safety rails to the roofs of existing buildings and are not considered to result in any increase in flood risk at the site.

7.13 The proposed new and replacement rooftop safety rails would not result in any loss of biodiversity, greenery or vegetation. In this respect the proposals would comply with Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) which requires that development should not result in a net loss of on-site biodiversity. Given this, and the nature of the proposals which are considered acceptable in respect of all relevant matters additional biodiversity or landscaping is not considered to be justified in this instance. The proposals do not impact upon any existing biodiversity and therefore the statutory requirement for planning application to provide a 10% net gain in biodiversity does not apply in this instance with the development being exempt from this requirement under the terms of the relevant legislation. The RBC Ecology adviser raises no objection to the application and advises that given the minor nature of the proposals they would not adversely impact upon protected species such as bats.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.14 The proposed development does not result in any change in floorspace and is not CIL liable.

8 Equality implications

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to this particular application.

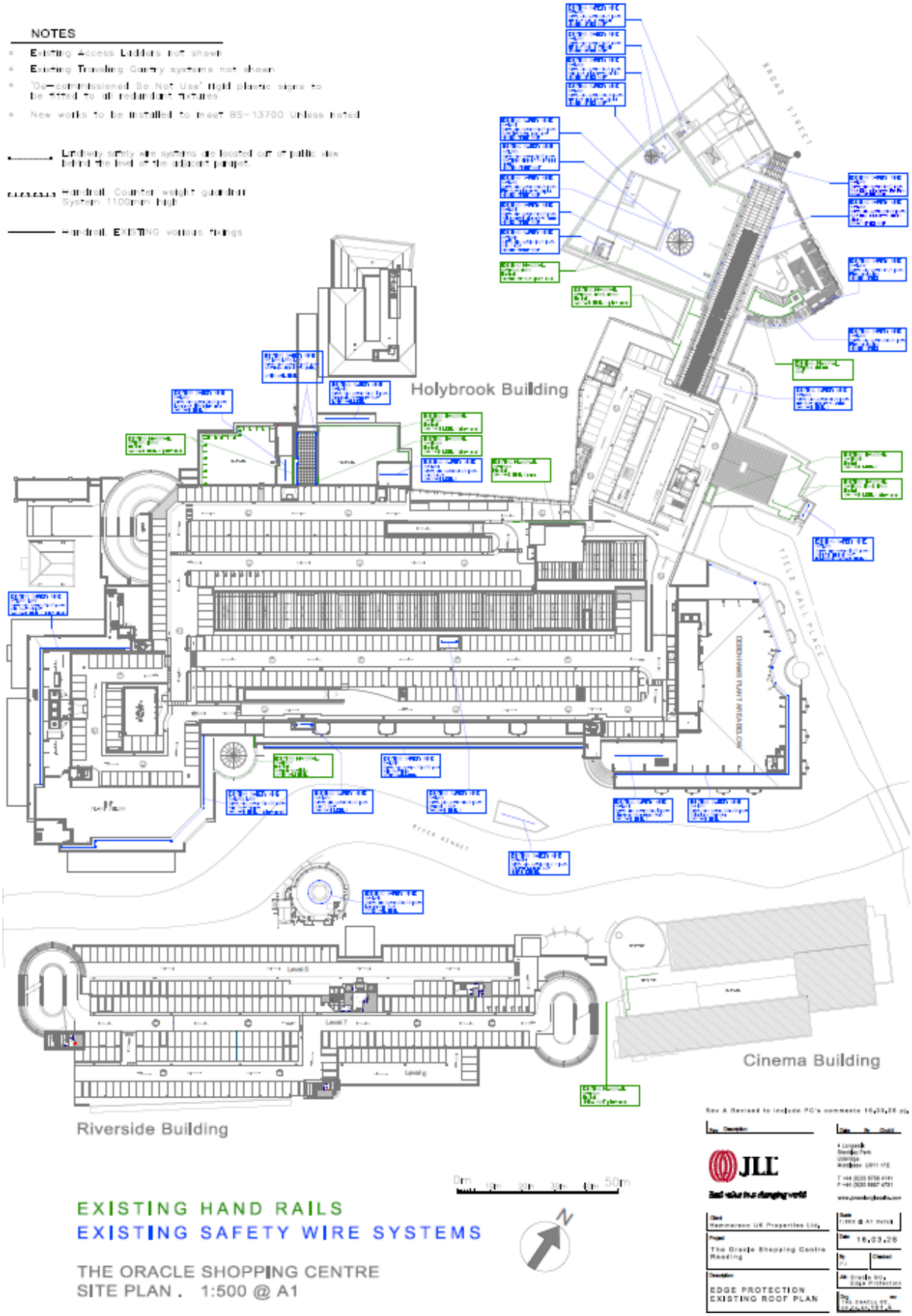
9 Conclusion

9.1 The proposed development seeks to replace and upgrade existing rooftop safety infrastructure at The Oracle through the installation of replacement safety rails and a fixed access ladder to facilitate safe maintenance and operation of existing rooftop plant and equipment and to ensure compliance with current health and safety standards. The proposals would support the continued operation and long-term viability of The Oracle shopping centre, an important component of Reading town centre and Regional Centre.

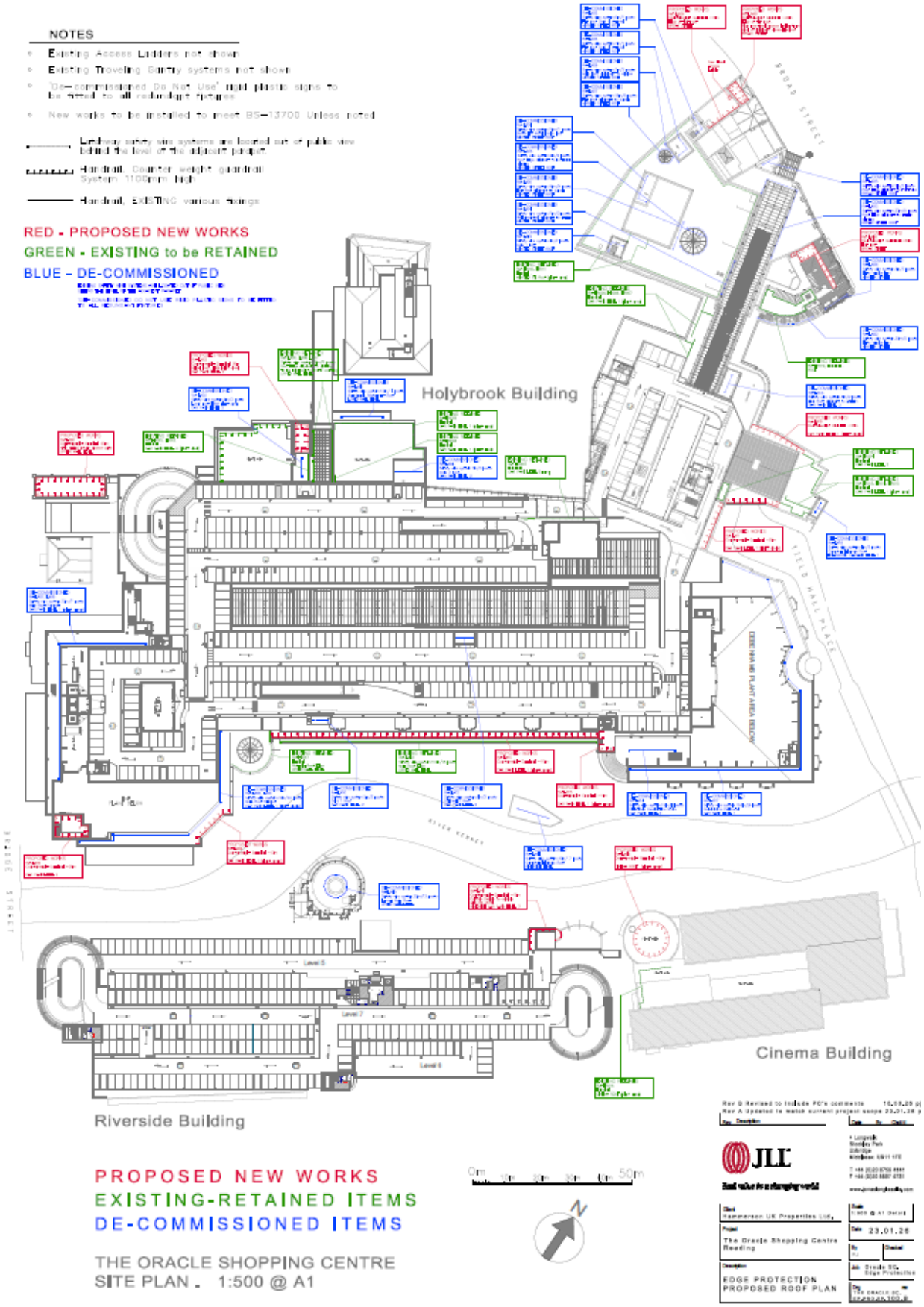
9.2 The proposed safety rails and ladder are limited in scale, utilitarian in nature and would be located at roof level where they would have a negligible visual presence to views within The Oracle and from the surrounding area. The development would not adversely affect the character or appearance of The Oracle, the surrounding townscape, riverside environment or nearby heritage assets and no harm to residential amenity, biodiversity, flood risk or in respect of any other material planning considerations has been identified.

9.3 The proposals are considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Development Plan as described above and accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions set out within the recommendation box at the top of this report.

Plans & Appendices

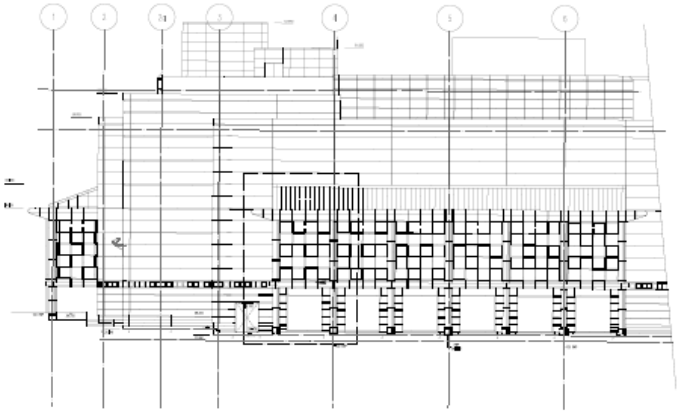


Existing Roof Plan

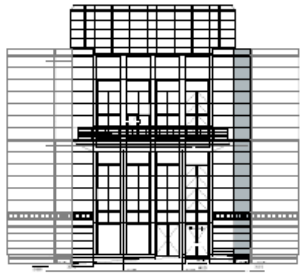


Proposed Roof Plan

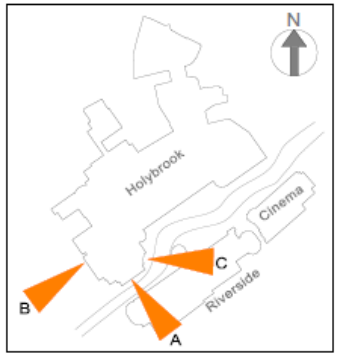
10m 20m



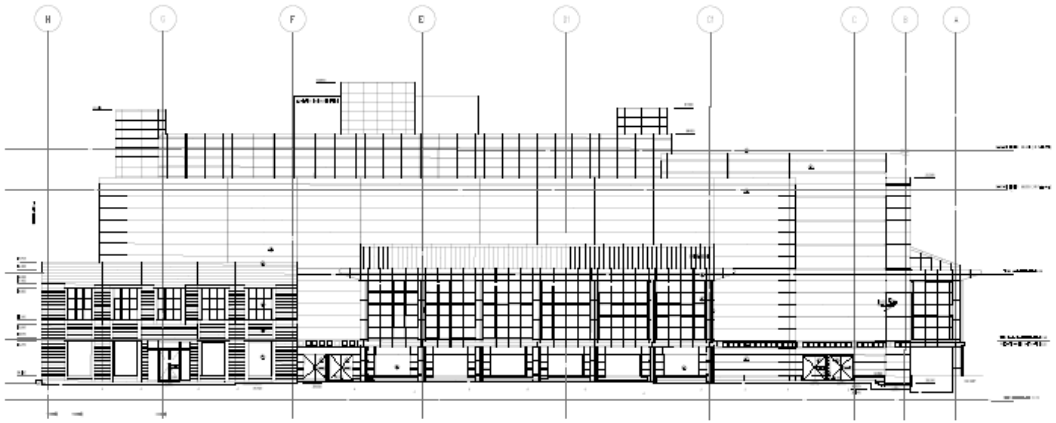
ELEVATION A House of Fraser Riverside South West End



ELEVATION C House of Fraser splay



KEY PLAN ELEVATION VIEW POINT



ELEVATION B House of Fraser South End, Bridge St

NOTES

EXISTING SAFETY WIRE SYSTEMS ARE LOCATED OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW BEHIND THE LEVEL OF THE ADJACENT PARAPET.

Rev A Revised to include PC's comments 16.03.26 pj.

Rev	Description	Date	By	Chkd

JLL

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www.joneslanglasalle.com

Client
Hammerson UK Properties Ltd.

Scale
1:200 @ A1 Detail

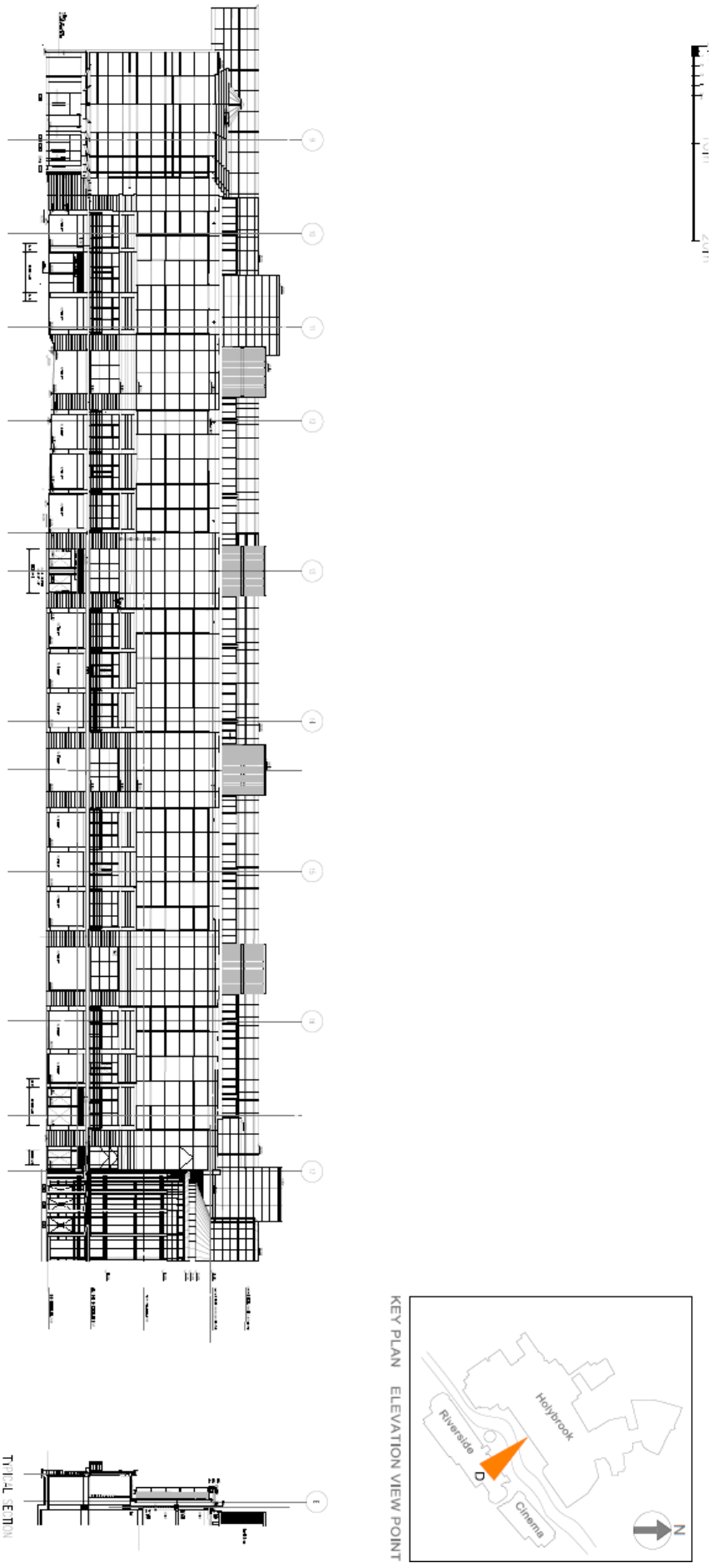
Project
The Oracle Shopping Centre
Reading

Date 23.01.26

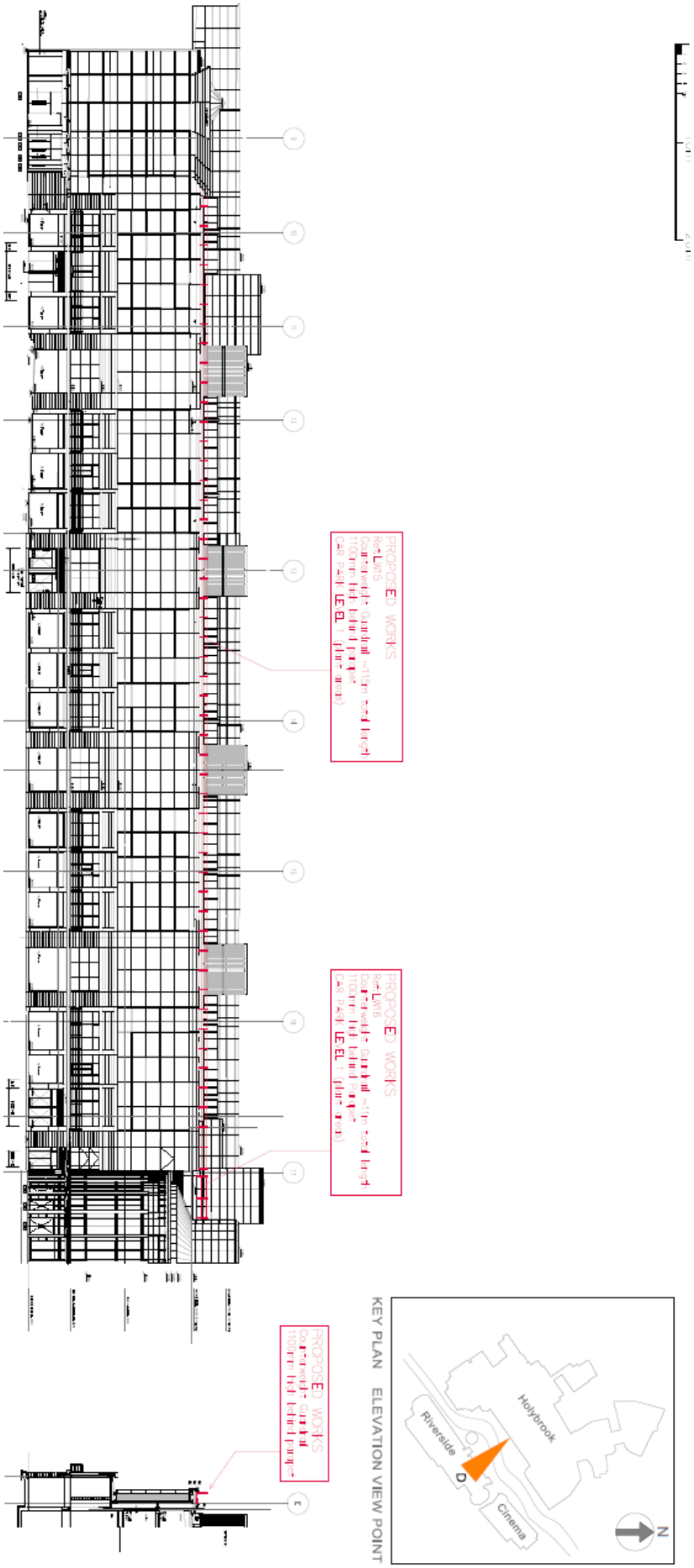
By Checked

Existing Elevations – Riverside North

Proposed Elevations – Riverside North

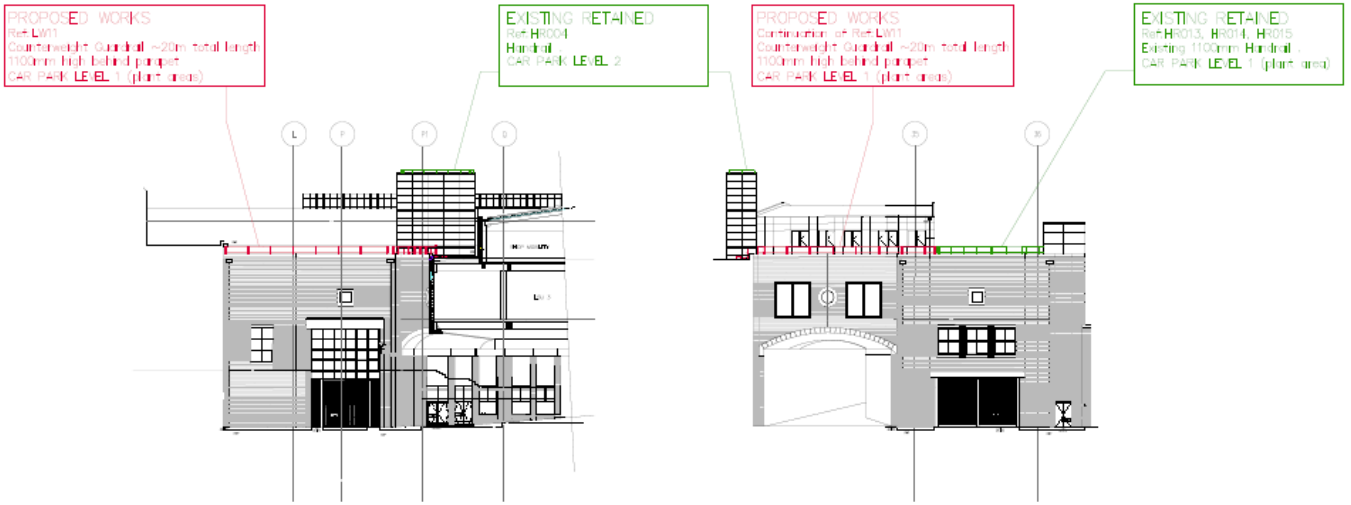


Existing Elevations – Riverside North



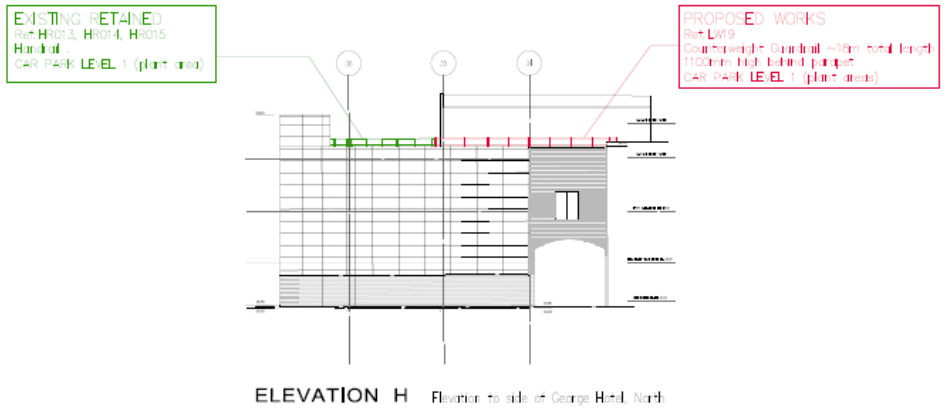
Proposed Elevations – Riverside North

Existing Elevation – East (from Yield Hall Place)

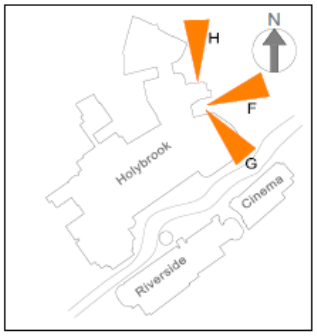


ELEVATION F Yield Hall Place, EAST ELEVATION

ELEVATION G Yield Hall Place, SOUTH ELEVATION



ELEVATION H Elevation to side of George Hotel, North



KEY PLAN ELEVATION VIEW POINT

NOTES

EXISTING SAFETY WIRE SYSTEMS ARE LOCATED OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW BEHIND THE LEVEL OF THE ADJACENT PARAPET.

'DE-COMMISSIONED. DO NOT USE' RIGID PLASTIC SIGNS TO BE FITTED TO ALL REDUNDANT FIXTURES

Rev A Revised to include PC's comments 16.03.26

Rev	Description	Date	By	Chkd

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www.jonesloanglasalle.com

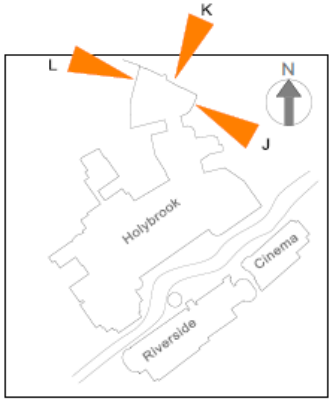
Client
Hammerson UK Properties Ltd.

Scale
1:200 @ A1 Detail

Proposed Elevations East (from Yield Hall Place)

Existing Elevations – Broad Street

ELEVATION K Broad Street, South East



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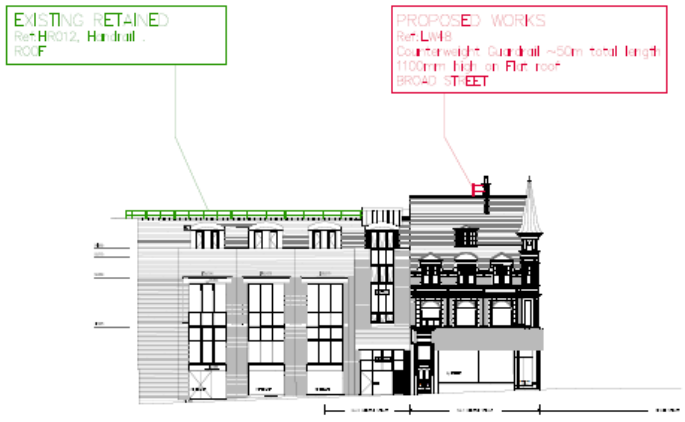
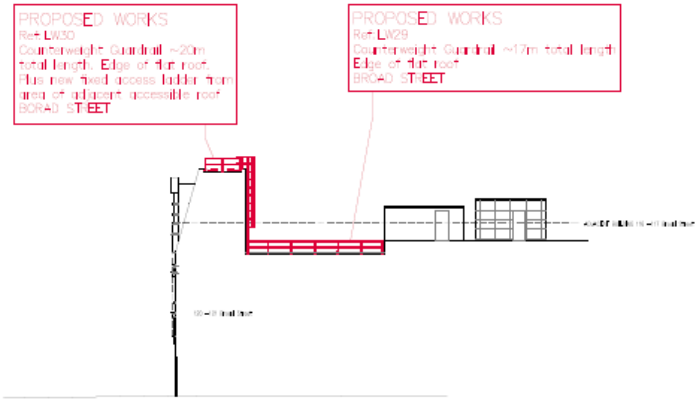
EXISTING SAFETY LINE SYSTEMS ARE LOCATED OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW BEHIND THE LEVEL OF THE ADJACENT PARAPET

'DE-COMMISSIONED DO NOT USE' RIGID PLASTIC SIGNS TO BE FITTED TO ALL REDUNDANT FIXTURES



ELEVATION J Minster Street, South West



ELEVATION L Broad Street, North West

Rev A Revised to include PC's comments 16.09.25 p

Rev	Description	Date	By	Chkd

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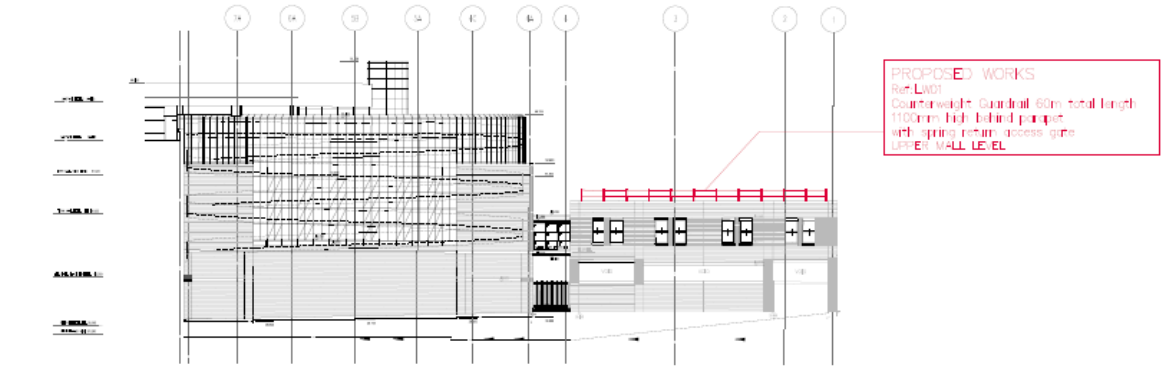
Proposed Elevations – Broad Street

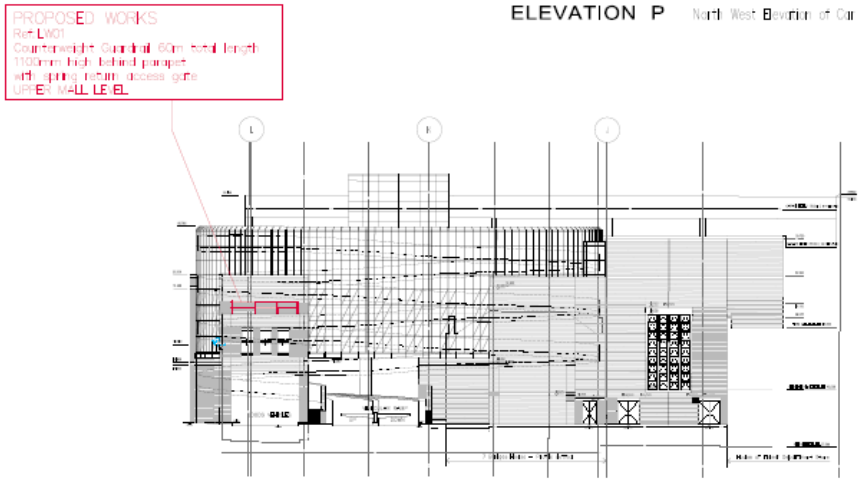
Existing Elevations – West

Proposed Elevations – West

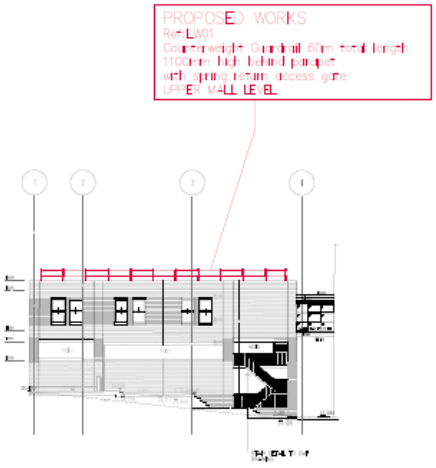
Existing Elevations – West



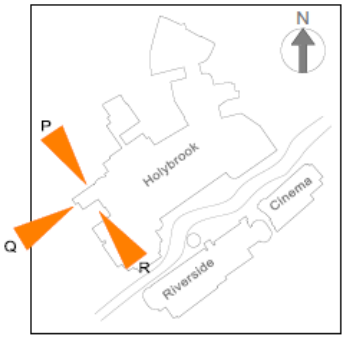
ELEVATION P North West Elevation of Car Park Ramp



ELEVATION Q To Bridge Street



ELEVATION R Carshouse South



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Rev A Revised to include PC's comments 16.03.26 |

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Proposed Elevations – West

Existing Elevations – Riverside South

Proposed Elevations – Riverside South

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Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT**
Ward	Abbey
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0785 FUL
Site Address:	Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading
Proposed Development	Installation of temporary security hoarding, mesh screens and associated security measures to the Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, to secure the vacant building against unauthorised access, vandalism and anti-social behaviour pending determination of its future use.
Applicant	Property and Assets, RBC
Report author	Marcie Rejwerska, Senior Planning Officer
Deadline:	10 August 2026
Recommendation	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION Recommended conditions: 1. Temporary permission – all exterior works to be removed within 3 years of the date of this permission. 2. Approved Plans 3. Materials As Specified 4. Scheme for decorative artwork for timber hoardings to be submitted for approval prior to installation of timber hoardings to include a timetable for implementation. Implementation in accordance.
Informatives	1. Positive and Proactive Working – approval 2. Terms 3. Any signage or other advertisements may require separate Advertisement Consent. 4. Complaints about construction

1. Executive summary

1.1 The report considers the application for full planning permission for installation of security hoarding at the now vacant Reading Central Library on Kings Road/Abbey Square. The design has been designed to minimise the impact on the street scene and the works fall under permitted development. The application is recommended for approval.

2. Introduction

2.1 The application site comprises the recently vacated Reading Central Library on Kings Road/Abbey Square. The property is located in the central core, immediately to the east of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area. The Holy Brook runs underneath the building and falls within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

2.4 The applications are required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee as Reading Borough Council is the applicant.

Figure 1: Aerial View – not to scale

3. The Proposal

3.1 Full planning permission is sought for the proposed scheme for securing the site to prevent unauthorised access. The scheme includes internal metal mesh for all windows facing Kings Road, and external metal mesh screens for windows and external doors at the rear. Timber hoarding is proposed to enclose the canopy entrance on Kings Road. Access is to be retained along the Holy Brook at the rear of the site.

3.2 Information submitted on 15 June 2026:

- Design and Access Statement including Flood Risk Assessment
- 1183-02-00 Site Location Plan
- 1183-02-01 Block Plan as Existing
- 1183-03-00 Ground and First Floor Existing Plan
- 1183-05-00 Partial Elevations as Existing For Hoarding 1

- 1183-05-01 Partial Elevations as Existing For Hoarding 2
- 358 Gate Data Sheet
- 358 Additional Data Sheet
- Hoarding Data Sheet
- Metal Data Sheet
- Protek 358 Data Sheet Safesite

Information submitted on 7 July 2026:

- 1183-03-10 R2 Ground and First Floor Proposed Plan
- 1183-05-10 R2 Partial Elevations as Proposed For Hoarding 1
- 1183-05-11 R2 Partial Elevations as Proposed For Hoarding 2

4. Relevant Planning History

4.1 PL/89/0720 – A pair of signboards fixed back to back projecting from building on Kings Road elevation. Application refused on 4 May 1989.

5. Consultations

5.1 No internal consultees.

5.7 2x site notices were displayed, one at the front of the site and the other at the rear, on 18 June 2026 in the public interest.

5.8 No letters of representation were received.

6. Legal Context

6.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.4 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.5 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

6.6 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, as amended)

6.7 National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

6.8 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 - Policies:
CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC7: Design and the public realm
EN18: Flooding and drainage
CR2: Design in Central Reading

6.10 Local Plan Partial Update
Local Plan (2019), the emerging Local Plan (Submission Draft 2025)

6.11 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update was submitted on 9th May 2025 and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place in February 2026.

6.12 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

6.13 Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that, other than Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

7. Appraisal

7.1 The main considerations relevant to the determination of this application are:

I. Design and appearance
II. Flooding

I) Design and Appearance

7.2 Policy CR2 requires proposals within Central Reading to demonstrate high quality architectural detailing and use of materials, respecting the existing character of the surrounding area. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character.

7.3 The security metal sheets are proposed to be installed internally to all windows facing onto Kings Road. This element does not require planning permission as the works are internal. This is considered an appropriate solution to prevent the works from harming the character of the building and the setting of the nearby conservation area. The proposed hoarding around the entrance is proposed to be timber boarding attached to the existing columns at full height (leaving a 50mm gap at the base for flooding reasons – see below).

7.4 At the rear, metal mesh is proposed to extend around the bay window at the ground floor level near the footbridge over the canal to prevent access to the rear of the site and to prevent climbing onto the bay pitched roof. Metal mesh is also proposed on either side of the canal immediately at the rear elevation to prevent climbing.

7.5 The case officer has discussed with the applicant if a “meanwhile” use could be considered for one of many local community groups that are in need of premises to operate from, however, it has been confirmed that the applicant is not intending to bring the interior of the property to standard suitable for this type of use.

7.6 Overall it is considered that the proposals will have an unfortunate deadening effect upon the vacant building and this effect will extend to affect the surrounding street frontages to the front and rear, including the stepped courtyard area at the rear. The proposals would have an unattractive appearance and are not considered appropriate to be kept in place for any significant length of time. The effects of the proposal will fail to *enhance* the setting of the adjacent conservation area and will result in a degree of harm (at a “less than substantial” level using NPPF terminology) to the setting of the adjacent conservation area.

7.7 In order to *preserve* the character and appearance of the conservation area in the medium to long term and to ensure the deadening qualities do not persist, it is considered reasonable and necessary to impose a condition requiring all external works to be removed within 3 years of the date of the permission. A condition requiring a scheme of artwork for the hoardings is also recommended as a means

of improving the visual quality to a degree. It is considered that the requirements of these conditions taken together would be sufficient to outweigh the heritage harm identified.

II) Flooding

7.6 Policy EN18 states “Where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary, it will not reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding. Wherever possible, development should be designed to reduce flood risk, both on- and off-site.”

7.7 The proposed development has been designed to have no impact on the site in the event of surface flooding. The mesh metal barriers on the entrance doors and at the rear of the site are not fixed to the ground and would not impede water flow in the event of a flood. The proposed hoarding around the entrance porch is proposed to be affixed to the existing columns to support the hoarding and will have a 50mm gap at the floor level to allow water to pass underneath. The use of the materials therefore does not increase the flood risk to the site to a harmful extent.

Equality implications

7.24 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.25 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. There is no indication that the proposal would have any impact with regard to any protected characteristics.

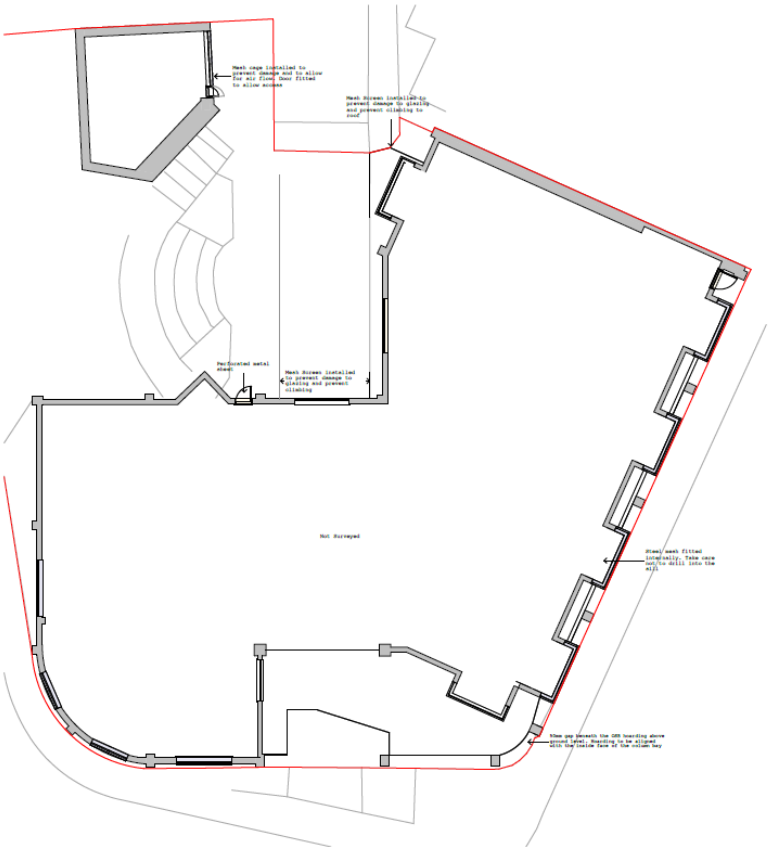
8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The application is required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

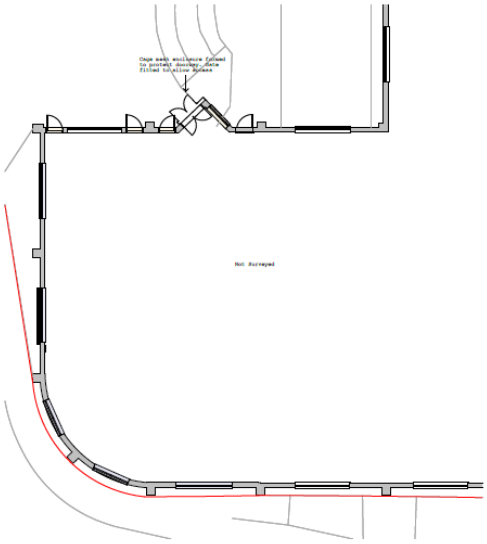
8.2 The proposed works are described by the applicant as being required to secure the vacant building to prevent damage and unauthorised access to the site. The proposals will have visual impacts on the building and surrounding public areas, including the adjacent Market Place/London Street Conservation Area to the

extent that permission should only be granted for a temporary period. The flooding impacts are considered acceptable. The application is therefore recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions.

Plans and documents considered:



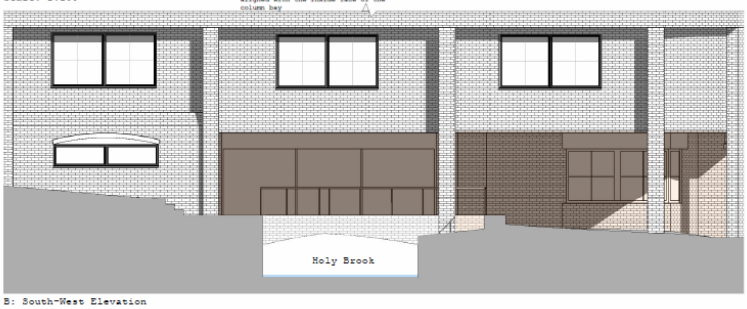
Ground Floor Plan As Proposed



First Floor Plan As Proposed

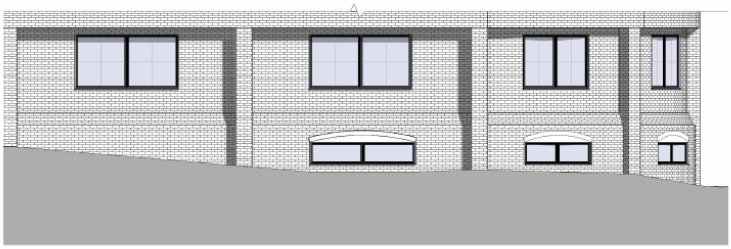
- Mesh
- Perforated metal sheet
- OSB

A: South Elevation
Scale: 1:100

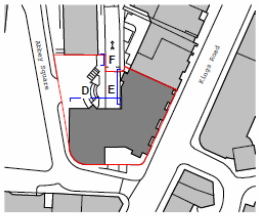


B: South-West Elevation
Scale: 1:100

A: South Elevation B: South-West Elevation C: North-West Elevation

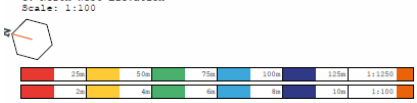


C: North-West Elevation
Scale: 1:100



Site Plan
Scale: 1250

- Mesh
- Perforated metal sheet
- OSB



colony

Collaborating with: Reading Borough Council

Project: Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading

Drawing: Partial Elevations As Proposed For Hoarding 1

Date: 07.26 | Status: Planning

Job: 1183 | Drawing: 05-10 | Revision: R2

Drawn By: AS | Checked By: SH

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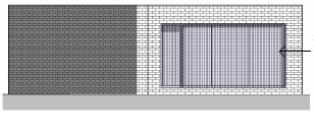
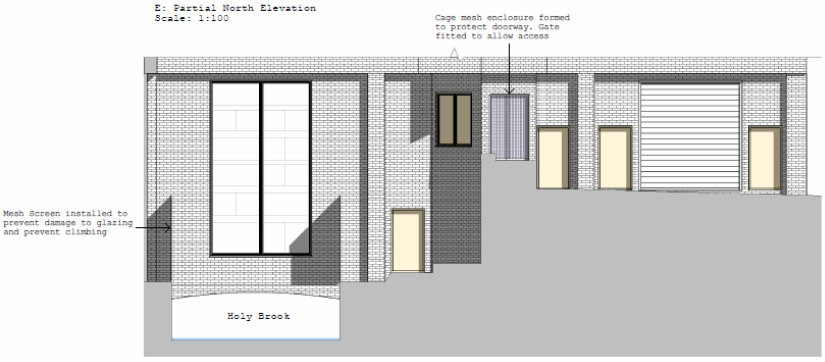
E: Partial North Elevation
Scale: 1:100

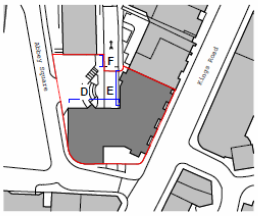


F: South Elevation
Scale: 1:100

E: North Elevation D: East Elevation F: South Elevation

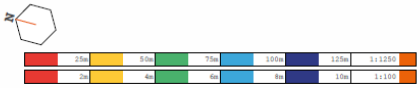


D: Partial East Elevation
Scale: 1:100



Site Plan
Scale: 1250

- ☐ Mesh
- ☐ Perforated metal sheet
- ☐ OSB



colony

Collaborating with:
Reading Borough Council

Project:
Central Library
Abbey Square, Reading
Drawing:
Partial Elevations As Proposed For Hoarding 2
Date: 07.26
Status: Planning
Job: 1183
Drawing: 05-11
Revision: R2
Drawn By: AG
Checked By: SH

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Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT**
Ward	Caversham
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0614 FUL & PL/26/0617 LBC
Site Address:	Caversham Court, Church Road, Caversham
Proposed Development	Repair and conservation work to the Gazebo, Causeway, Stable Block boundary wall and gate piers, East (screen) wall gates and gates opening and buttress to the adjacent garden wall.
Applicant	Christelle Beaupoux, RBC Culture
Report author	Marcie Rejwerska, Senior Planning Officer
Deadline:	24 July 2026 (agreed extension of time)
Recommendation	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION Recommended conditions: 1. Time Limit (standard) 2. Approved Plans 3. Materials As Specified 4. Arboricultural Method Statement – as specified 5. Protected species measures implemented as specified in the Stage 2 Bat Report GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Recommended conditions: 1. Time Limit (standard) 2. Approved Plans 3. Any replacement material of flintwork, stonework, brickwork, plain clay roof tiles, timberwork, including all exposed and non-exposed timber frame, windows, doors, and laths, and clay/terracotta floor tiles to be used in the repair works of the listed wall hereby permitted shall match exactly in type, material, colour and texture and be laid in bond, coursing and mortar bedding to match those found in the existing construction and design. 4. Prior to the commencement of any works in connection with the repair or replacement of the existing lime mortar and lime plaster surfaces, including internal floors, walls, and ceilings, details of the proposed lime mixes and final

	lime finishes (proposed lime wash) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. 5. All repair works, including removal of loose flashings, deteriorated paint and finish to timberwork; raking out mortars; removal and replacement of defective original materials; and removal of vegetation, shall be carried out carefully by hand or by tools held in the hand, other than power-driven tools; and all original materials shall be stored in a dry and secure place for re-use. 6. Following the inspection of the existing oak wall plates and prior to any further repairs to all timberwork, a schedule detailing the works, including finishes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. 7. Following the localised investigations of the listed walls on site and prior to any repairs, a schedule detailing the works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. 8. Following the removal of the vegetation from the south wall and further investigation of the listed walls, and prior to any repairs, a schedule detailing the works shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
Informatives	1. Positive and Proactive Working – approval 2. Terms 3. Pre-commencement conditions 4. Complaints about construction

1. Executive summary

1.1 The report considers applications for full planning permission and listed building consent for a programme of conservation and repair works at Caversham Court Gardens affecting the gazebo, the causeway to the upper level in the gazebo, the stable block east courtyard boundary wall and associated gate piers, the double oak gates to the principal entrance on Church Road and part of the existing garden forecourt north wall and associated buttress that separates the former main house courtyard with the courtyard to the stable block.

1.2 The report assesses the impact of the proposed works in terms of heritage implications, impact on the existing trees and protected species found at the

gardens. There are no major issues identified and the applications are recommended for approval subject to conditions as outlined above.

2. Introduction

2.1 The proposal affects a number of different listed structures at Caversham Court Gardens, which is itself a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. The national listing entries for the affected structures read as follows:

The Gazebo

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Riverside Garden Pavilion at Caversham Court (Formerly listed as Caversham Court Garden) SU 7074 11/263A 22.3.57. II 2. Early to mid C17 probably. Said to bear date 1617. Built by the Lovedays of Caversham Court. Reached by a raised walk (qv) from the main axial terrace (qv). At the south-west corner of the garden. 2 storeys square plan, 1st floor timber framed and entered from raised terrace. The ground floor forms a battered basement and is built of brick. An early example of Flemish bond. Hipped old tile roof. The 1st floor room, intended to give a view of the river has original casement window of the "Ipswich" type to south and to east, and an original 6 panel door. The west entrance to the ground floor room has a rusticated surround of flint. The south side has a blind oculus which possibly once had cruciform opening. Altered doorway to east. Formerly had windvane dated 1663.

The Causeway

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Retaining walls to raised walk to Riverside Garden Pavilion at Caversham Court SU 7074 11/446 II 2. C17. Mostly brick, partly flint with brick banding and buttresses (to west). Varies from 8 to 5 foot high (lower to east, formal side). The retaining wall of the terrace walk is continued north up to the church yard retaining wall (qv) although interrupted by the allotments entrance (flint base with brick lacing courses, buttresses and upper courses).

The Stable Block Boundary Wall and Gate Pier

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Caversham Court Stables SU 7074 11/263 22.3.57. II GV 2. Mid-late C17 stables of now destroyed Caversham Court. Some alterations. 2 storeys, brick, with string at 1st floor level. Old tile roof. Ground floor has 3 stone mullioned and transomed 2 light windows, right hand part of ground floor thicker. The left hand door has small stone mullioned overlight. Stone label mould over ground floor windows. 1st floor has 5 small C20 casements. Modern extension to left. Cobbled courtyard in front. Large late C19 detached coach house to east. Enclosed to street by flint stepped wall with ashlar and flint gatepiers.

Screen Wall at North East End

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Screen wall at north-east end of Caversham Court Recreation Ground SU 7074 11/445 II GV 2. Early-mid C19. Probably by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. Gothic. Flint on ashlar and brick

basement. About 10 foot high with stone cope and occasional pinnacles. Brick lacing courses to south. 4 lancets to left. Entrances framed by 3 bays on each side with weathered buttresses and ogee-shaped panels. Returned to north in brick with chamfered cope. This part of the wall also has gateway, pcesunably formerly linking stable court: ogee headed archway, ashlar fronted to south, with 4 flanking bays (brick lined ogee panels to south). Part of wall realigned in early part of C20. Pugin attribution based on recollection of Marianne Loveday (former leaseholder).

2.2 The full listing description for the Registered Park and Gardens can be found on the Historic England register at the following weblink: https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000582?section=official-list-entry.

2.3 The gardens are also located within the St Peters Conservation Area.

2.4 The applications are required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee as Reading Borough Council is the applicant.

Figure 1: Aerial View – not to scale

3. The Proposal

3.1 Full planning permission and listed building consent are sought for conservation, and repair works to the structures as listed above. The works are necessary to rectify building faults and defects where these have been identified in the submitted Heritage Statement. Replacement entrance gates are also proposed. A comprehensive schedule of works has been submitted which details how the works will be carried out.

3.2 Information submitted on 11 May 2026:

- SFK Report No. 25143.R01A Structural Report
- 1053-124-PL00-East Boundary Gate Piers and Gates as Existing Photographs
- 1053-122-PL00-North Boundary Buttress and Wall as Existing Photographs
- 1053-103-PL00-Existing Site Plan Gazebo and Causeway
- 1053-152-PL00- East Boundary Gate Piers and Gates as Proposed
- 1053-111-PL00-Gazebo Roof Plan as Existing
- 1053-150-PL00-Stable Block Boundary Wall and Gate Peirs as Proposed
- 1053-SCH-03-PR00-Stable Block Courtyard Wall and Gate Pier-Schedule of Repairs-
- 25143-SFK-CW-ZZ-DR-S-0001 P1 Causeway
- 1053-SCH-04-PR00-North Courtyard Screen Wall and Buttress-Schedule of Repairs
- 1053-119-PL00-Stable Block Boundary Wall and Gate Piers as Existing
- 1053-SCH-01-PR00-Gazebo-Schedule of Repairs-260424
- MW Drawing Issue Schedule 260508
- 1053-110-PL00-Gazebo Plans as Existing
- 1053-100-PL00-Location Plan
- 1053-102-PL00-Block Plan-Stable Block Courtyard Wall-North Boundary Wall and East Boundary Gate
- 1053-141-PL00-Gazebo South Elevation Repairs.
- 1053-SCH-05-PR00-East Boundary Wall Opening and Gates-Schedule of Repairs-
- 1053-140-PL00-Gazebo East Elevations Repairs
- SFK Report No. 25143.R03. Structural Report
- SFK Report No. 25143.R02. Structural Report
- 1053-139-PL00-Gazebo North Elevation Repairs
- 1053.HS.001.PL00-Caversham Court Gardens-Gazebo-Heritage Statement-Revision 0-
- 1053-149-PL00-Causeway Elevations as Proposed
- E1280-380-R1 M Ent New Gates
- 1053-145-PL00-Gazebo Section AA Repairs
- 1053-115-PL00-Gazebo Elevations as Existing
- 1053-146-PL00-Gazebo Section BB Repairs
- 1053-121-PL00-North Boundary Buttress and Wall as Existing
- 1053-124-PL00-East Boundary Gate Piers and Gates as Existing Photographs
- 1053-117-PL00-Causeway Elevations as Existing
- 1053-104-PL00-Existing Site Plan Stable Block Courtyard Wall - North Boundary Wall and East Boundary
- 1053-101-PL00-Block Plan-Gazebo and Causeway
- 1053-SCH-02-PR00-West Retaining Wall to Raised Walkway-Schedule of Repairs-2
- 1053-151-PL00-North Boundary Wall Buttress as Proposed
- 1053-Caversham Court-BNG Exemption-Principals
- 1053-148-PL00-Gazebo Section DD Repairs
- 1053-120-PL00-Stable Block Boundary Wall and Gate Piers as Existing Photographs
- 1053-147-PL00-Gazebo Section CC Repairs.
- 1053-Design and Access Statement

- 1053-125-PL00-Gazebo Sections as Existing
- 1053-118-PL00-Causeway Elevations as Existing Photographs
- 1053-142-PL00-Gazebo West Elevation Repairs
- 1053-118-PL00-Causeway Elevations as Existing Photographs
- 1053-116-PL00-Gazebo Elevations as Existing Photographs

Information submitted on 16 June 2026:

- 1053-130-PL00-Gazebo-Floor Plans as Proposed- Repairs

Information submitted on 30 June 2026:

- RMT2075 Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Method Statement, dated 30 June 2026
- Appendix 4 – Tree Protection Plan

Information submitted on 25 June 2026:

- Stage 2 Bat Survey – Caversham Court Gazebo

Information submitted on 7 July 2026:

- Stage 1 Bat Survey - Caversham Court Gazebo

4. Relevant Planning History

4.1 PL/25/0606 & PL/25/0607 - Repair and conservation of part of the eastern boundary (screen) wall at Caversham Court Gardens including: part dismantling and rebuilding of two sections of the wall, repairs in situ to the wall, repairs to brickwork arches over existing below ground vaults, new structural concrete slab over vaults, alterations to existing surface water drainage and new supplementary surface water drainage, new paving to inner pavement, root protection measures. Applications permitted.

4.2 PL/19/0844 – Repairs to wall. Application withdrawn.

4.3 PL/13/0169 - Re-configuration of the main stairs in the stable block and minor alterations to the internal layout including new partitions and doors. Structural repairs to the coach houses and alterations to provide conference/meeting rooms with supporting facilities. New open covered walkway between the buildings with a clear glass roof. Referred to Secretary of State and granted.

4.4 PL/13/0168 - Re-configuration of the main stairs in the stable block and minor alterations to the internal layout including new partitions and doors. Structural repairs to the coach houses and alterations to provide conference/meeting rooms with supporting facilities. Application permitted.

4.5 PL/07/0863 & PL/07/1602 - Restoration of the Grade 2 Listed Garden and its structures, including repair and re-building of replicas and new disabled access

ramp. Refurbishment of toilet to kiosk and toilets, and soft landscaping. Applications permitted.

4.6 PL/07/0624 - To restore the weathervane on the apex of the Grade II listed gazebo. Application permitted.

4.7 PL/07/0344 - To restore the weathervane on the apex of the Grade II listed gazebo, by installing a facsimile of the original, which is held in St Peter's Church, Caversham. Application withdrawn.

5. Consultations

5.1 RBC Conservation Officer – No objections subject to conditions.

5.2 RBC Building Control – No comments to make.

5.3 RBC Natural Environment – Revised Arboricultural method statement is acceptable.

5.4 RBC Ecology Adviser – The applicant has submitted a preliminary bat survey report of the gazebo building (CA Ecology, March 2026) following the discovery of a Nathusius' pipistrelle bat within the building during structural survey works. Two subsequent emergence surveys (CA Ecology, June 2026) were undertaken. No bats were seen to emerge from the building, and the report concludes the building is unlikely to host roosting bats during the active season. However, the report states that the building has potential to host hibernating bats. For the reasons set out in section 5 of the report, there will be no need to undertake further winter surveys. There would therefore be no objections to the application, providing works are carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in Section 5 of the report.

5.6 RBC Archaeology – No comments received.

5.7 Two site notices were displayed at the front of the site on 28 May 2026 in the public interest. The application was also advertised in the local press.

5.8 No letters of representation were received.

6. Legal Context

6.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.2 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.4 In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.5 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

6.6 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, as amended)

6.7 National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

6.8 Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 - Policies:
CC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC7: Design and the public realm
EN1: Protection and enhancement of the historic environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
EN12: Biodiversity and the green network
EN14: Trees, hedges and woodland

6.9 Other relevant guidance/documentation:
St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal (2018)
Historic England Good Practice Guide Note Number 2: managing significance in decision-taking.
Principles of Conservation (Historic England, 2008)

6.10 Local Plan Partial Update
Local Plan (2019), the emerging Local Plan (Submission Draft 2025)

6.11 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update was submitted on 9th May 2025 and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the

process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place in February 2026.

6.12 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

6.13 Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that, other than Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

7. Appraisal

7.1 The main considerations relevant to the determination of this application are:

I. Heritage Impacts
II. Natural Environment - Trees
III. Protected Species

I) Heritage Impacts

7.2 Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. Policies EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) and EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context) seek to conserve, protect and enhance designated heritage assets.

7.3 Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment. Paragraph 139 of the NPPF 2024 details that development that is not well designed should be refused. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF 2024 states “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”

7.4 The proposed works have been assessed by the case officer and Conservation Officer and it is agreed that the repairs and reinstatement works are essential to return the buildings and structures back to a good condition. The repairs are necessary as parts of the buildings and structures have deteriorated or have been

damaged by vehicle impact. Maintaining the buildings in a good state of repair will reduce the speed and rate of decay and deterioration and will preserve the historic features, detail and materials to reduce potential negative impact that will undermine architectural and/or historical significance.

Gazebo

7.5 The external repair works proposed for the listed gazebo constitute the partial replacement of exposed timber elements, including treatment and repainting of the exposed timber frame, doors and windows. There are also proposed repairs with ties for cracks and repointing with lime mortar of brickwork and flintwork walls, and redecoration of rainwater disposal goods. Most of the works are like-for-like repairs and replacements.

7.6 The works for the gazebo include structural repairs for the timber frame of the upper floor, which is a like-for-like replacement and minimal in scale, so that no harm is expected. Internally, the introduction of a new oak post on a brick plinth and a new concrete foundation to support the existing oak beam is considered necessary for the structural stability of the gazebo. Whilst the use of concrete is not ideal, as it would introduce a modern material into the traditional construction, it is noted that this is at the recommendation of the conservation engineer and is considered acceptable on that basis.

Causeway/Retaining Walls to Raised Walk to Riverside Garden Pavillion

7.8 The east wall has been largely rebuilt with a stepped concrete foundation. There is a cavity wall constructed with blockwork, which is assumed to have been filled with concrete/reinforced. Similarly, the west wall was also rebuilt in 2008. The structural repair for the causeway recommends conducting an on-site investigation to determine the cause of the cracking in the flintwork and a condition is recommended to secure this information. Given these walls have been structurally and partially altered, localised rebuilding of flintwork by use of stainless steel is considered not harmful and is acceptable.

Stables and Courtyard Wall

7.9 The demolished courtyard walls of the listed stable block are proposed to be reconstructed on a like-for-like basis. Additionally, further investigations after the removal of the existing vegetation are proposed, although the works do not include the installation of gates. The works would be beneficial and, therefore, supported, subject to the recommended conditions regarding further investigations.

East Boundary Screen Wall Opening and Gates

7.10 Similarly to the stable courtyard walls, north courtyard walls, and buttress, the replacement of the existing timber gate and localised repairs to the stonework of this wall are considered necessary and acceptable. New replacement oak gates would be an exact replica of the existing, which is not original, associated hinge pins and other metal elements to be replaced with new iron ones, and the gate

opening reveal and stonework would be repaired like for like. As such, the works are beneficial and acceptable.

II) Natural Environment - Trees

7.12 Trees are a material planning consideration whether or not they are protected. Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act states *'it shall be the duty of the LPA to ensure, whenever it is appropriate, that in granting planning permission for any development adequate provision is made, by the imposition of conditions, for the preservation or planting of trees.'*

7.13 Policy EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting whilst Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks proposals should include appropriate landscaping.

7.14 Paragraph 136 of the NPPF 2024 details that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

7.15 The proposed works to the walls required limited crown lifting to facilitate access for investigations and works. Full details have been set out in the submitted arboricultural method statement which has been reviewed and is considered appropriate and reasonable. The works are therefore considered acceptable in this respect.

III) <u>Protected Species</u>

7.17 All bat species are European protected species (EPS) protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The impact of a proposal on protected species is therefore a material planning consideration.

7.18 The applicant has stated that pipistrelle bats have been spotted near the gazebo. As such, a bat survey was carried out of the gazebo itself which notes no bats were seen to merge from the building, concluding that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats during the active season. The proposal is considered acceptable, subject to securing the measures as set out in Section 5 of the Stage 2 Bat Report as follows:

- No works to be undertaken between November and March inconclusive.
- None of the potential roost features considered suitable for hibernating bats will be directly affected by the proposed works.

<u>Equality implications</u>

7.24 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

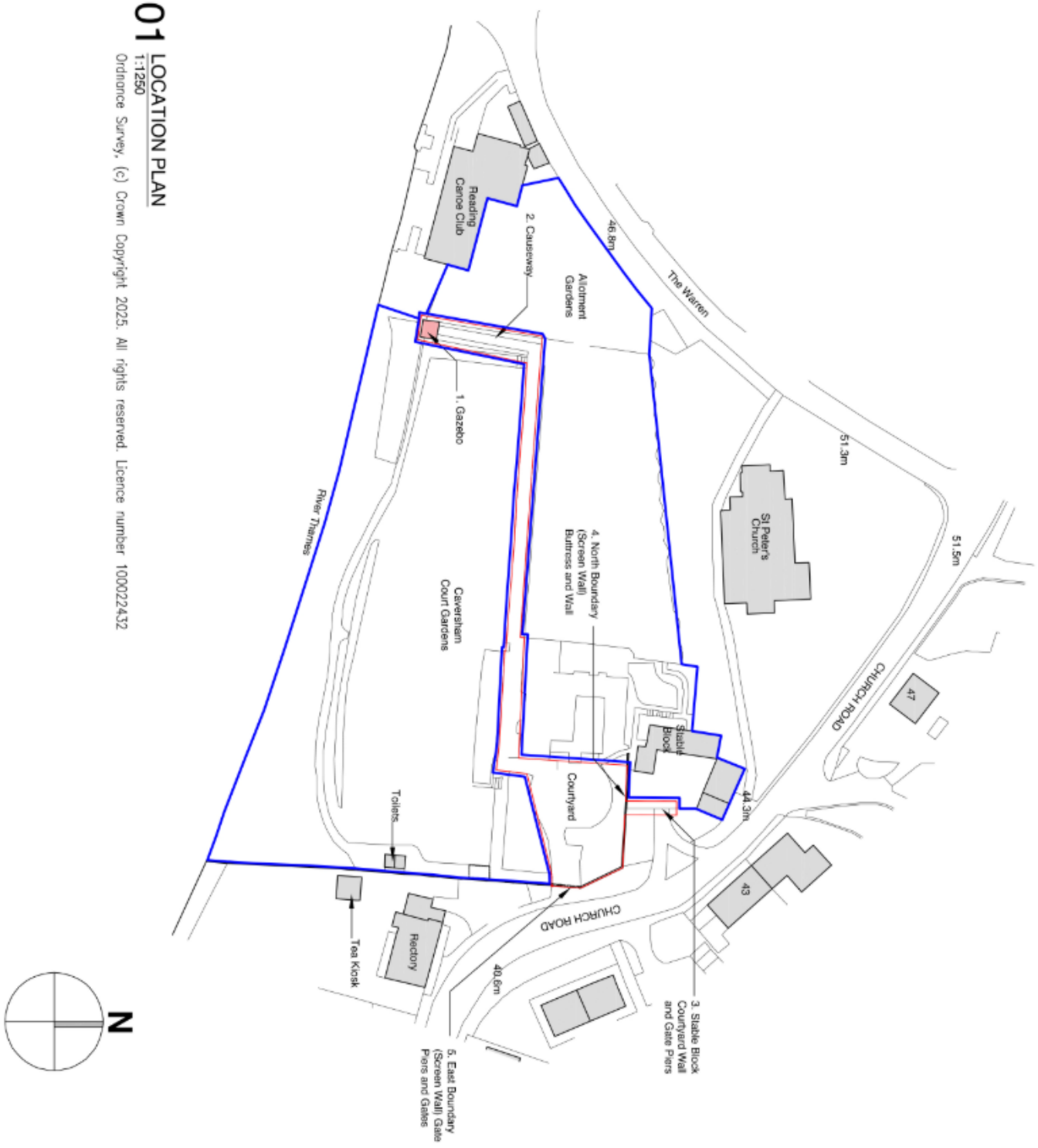
7.25 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. There is no indication that the proposal would have any impact with regard to any protected characteristics.

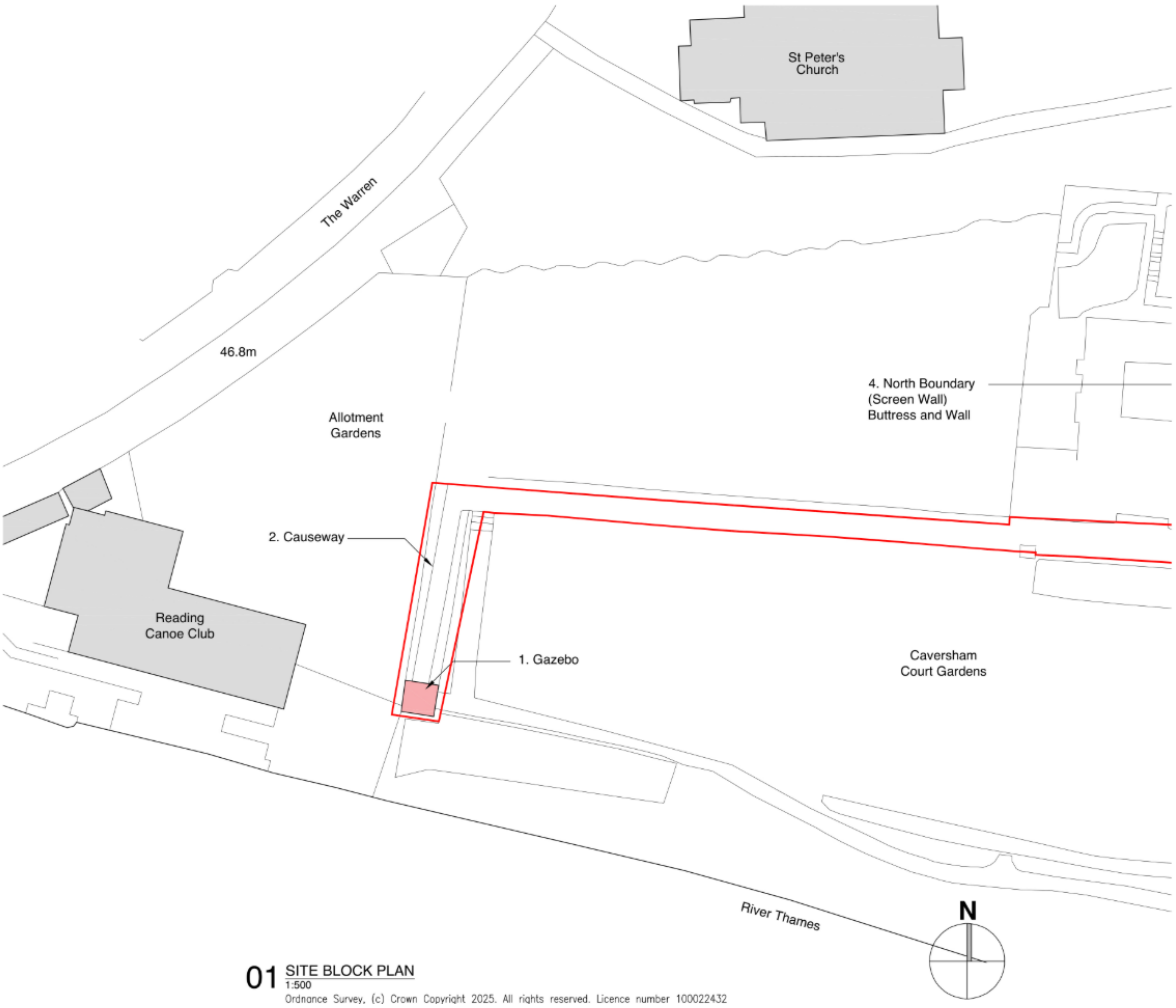
8. CONCLUSION

8.1 As with all planning applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

8.2 The repairs and reinstatement works are essential to return the buildings and structures back to a good condition. Maintaining the buildings in a good state of repair will extend their longevity, and the methods proposed are appropriate to maintain the architectural/historic significance of the heritage assets. Subject to the recommended conditions, both applications are recommended for approval.

Plans and documents considered:





01 SITE BLOCK PLAN
1:500

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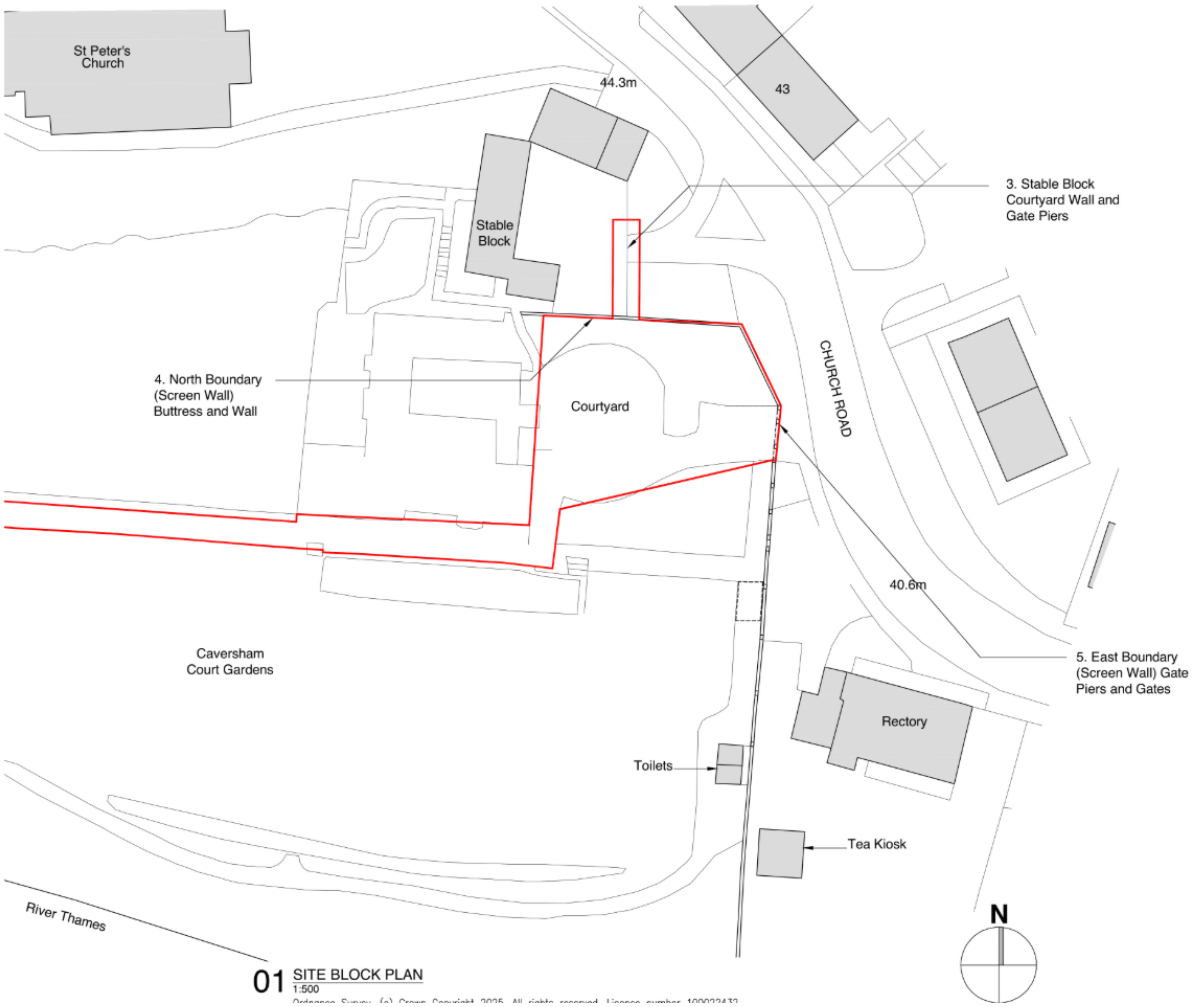
01 Gazebo External - North
NTS

02 Gazebo External - East
NTS

03 Gazebo External - South
NTS

04 Gazebo External - West
NTS

01 Upper Causeway Looking North
NTS



01 SITE BLOCK PLAN
1:500

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01 Stable Block Gateway & Piers from Highway
NTS

02 Stable Block Gateway & Piers Showing Damage from Highway
NTS

Damaged Buttress

Defective Flintwork to panels to bay between buttresses

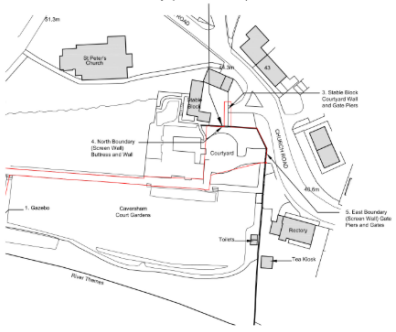
01 Boundary Wall - Caversham Court Gardens
NTS

Damaged Buttress

02 Boundary Wall - Bay
NTS

03 Boundary Wall - Damaged Pier Base
NTS

North Boundary (Screen Wall) Buttress and Wall



07 Location Plan as Existing
NTS

04 Boundary Wall - Loose Flints
NTS

Damaged Buttress

05 Boundary Wall - Damaged Pier
NTS

06 Boundary Wall - Damaged Pier
NTS

morseWEBB architects
The Byre The Street Bramley Hampshire RG26 5DE
T: 01256 557888 W: www.morsewebb.co.uk

project
Caversham Court

title
North Boundary Wall Buttress as Existing - Photographs

scale	status
NTS@A3	PLANNING

job no.	dwg no.	status/revision
1053	122	PL00

01 Main Entrance Gate Piers Opening from Highway
NTS

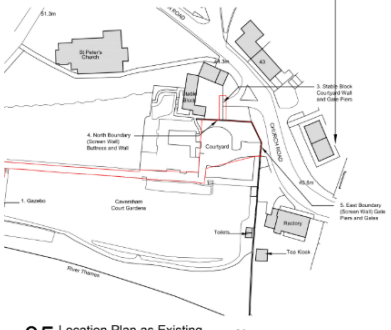
Remains of gates following impact damage by car

02 Damaged Main Entrance Gates and Bollard
NTS

03 Damage to Gate Opening Reveal
NTS

04 Damage to Hinge Pin
NTS

North East (screen wall) Gates



05 Location Plan as Existing
NTS

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project
Caversham Court

title
East (screen wall) Gate as Existing - Photographs

scale	status
NTS@A3	PLANNING

job no.	dwg no.	status/revision
1053	124	PL00

Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**
Ward	Katesgrove
Planning Application Reference:	PL/25/1338 Removal/variation of conditions
Site Address:	9 Upper Crown Street, Reading, RG1 2SS
Proposed Development	Application under Section 73 to vary Condition 2 (approved plans) of Planning Permission ref. PL/23/0814: (Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated re-use of frame with basement level used for car parking and servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access) to add dormers to the front roof slope of building 1 (terrace houses) and to the top floor of building 2 (central block), addition of ensuites to a number of the 2b3p units in building 2, other minor changes to the layouts of all three buildings, addition of 2 tandem vehicle parking spaces at basement level which will include EV charging and to reduce the affordable housing provision of the development
Applicant	Irongate Property (Reading) Ltd
Report author	Matt Burns
Deadline:	**13 week decision date**: 22/12/2025 **Extension of time decision date:** 28/08/2026
Recommendation	Delegate to the Director for Planning, Transport and Public Protection Services (DPTPPS) to (i) GRANT S73 variation of condition planning permission subject to the satisfactory completion of a section 106 legal agreement and delegate to the DPTPPS to make such minor changes to the conditions, Heads of Terms and details of the legal agreement as may be reasonably required to issue the permission or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Section 106 legal agreement not be completed by 28th August 2026 (unless the DPTPPS agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement).
S106 Terms	Proposed terms shown compared to the terms which form part of the existing legal agreement linked to the original planning permission (ref. 23/0814) (deletions ~~crossed through~~ and additional text in ***bold and italics***: 1. Affordable Housing To secure affordable housing on site consisting of ~~fourteen~~ ***five*** units ~~(30% provision)~~ on site, consisting of ~~5 x one bedroom units~~ ***2 x one-bedroom units*** of Reading Affordable Rent, ~~5 x two bedroom units~~ ***2 x two-bedroom unit*** of Reading Affordable Rent and ~~4 x one bedroom units~~ ***1 x two-bedroom shared ownership unit.*** Reading

	Affordable Rent (RAR) tenure rent levels to be capped at 70% of market rent in accordance with the Borough Council's published RAR levels. In the event that a Registered (affordable housing) Provider is not secured for the provision of the Affordable Housing on site, the units to be offered to the Council to be provided by the Council as Affordable Housing. In the event that neither a Registered Provider or the Council can come forward to provide Affordable Housing on-site, the developer to pay to the Council a default sum equivalent to ~~12.5%~~ ***5.45%*** of the Gross Development Value of the development for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough. To be calculated (the mean average) from two independent RICS valuations to be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to first occupation of any market housing unit. In this event, the sum to be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from the date of valuation. As per Policy H3 ***2. <u>Deferred Payment Mechanism</u>*** ***A Deferred Payment Mechanism (DPM) to potentially increase the overall provision of affordable housing (via a commuted sum to go towards affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough) to a maximum of equivalent 30% policy compliance as per the following terms:*** - ***Open book approach to actual Construction Costs (including payment dates) as signed off by Quantity Surveyor or Employers agent providing a Duty of Care to the Council*** - ***Professional Fees agreements and schedule of payments*** - ***All other development costs, for example abnormal costs, related directly to the site, with evidence and including dates of payment*** - ***Gross Development Value for the entire development from Disposal / Rental (deemed disposal for any rented units) subject to valuation. Certified copies of completion certificates, will be required and any other related sales / rental agreements.*** - ***BLV is fixed at £873,750 (fixed land cost within DPM)*** - ***Profit level 17.5% on GDV for Open Market units, 6% on GDV for Affordable units*** - ***Finance rate is fixed at 6.5%, and finance amount to be determined by an appraisal in the same format as the Viability Review at Planning stage (Argus Appraisal to be saved and issued to legal to file for late stage review).*** - ***Review trigger at 75% of units sold or deemed disposal, 34 units*** - ***Max cap linked to Policy Level provision at 30% less 10% (assuming they provide exactly the 10% as stated above) is £1,563,400 (which is the monetary value of the shortfall i.e. 20%) which will be index linked*** - ***Any further sums payable under DPM will be indexed linked from the date of the valid consent***

	- ***All costs of Reviewing the information provided for the DPM (including internal costs and external costs i.e. consultants / valuers) to be recharged to the applicant*** As per Policy H3 3. <u>Carbon Offsetting Contribution</u> ~~A carbon off-setting contribution of £2,949.72~~ ***As per the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD 2019. If zero carbon is not achieved the scheme must instead achieve a minimum of a 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus provide a financial contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30-year period). Contribution to be index linked from the date planning permission is granted.*** As per Policy H5 4. <u>Employment, Skills and Training</u> A contribution of ~~£8,820.75~~ ***£9, 368.75***. Payable prior to commencement of development. All obligations Index linked from date of planning permission.
Conditions	Variation of condition 2 (and 1 to stipulate that time limit for implementation remains that of the original planning permission) as follows (deletions ~~crossed through~~ and additional text in ***bold and italics***) **1.** The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of ~~this~~ planning permission ***ref. PL/23/0814 (29th May 2024).*** REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions. **2.** The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: ~~Existing and Proposed Drawings (P001 – P0008, PO10 - PO41 & P090) received 12/06/2023 & PO009 received 29/08/2023.~~ - ***Site Plan – P008 Rev 5*** - ***Basement – P009 Rev 7*** - ***Ground Floor – P010 Rev 5*** - ***First Floor – P011 Rev 5*** - ***Second Floor – P012 Rev 5*** - ***Third Floor – P013 Rev 5*** - ***Fourth Floor – P014 Rev 5*** - ***Roof Plan – P015 Rev 5*** - ***Building 1 Floor Plans – P016 Rev 4*** - ***Building 1 Floor Plans – P017 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Floor Plans – P018 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Floor Plans – P019 Rev 4***

	- ***Building 2 Floor Plans – P020 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Floor Plans – P021 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Floor Plans – P022 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Floor Plans – P023 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Floor Plans – P024 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Floor Plans – P025 Rev 4*** - ***Site Elevations Sheet 1 – P026 Rev 5*** - ***Site Elevations Sheet 2 – P027 Rev 5*** - ***Site Elevations Sheet 3 – P028 Rev 5*** - ***Site Elevations Sheet 4 – P029 Rev 4*** - ***Site Sections Sheet 1 – P030 Rev 4*** - ***Building 1 Elevations – P031 Rev 4*** - ***Building 1 Sections – P032 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Elevations – P033 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Elevations – P034 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Elevations – P035 Rev 4*** - ***Building 2 Sections – P036 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Elevations – P037 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Elevations – P038 Rev 4*** - ***Building 3 Sections – P039 Rev 4*** - ***Indigo House Stairs – P040 Rev 4*** - ***GIA Basement – P041 Rev 4*** - ***Landscape Principles and External Lighting Strategy – P090 Rev 5*** - ***Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 1 – P042 Rev 2*** - ***Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 2 – P043 Rev 2*** - ***Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 3 – P044 Rev 2*** - ***Areas – NDSS Schedule – P045 Rev 2*** ***Received by the Local Planning Authority on 22nd September 2025*** REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved. All other conditions attached to planning permission ref. PL/23/0814 to be carried across and replicated to any s73 variation of condition planning permission.
Informatives	As per planning permission ref. PL/23/0814.

1. Executive summary

1.1 This report considers a Section 73 variation of condition application to amend the planning permission and approved plans for a development at 9 Upper Crown Street which already benefits from permission for demolition of existing structures at the site and construction of 46 new dwellings across 3 blocks.

1.2 The proposed changes are minor in design terms, including additional dormer roof extensions to 2 blocks, internal layout changes and provision of two additional parking spaces. These alterations are considered to be acceptable, with no harmful impacts on design, neighbour amenity, or transport matters identified whilst resulting in some improvements to living conditions within the scheme.

1.3 The proposals also seek to reduce the affordable provision of the development from 30% of dwellings to 10.9% of the dwellings proposed. The application is accompanied by a viability appraisal which concludes that it is not viable for the development to provide any affordable housing and these findings have been independently reviewed and verified on behalf of the Council. Whilst the reduced level of affordable housing proposed is

disappointing, particularly given the critical need for affordable dwellings within the Borough, the proposals are considered to be adequate in this respect given the verified unviable nature of the proposal in respect of providing affordable housing and also taking into account that a deferred payment mechanism has been agreed with the applicant that means the Council would share in any positive change in the viability position of the development.

1.4 Overall, although the reduced affordable housing provision is a clear disadvantage of this proposal compared to the extant planning permission, when carrying out a planning balance weighing up exercise and given the titled balance under paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged it is considered that the benefits of the proposed development, most notably in terms of delivering housing on a sustainable brownfield site weigh in favour of the development and that planning permission should be granted subject to completion of a s106 legal agreement and the recommended conditions.

2 Introduction and site description

2.1 The application site is in current use as a data storage facility with roof deck car park above. The existing building is utilitarian in appearance and constructed from a mix of red brick and concrete frame. The site is accessed from Upper Crown Street and ground level via two vehicle ramps, one which slopes down to provide access to the data storage facility and to provide a servicing area for the building and three electrical substations on the site, and one which slopes upwards to access the rooftop car park. The ground floor site level of the data storage facility is set down below the level of that of adjacent surrounding buildings to the south on Upper Crown Street and to the west on Southampton Street. The car park itself serves residents in the surrounding residential and commercial buildings, many of whom have long-term leases on car parking spaces on the site.

2.2 To the south and east of the site are modest two storey terraced residential dwellings on Upper Crown Street and Newark Street. To the west of the site is the rear of the properties fronting Southampton Street which are a mixture of commercial and residential ranging from single storey to five storeys in scale. To the north of the site is the rear of the large Indigo apartments building which ranges from four to six storeys in scale.

2.3. The application site is located outside of but adjacent to the Reading Central Area as defined by Policy CR1 (Definition of Central Reading). The site is also located within an area of potentially contaminated land and within an air quality management area.

2.4 The site location pan is below.

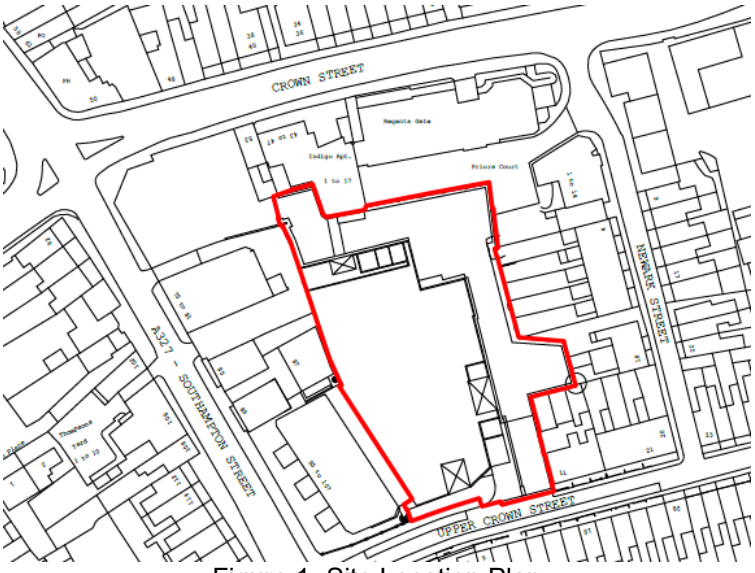


Figure 1- Site Location Plan

2.5 There is an extant planning permission for the site ref. PL/23/0814 to demolish the majority of the existing structures but retaining some of the building frame and erection of 3 x new residential blocks of between two and five storeys containing 46 no. dwellings, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access. Planning permission was granted on 29th May 2024 following determination by planning applications committee on 4th October 2023 and subsequent completion of a s106 legal agreement. The planning permission has not been implemented at the time of writing this report. The site plan for the extant planning permission is shown below:

Figure 2 - Approved Site Plan

2.6 The approved development consists of 4 two storey houses fronting onto Upper Crown Street (building 1 on the site plan above), a four storey block of flats located central within the site (building 2 on the site plan above) and a five storey block of flats located on the western boundary of the site (building 3 on the site plan above). The approved dwelling mix is as shown in the table below:

Type	Market	Affordable	Total
1 bedroom flat	13	9	22 (48%)
2 bedroom flat	11	5	16 (35%)
3 bedroom flat	4	0	4 (8.5%)
3 bedroom house	4	0	4 (8.5%)
Total	32 (70%)	14 (30%)	46 (100%)

Figure 3 – Approved Dwelling Mix

2.7 A selection of floor plans, elevations and visuals for the approved development are shown below.

Figure 3 - Approved Ground Floor Plan

Figure 4 - Approved Elevations

Figure 5 - Visuals of Approved Development

Figure 6 - Visuals of Approved Development

2.8 A copy of the officer committee report (and update report) to October 2023 Planning Applications Committee with full details of the approved development, including secured s106 obligations and conditions, are attached to this report as appendix 1 and 2.

2.9 The application is subject to determination by Planning Applications Committee as it relates to an application to vary conditions attached to a planning permission for a Major category development.

3 The Proposal

3.1 The application seeks to vary the approved plans condition (condition no.2) attached to planning permission ref. PL/23/0814 under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act).

3.2 The proposed changes to the plans include:

- Dormers roof extensions added to the front (south) roof slopes of building 1 (terraced houses) to improve spaciousness of the second-floor level ensuites to each house.

- Additional dormer roof extensions added to the top floor of building 2 (central block) to east and west elevation roof slops to improve internal layouts of top floor flats
- Ensuites added to a number of the 2 bed 3 person flats within building 2.
- Minor adjustments / improvements to the internal layouts of all three buildings.
- 2 additional tandem vehicle parking spaces added to the basement car park, including electric vehicle charging facilities.

3.3 The application states that the changes are proposed in response to changing demands of the housing market.

3.4 The application also seeks to revise the affordable housing provision of the development. The approved development includes a policy compliant provision of 30% of the total number of dwellings proposed as on-site affordable housing in an appropriate unit (as shown in Figure 3 above) and tenure mix. 5 x one-bedroom and 5 x two-bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent (71% of the affordable units) and 4 x one-bedroom units as First Homes (29% of the affordable units) are secured to be provided as part of the existing s106 agreement linked to the original planning permission (ref. PL/23/0814).

3.5 The application is accompanied by a viability appraisal on the basis of which a reduced affordable housing offer is proposed equating to 10.9% of the total number of dwellings proposed. This reduced offer comprises 5 affordable dwellings (2 x 1 bed affordable rent and 2 x 2 bed affordable rent dwellings (80% of the affordable units) and 1 x 2 bed shared ownership dwelling (20% of the affordable units).

3.6 The proposed changes, if approved, would require a new s73 variation of condition planning permission to be issued and a new s106 agreement to be completed. In this instance the legal agreement completed under the extant planning permission does not, as is often the case, include a clause that the agreement would carry over and continue to be linked to any subsequent s73 planning permission that is granted and therefore a new s106 agreement would be required to be completed to secure the revised affordable housing proposals and other obligation secured against the extant planning permission.

3.6 <u>Plans and Documents Submitted</u>

Revised Plans

- Site Plan – P008 Rev 5
- Basement – P009 Rev 7
- Ground Floor – P010 Rev 5
- First Floor – P011 Rev 5
- Second Floor – P012 Rev 5
- Third Floor – P013 Rev 5
- Fourth Floor – P014 Rev 5
- Roof Plan – P015 Rev 5
- Building 1 Floor Plans – P016 Rev 4
- Building 1 Floor Plans – P017 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P018 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P019 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P020 Rev 4
- Building 2 Floor Plans – P021 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P022 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P023 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P024 Rev 4
- Building 3 Floor Plans – P025 Rev 4
- Site Elevations Sheet 1 – P026 Rev 5
- Site Elevations Sheet 2 – P027 Rev 5
- Site Elevations Sheet 3 – P028 Rev 5
- Site Elevations Sheet 4 – P029 Rev 4
- Site Sections Sheet 1 – P030 Rev 4

- Building 1 Elevations – P031 Rev 4
- Building 1 Sections – P032 Rev 4
- Building 2 Elevations – P033 Rev 4
- Building 2 Elevations – P034 Rev 4
- Building 2 Elevations – P035 Rev 4
- Building 2 Sections – P036 Rev 4
- Building 3 Elevations – P037 Rev 4
- Building 3 Elevations – P038 Rev 4
- Building 3 Sections – P039 Rev 4
- Indigo House Stairs – P040 Rev 4
- GIA Basement – P041 Rev 4
- Landscape Principles and External Lighting Strategy – P090 Rev 5

New Plans

- Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 1 – P042 Rev 2
- Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 2 – P043 Rev 2
- Areas – GIA Proposed Sheet 3 – P044 Rev 2
- Areas – NDSS Schedule – P045 Rev 2

4 Planning history

4.1 PL/21/1614 - Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated reuse of frame with basement level used for car parking & servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations & associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access. Refused on 20/06/2022 and dismissed at appeal (ref. APP/E0345/W/22/3313234) on 27/04/2023.

4.2 PL/23/0814 - Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated re-use of frame with basement level used for car parking and servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of Indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access. Granted on 29/05/2024 (with linked s106).

5 Consultations

5.1 RBC Transport Development Control – No objection.

5.2 RBC Housing – Consider that the mix of affordable housing proposed should incorporate 1 x 3 bedroom unit.

Public Notification

5.3 A site notice was displayed at the application site on 8th October 2025.

5.4 1 x objection has been received raising the following matters:

- Concern regarding fire risk, electromagnetic fields, vibration and humming from the proposed electrical substation and impacts of this on existing neighbouring properties. *Officer comment: The substation forms part of the original planning permission and is not proposed to be changed or altered as part of this application.*
- Overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of sunlight and overlooking to no. 16 Newark Street
- Scale of the building would overshadow the surrounding neighbourhood, and its appearance would be out of keeping with existing surrounding dwellings
- Insufficient parking and existing poor access along Newark Street and Upper Crown Street that the development will make worse through number of car and congestion
- Noise, dust and other disturbances to existing surrounding occupiers that would result from construction of the proposed development. Harm to structure of surrounding dwellings from construction vibrations.

- Insufficient infrastructure in the local area for new dwellings, such as doctors, dentists and shops
- A similar planning application (ref. PL/21/1614) was refused for many of the reasons above.
  Officer comment: This is correct, however, a subsequent planning application (ref. PL/23/0814) for a similar development has since been granted.
- Impact upon local property prices
  Officer comment: Not a material planning consideration.
- Not clear how sustainable the development is, new trees and drainage should be provided.
  Officer comment: The development already has an extant planning permission that could be implemented, this application considers only the proposed changes to that approved planning permission. Many of the comments above relate to aspects of the development that are not subject to proposed changes as part of this application. This application does not re-open consideration of matters that have already obtained planning permission and to which changes are not sought as part of this application, such as scale, access, sustainability and access to infrastructure.

6 Legal context

6.1 Section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.2. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.3. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.4. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.5. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

<u>NPPF December 2024 (as amended February 2025)</u>
2. Achieving sustainable development
4. Decision-making
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

<u>National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)</u>
<u>Reading Borough Local Plan 2019</u>
CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

Local Plan Update

6.6 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) was submitted on 9th May 2025 and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place in February 2026.

6.7 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

6.8 Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that, other than Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’. Policy H1 is out of date because the Council is not currently meeting its annual housing targets for general housing as calculated using the standard method in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (as required now Policy H1 is out of date) or for the provision of Affordable Housing.

6.9 Whilst at this time, the examination of the LPPU has reached a fairly advanced stage the weight that can be attributed to policies within the LPPU depends on the degree to which modifications are proposed to relevant policies. Where it is considered any updated policies within the LPPU that are relevant to the changes to the approved development proposed by this s73a variation of conditions application can be attributed significant weight this will be outlined in this report if relevant.

6.10 It is noted that paragraph 11 of the NPPF states: “d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

6.11 Paragraph 11 is often called ‘the tilted balance’. With regard to policies which must be given weight in determining adverse impacts refers to paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12. 6.11 Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 is over 5 years old, and the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing supply, currently demonstrating 3.55 years. As such, Policy H1 is out of date, and the tilted balance would be engaged, an assessment of the overall planning balance will form part of the conclusion of this report.

7 Appraisal

7.1 The Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions confirms that section 73 applications are considered against the…

“…Development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, and conditions attached to the existing permission. Local planning authorities should, in making their decisions, focus their attention on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission”.

7.1 With this context in mind, many of the matters that have already been considered appropriate, are not repeated in this assessment, in view of the overriding policy context not changing so significantly in the intervening time to alter those findings. Furthermore, technical matters not impacted by the proposed changes are not explicitly referenced within this appraisal, with the s106 obligations and conditions included on the original permission satisfying these elements satisfactorily (barring in a number of instances an update to the plans referenced). Instead, as per the guidance above, the focus of attention is on the proposed changes to the development and national and local policy and other material considerations which have changed significantly. Firstly, since the original decision was issued in May 2024, the NPPF has been updated (most recently in February 2025). Other than Policy H1, the local policy context has not significantly altered, with the same Local Plan (2019) still in place, although the Local Plan is in the process of being updated this is not yet at a stage where significant weight can be given to updated policies, as discussed in paragraphs 6.6 to 6.11 above.

7.2 It is also relevant to acknowledge from the outset of this appraisal that, from a procedural perspective, it is considered appropriate for these proposals to be presented as a section 73 application. The three recent Case Law cases of *Finney*, *Armstrong* and *Fiske* have all been considered, with the proposals not changing operative wording of the original description of development (as per *Finney*), that the scope of the changes align with the approach taken in *Armstrong* and do not create a fundamental conflict between the conditions and the permission (*Fiske*).

7.3 The NPPG (para 015) also sets out that:

Permission granted under section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted subject to new or amended conditions. The new permission sits alongside the extant permission, which remains intact
and unamended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new permission or the one originally granted.

A decision notice describing the new permission should be issued, setting out all the conditions related to it. To assist with clarity decision notices for the grant of planning permission under section 73 should also repeat the relevant conditions from the extant planning permission unless they have already been discharged.

As a section 73 application cannot be used to vary the time limit for implementation, this condition must remain unchanged from the extant permission. If the original permission was subject to a planning obligation, then this may need to be the subject of a deed of variation.

7.4 With all of the above in mind, the main considerations for the amendments proposed are considered to involve:

i) Affordable Housing
ii) Design Matters
iii) Amenity Matters
iv) Transport Matters
v) Other Matters

i) Affordable Housing

7.5 The extant planning permission and associated legal agreement for the original development secure provision of 30% of the proposed dwellings as on-site affordable housing in an appropriate dwelling and tenure mix. Specifically, this comprises 5 x one-bedroom and 5 x two-bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent (71% of the affordable units) and 4 x one-bedroom units as First Homes (29% of the affordable units). This provision accords with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) which requires 30% of dwellings to be in the form of affordable housing on developments of 10 or more dwellings. This also accords with the RBC Affordable Housing SPD (2021) which requires a tenure split of at least 62% of affordable units in the form of affordable rented accommodation at Reading Affordable Rent levels and a maximum of 38% of affordable units in the form of affordable homes ownership or another product.

7.6 Unlike the application for the extant planning permission the current application is accompanied by a viability appraisal prepared by the applicant's viability consultant. Policy H3 allows for viability considerations when considering affordable housing proposals and states that *In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution.*

7.7 This submitted viability appraisal concludes that primarily because of current and rising market costs associated with the proposals and its construction it is not viable for the development to provide any affordable housing. The viability appraisal has been independently reviewed by a consultant viability specialist on behalf of the Council who has verified the findings of the appraisal and that it is unviable for the development to provide affordable housing.

7.8 Planning viability guidance (contained within Policy H3, including as proposed to be updated in the Local Plan Partial Update and as set out in the adopted Affordable Housing SPD) does not require the LPA to negate or reduce affordable housing provision where developments are found to be unviable but allows greater flexibility to agree a position

which would maximise delivery of affordable housing and support delivery of a development which would give wider public benefits.

7.9 There is a significant shortfall in provision of affordable housing within the Borough compared with the identified and persistent need. Paragraph 4.4.19 of the Reading Borough Local Plan provides some background to the policy and summarises the large amount of evidence that the Council has in respect of the critical need for Affordable Housing that exists within the Borough. An up-to-date assessment of the need for Affordable Housing that exists in the Borough is within the supporting text for Policy H3 (para 4.4.21) of the Reading Borough Local Plan Submission Draft Partial Update May 2025 which states the following:

> *"The Reading Housing Needs Assessment (HNA, 2024) has once again emphasised the critical need for affordable housing within Reading as well as the remainder of Berkshire. The HNA identified a need for 406 additional affordable homes per year in Reading, which represents the majority of the overall housing required. The consequences of not providing much-needed affordable homes would be severe, and would include homelessness, households in temporary or unsuitable accommodation, overcrowding and younger people having to remain living with parents for increasing periods. Insufficient affordable housing will also act as an impediment to economic growth, as firms will face increasing problems with accommodation for their workforce. Meeting even a substantial proportion of the identified housing need presents significant challenges, and it is therefore critical that new residential development of all sizes makes whatever contribution it can".*

7.10 The NPPF and the Council's policies allow for viability considerations to reduce the provision but only in specific circumstances. Paragraph 59 of the NPPF 2024 states that "*The weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in site circumstances since the plan was brought into force*."

7.11 Given the above officers set out to the applicant that regardless of the viability position a proposal to reduce the affordable housing provision of the development to 0% would not be acceptable. Following this and further discussion with officers the applicant has put forward a proposal for 5 dwellings within the development to be provided as affordable housing which equates to 10.9% of total number of dwellings proposed. The mix of units is as follows with 4 of the affordable dwellings (80%) to be affordable rented tenure units at Reading Affordable Rent levels and 1 of the affordable dwellings (20%) to be in shared ownership tenure, complying with the RBC Affordable Housing SPD in terms of affordable tenure split. The mix of affordable housing proposed is as follows:

- 2 x 1 bed affordable rented units
- 2 x 2 bed affordable rented units
- 1 x 2 bed shared ownership unit

7.12 The mix of the affordable dwellings is considered to be acceptable. Whilst preference, as indicated by RBC Housing, would be for there to be a 3-bedroom unit to form part of the mix it is noted that the 30% provision secured under the extant permission did not include any 3-bedroom units. The proposed mix is considered to comply with Policy H2 (Density and Mix) which identifies most need for one- and two-bedroom dwellings on site within and close to the town centre. The affordable dwellings would be located within Building 3 across the ground and first floor as shown on the plans in figure 6A below:

Figure 6A – Proposed Affordable Dwellings (shown within red square at ground and first floor level)

7.13 Despite highlighting concerns with the Applicant over the quantity of affordable housing proposed to be provided as part of the application and reduction from the policy complaint level of provision proposed under the extant planning permission, the Applicant's position is that given the agreed lack of viability for the scheme to provide affordable housing, then it is this offer which they wish to be considered as part of the wider determination of the planning application. The lack of viability has been independently verified, and therefore the consequence of retaining the proportion of affordable housing in the extant permission is likely to be that the proposal cannot be delivered and would not therefore make any contribution to meeting housing needs.

7.14 Given the amount of affordable housing proposed falls short of the policy requirement a deferred payment mechanism (DPM) is also proposed to be secured as part of the s106 agreement for the application which would ensure that in the future, if any positive gains were made in viability due to for instance, lower construction costs and/or an expected uplift in values, the developer would be required to make a further financial contribution towards the provision of affordable housing within the Borough. The 'cap' for the deferred contribution would be the equivalent financial contribution of providing 30% of the dwellings as affordable housing which is the policy compliant level of provision set out under Policy H3 within the current and emerging Local Plan.

7.15 The level of affordable housing proposed by the applicant follows from a full and detailed review of the viability position for the development which was not undertaken when the extant planning permission (PL/24/0813) was granted. Given the confirmed and independently verified position of the development as non-viable within the context of

planning viability policy and guidance, a lower than policy compliant affordable housing provision is considered to be justified in this instance. Whilst the level of affordable housing proposed to be provided is disappointing, particularly given the critical need for affordable dwellings within the Borough that is identified in the support text (paragraph 4.4.19) to Policy H3, Officers consider the offer to be adequate given the verified unviable nature of the proposal in respect of providing affordable housing and also taking into account the deferred payment mechanism that means the Council would share in any positive change in the viability position of the development. The terms of the DPM have been agreed with the applicant and are set out in the s106 heads of terms at the top of this report.

ii) Design Matters

7.16 The extent and nature of proposed design changes in comparison to the already approved scheme is set out in section 3 of this report above. The changes proposed are minor in nature both in themselves and in the context of the already approved scheme.

7.17 The addition of four flat roof dormer roof projections to the front roof slope of block 1 and the four terraced houses is considered to integrate satisfactorily with the approved design with the dormers being of modest scale such that they do not dominate the front roof slope of the building as shown in figures 7 and 8 below. The terraced houses front on to Upper Crown Street, which is primarily characterised by two storey terraced dwellings, none of which have front dormer roof extensions. Approved and proposed partial Upper Crown Street street-scene sections are shown in figures 9 and 10 below. A variety of front dormer extensions are present to dwellings on nearby streets which are also characterised primarily by terraced dwellings such as to Southampton Street, West Hill and Iliffe Close. The overall ridge height of the dwellings would remain as approved, and it is considered to the single modest dormers to each dwelling would be appropriate additions which would not be detrimental to the visual amenity of the street and would integrate satisfactorily with the character of the surrounding area.

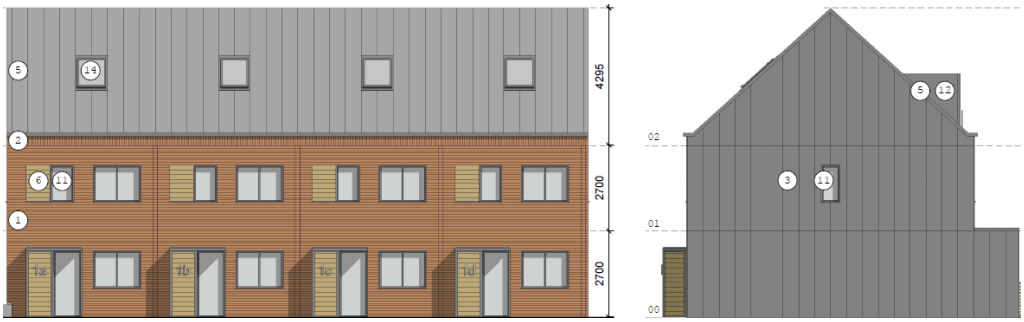


Figure 7 - Block 1 front (south) elevation as approved

Figure 8 - Block 1 front (south) elevation as proposed (changes circled red)

Figure 9 - Upper Crown Street Section Elevations as Approved

Figure 10 - Upper Crown Streer Section Elevations as Proposed

7.18 Centrally within the site additional dormer roof extensions are proposed to the east and west elevations of four storey Block 2. The approved design for Block 2 already incorporates six flat roof dormer roof projections to each of the east and west elevation roof slopes as shown in figures 11 and 13 below. The proposed design seeks to add a single additional dormer to both elevations, very minor realignment of the already approved dormers and proposes to change the approved dormers to slimmer framed projections as shown in figures 12 and 14 below. The proposed additional dormers would reflect the proportion of the already approved dormers, and the slimmer profile design of the dormer would be an improvement over the approved design and are considered to integrate satisfactorily with the appearance of approved Block 2. The two additional dormers are not considered to materially impact upon the appearance of this block or the development to views from the surrounding area and the overall height of Block 2 would remain as already approved under the extant planning permission.

Figure 11 - Block 2 East Elevation as Approved

Figure 12 - Block 2 East Elevation as Proposed (changes circled red)

Figure 13 - Block 2 West Elevation as Approved

Figure 14 - Block 2 West Elevation as Proposed (changes circled red)

7.19 The proposed external changes to the approved development are considered to be minor in nature and acceptable. The proposed amendments do not change the conclusions officer reached when considering the design and appearance of the development subject to the extant planning permission and the varied development is considered to be an enhancement to the character of the site and surrounding area compared to the existing elevated car park and data storage building and accord with Policy CC7. The condition attached to the extant planning permission to secure submission and approval of a schedule of all external materials prior to commencement of the development to ensure a high-quality finish to the development would be carried across as part of a s73 planning permission.

7.20 The layout of external areas of the development is proposed to remain unchanged from the approved scheme, including soft landscaping, boundary treatments and provision of green roofs, and conditions to secure detailed specifications of these elements of the development attached to the extant planning permission would also be carried across as part of a s73 planning permission.

iii) Amenity

Neighbour Amenity

7.21 It is not considered that any adverse overlooking or loss of privacy impacts to neighbouring occupiers would occur as a result of the proposed dormers to the front roof slope of the four terraced dwellings within Block 1. The proposed dormers would replace roof lights to the front roof slope as per the already approved scheme and there would be no changes to the separation distance between the approved dwellings and existing dwellings on the opposite side of Upper Crown Street.

7.21 Similarly the single additional dormer roof extension to the east and west elevations of Block 2 would not result in any adverse overlooking or loss of privacy impacts. The approved scheme already incorporates five dormers at this level and the addition of a further dormer to the two elevations is not considered to introduce any unacceptable overlooking impacts to the adjacent flats at 85-89 Southampton Street and City Gate 95-107 Southampton Street to the west, nor the adjacent dwellings on Newark Street and Upper Crown Street to the east.

Standard of Accommodation

7.22 The additional dormers proposed would improve the standard of accommodation to be provided within Blocks 1 and 2 resulting in most increases in the floor spaces of the rooms and dwellings to the upper floors of these blocks within the development. Within Block 2 the floor space of the four 3 bed flats at third floor level (top floor) would increase by between 0.5m2 and 3m2. These dwellings as approved already satisfied the minimum floor spaces required in accordance with Policy H5 and the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) but the proposed dormers would provide more spacious accommodation to these units as well as improving outlook and access to daylight, notably providing a window to one of the bathrooms within each unit whereas under the approved design none of the bathrooms to the flats at third floor level are served by a window. The approved and proposed layouts are shown in figures 15 and 16 below.

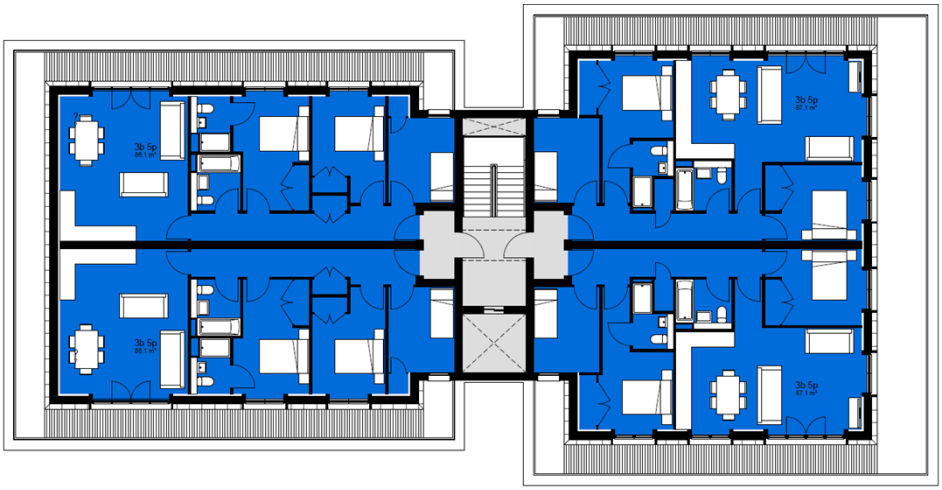


Figure 15 - Block 2 Third Floor Layout as Approved

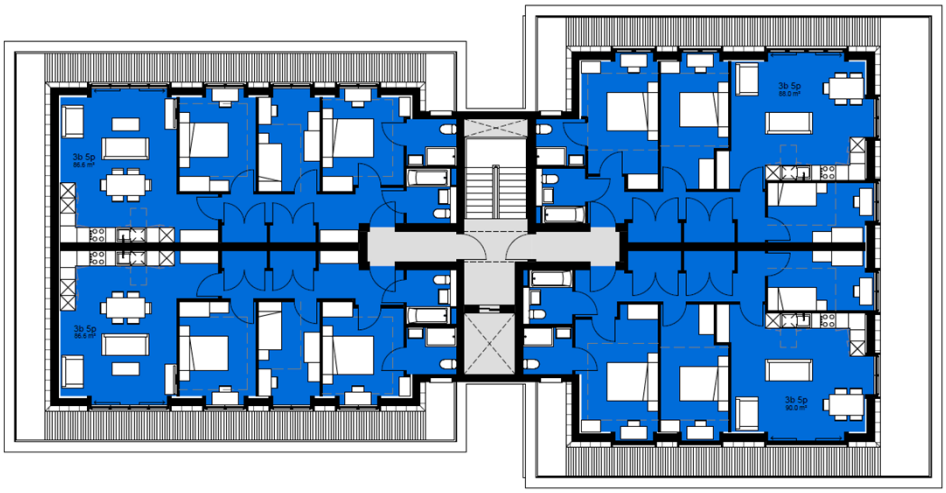


Figure 16 - Block 2 Third Floor Layout as Proposed

7.23 Within Block 1 the proposed dormer roof additions would increase the floor space of each of the four dwellings by 2.1m2 by increasing the size of each of the ensuite bathrooms to the second-floor bedrooms as shown in figure 17 below. As per all the dwellings within the approved scheme these dwelling already satisfied the minimum floor space spaces standards required by Policy H5 and the NDSS, but the changes would provide more spacious accommodation and improve outlook and receipt of daylight to the en-suite bathrooms which under the approved scheme were only served by roof lights.

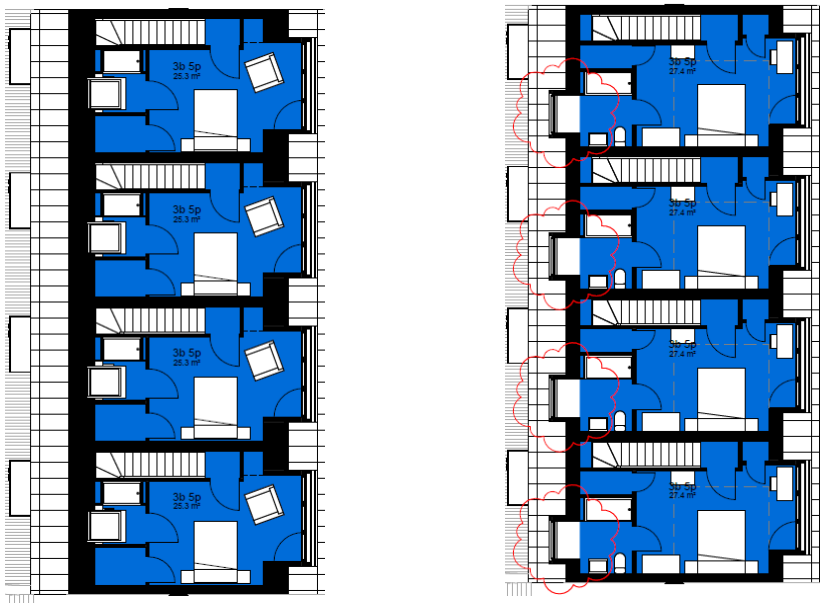


Figure 17 – Block 1 Approved (left) and Proposed (right) Second Floor Plans (changes circled red)

7.24 Various other minor internal layout changes to the development are proposed including reconfiguration of a number of the two-bedroom flats within Block 2 to provide ensuite bathrooms. Approved and proposed first floor plans for the development as a whole are shown in figures 18 and 19 below. The internal changes proposed are minor layout and changes and all dwellings with the development would continue to meet or exceed the NDSS and be served by adequate outlook and daylighting.

Figure 18 - All blocks First Floor Plan as Approved

Figure 19 - All blocks First Floor Plan as Proposed

7.25 The proposed changes to the approved development would not result in any adverse impacts upon the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and would result in a small enhancement to the standard of accommodation to be provided to a small number of units within the development through increased unit sizes and improved access to outlook and daylight. Conditions are attached to the extant planning permission to secure that prior to the commencement of development a noise assessment and mitigation scheme is submitted to and approved by the LPA to ensure that future occupiers of the development would not be adversely impacted by noise, as well as submission and approved of a construction method statement to demonstrate how surrounding occupiers would be protected from construction noise and disturbance, and these would be carried across as part of a s73 planning permission. Conditions to stipulate that noisy construction activities should take place outside of normal working hours and to prevent any burning of construction was on site would also be carried across. The proposals are considered to comply with Policies H5, CC8 and EN16.

Transport Matters

7.26 In respect of transport matters the only changes to the approved scheme is the proposed provision of 2 additional parking spaces within the basement car park. The approved and proposed parking layout of the development is shown in figures 20 and 21 below which shows the addition of 2 tandem layout parking spaces served by electric vehicle charging points within the car park. RBC Transport Officers advise that the tandem spaces are acceptable in terms of their layout and how they would be accessed from within the car park.

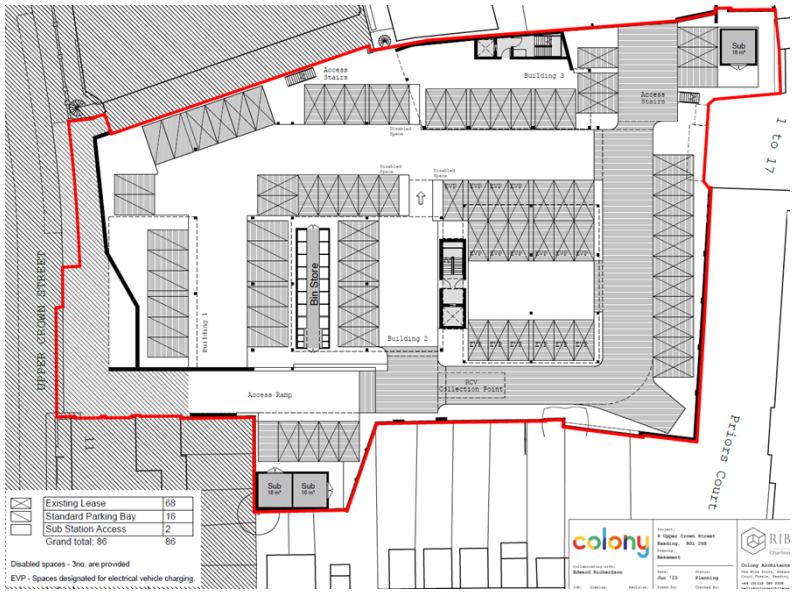


Figure 20 - Basement Level Car Parking Plan as Approved

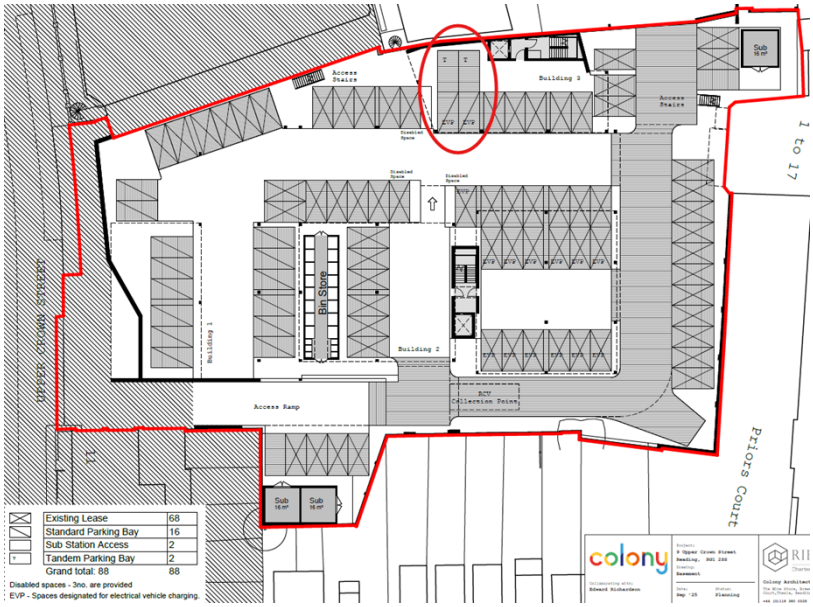


Figure 21 - Basement Level Car Parking Plan as Proposed (additional spaces circled red)

7.27 The Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) show that the site is located within Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport links. The site is currently in use as a data centre with a private car park providing 74 car parking bays on the roof provided on a lease basis to occupiers of buildings surrounding the proposed site. This existing parking area contains parking spaces which are separately leased out on 999-year leases. The approved scheme incudes provision of 86 car parking spaces within the development, 68 of which would replace the existing leased spaces, 16 would be for residents of the development and 2 would be for servicing of the on-site sub-station.

7.28 In accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) the development is required to provide 52 vehicle parking spaces for future residents. However, given the site's central and sustainable location and presence of parking controls to surrounding roads preventing on-street parking in the surrounding area the approved development accepted the under provision of car parking. The proposed addition of 2 further parking spaces for future residents of the development is considered to be acceptable.

7.29 Conditions securing the provision of all the proposed vehicle parking spaces as well as the approved cycle parking provision attached to the extant planning permission would

be carried across to a new s73 planning permission. Conditions requiring submission and approval of a car park management plan, electric vehicle charging details, details of waste stores and a construction method statement would also be carried across to a new s73 permission as well as conditions stipulating that future occupiers of the development would not be entitled to on-street parking permits.

7.30 The proposals do not change the officer conclusions in respect of the approved scheme in relation to transport matters and the development is considered to continue to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5. The proposals would support sustainable transport, not have an adverse impact upon safety, congestion and the environment whilst providing appropriate parking provision and access arrangements and ensuring that there would not be a detrimental impact on the functioning and safety of the transport network.

iv) Other Matters

7.31 The site is located within an area of potential contamination and conditions attached to the extant planning permission to secure submission and approval of a contaminated land assessment, remediation scheme and implementation of any remediation measures prior to the commencement of development would be re-applied on a s73 planning permission to ensure existing and future occupiers of the development and surrounding the site are protected from contaminants in accordance with Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources). Thames Water also identify that the site is located within close proximity to underground sewerage infrastructure and therefore a condition would also be carried across from the extant planning permission to secure that no construction piling takes place at the site until a piling methodology has been submitted to and approved by the LPA in consultation with Thames Water in order to ensure that construction of the development would not adversely impact upon local sewerage infrastructure.

7.32 Conditions are attached to the extant planning permission to secure that prior to the commencement of development details of a Sustainable Drainage Strategy (SuDS) for the development to reduce the risk of excess surface water and flooding at the site are submitted and approved by the LPA and then implemented as part of the development. These conditions would be carried across to a new s73 permission in accordance with Policy EN18 (Flood Risk and Drainage). Conditions to secure submission and approval of both design stage and as built stage SAP assessments would also be carried across as well as an obligation for the developer to provide a zero carbon off-setting contribution as part of a new s106 agreement to ensure that the development adheres to the Councils zero carbon homes standards aided by the proposed roof top photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps as per Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing), CC2 (Sustainable Design and Constriction), CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change), CC4 (Decentralised Energy) and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019).

7.33 The site is located within an area of archaeological potential and as such the condition attached to the extant permission to secure that prior to commencement of the development an archaeological written scheme of investigation is submitted, approved and implemented would be re-applied to a new s73 permission to ensure that archaeological remains at the site are adequately investigated and recorded in accordance with Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance).

7.34 The extant permission also secured submission and approval of a scheme of biodiversity enhancements in the form of integrated Swift boxes and green roofs on the buildings and soft landscaping of external areas of the site. Conditions securing these details would also be carried across to a new s73 planning permission. Given the extant planning permission was granted prior to the introduction of statutory BNG requirements any subsequent s73 variation of this permission is exempt from statutory BNG requirements. Nonetheless given the absence of vegetation or biodiversity at the existing site which is dominated by buildings and hardstanding the biodiversity enhancements proposed together with soft landscaping are considered to ensure that the proposals provide for a

net gain in on-site biodiversity in accordance with Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network)

7.35 The s106 agreement linked to the extant permission also secured a construction phase employment and skills plan contribution to ensure that as a major category development the scheme contributes towards training and skill improvements to the local workforce in accordance with Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure). Such a contribution would also be secured as part of a new s73 planning permission via a new s106 agreement. In accordance with the Councils Employment Skills and Training SPD (2013) The contribution for the amended development would be £9, 368.75.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.36 In terms of the Reading Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the proposals are a CIL liable development. The total CIL liability of the varied development would be £674,418. Albeit the figure is likely to reduce given the applicant can claim exemption from CIL for any affordable housing provided as part of the development.

8 Equality implications

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9 Conclusion

9.1 As confirmed at paragraph 7.1 to 7.3 above, section 73 applications are required to be considered against the development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and conditions attached to the existing permission, with a particular focus on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission. This has been set out in the above assessment.

9.2 As is the case for all planning applications, including applications under s73, any harmful impacts of the proposed development are required to be weighed against the benefits in the context of national and local planning policies.

9.3 When considering the application and development subject of the extant planning permission (ref. PL/23/0814) officers considered that the development demonstrated notable benefits in the form of provision of 46 new dwellings towards the Borough's housing needs on a brownfield and site just outside the Reading Central Area in a sustainable location, including a policy compliant (30%) provision of 14 affordable homes. Other benefits of the development included significant net gain in on-site biodiversity and soft landscaping and energy efficiency and sustainability benefits achieved via the incorporation of sources of decentralised energy within the development in the form of photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps and use of construction materials with good thermal efficiency which together with the proposed soft landscaping and SuDS demonstrated measures to adapt to climate change. The notable harm identified in consideration of the development subject to the extant planning permission is a minor

adverse impact to outlook of occupiers of the upper floor flats to no. 87 Southampton Street due to the proximity of proposed Block 3 to the western boundary of the site. In granting planning permission for the approved scheme, it was concluded that the identified benefits outweighed the identified harm when a planning balance weighing up exercise was carried out.

9.4 In re-visiting the planning balance weighing up exercise for the revised scheme subject of this application the key difference compared to the approved scheme subject to the extant planning permission is that the development no longer proposes to provide a policy compliant 30% level of affordable housing provision (14 dwellings) with the affordable housing provision now proposed to at 10.9% (5 dwellings). Whilst the level of affordable housing proposed to be provided is disappointing officers consider the offer to be adequate given the verified unviable nature of the proposal in respect of providing affordable housing and also taking into account the deferred payment mechanism that has been agreed with the application which means that the Council would share in any positive change in the viability position of the development. Notwithstanding this, the reduced level of affordable housing provision (including DPM) carries more limited weight as a public benefit of the proposals compared to the approved development. The other public benefits and harms of the development are considered to remain unaltered as a result of this s73 application and are as per the approved scheme (as set out in paragraph 9.3 above). Given the limited harm resulting from the proposed development officers conclude that the planning balance would still weigh in favour of granting planning permission for the development.

9.5 Furthermore, as set out in paragraphs 6.8 to 6.11 of this report and unlike when planning permission for the approved scheme was granted in 2024 the Council cannot now demonstrate a 5-year housing supply as Policy H1 of the Local Plan 2019 is out of date, and therefore the development must be assessed in line with Paragraph 11d(i and ii) of the NPPF (December 2024) referred to as the 'titled balance' and against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. Paragraph 11 states that

> *11. For decision-taking this means:*
> *c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*
> *d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date[8], granting permission unless:*
>
> > *i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance[7] provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
> > *ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination[9].*

9.6 Footnote 7 of the NPPF confirms that *"The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change."* The proposed development is not considered to impact upon Areas and Assets of particular importance and in these respects the proposals are not considered harmful.

9.7 In addition, Footnote 9 confirms that the relevant key policies are those in paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and

135 and 139 of chapter 12 of the NPPF. Considering each of these in turn the following is advised:

9.8 Paragraph 66 – Affordable Housing – As discussed above the proposals are considered to be adequate in respect of affordable housing given it has been independently verified that it is not viable for the development to provide any affordable housing but the development is still proposing to provide 10.9% of the dwellings as affordable housing and a DMP is to be secured as part of the s106 agreement to ensure the Council would share in any upturn in the viability of the scheme in future up to an equivalent policy compliant amount. Therefore, no policy conflict is identified in this respect.

9.10 Paragraph 84 – Rural housing – Not applicable to this proposal.

9.11 Paragraph 110 and 115 – Sustainable transport – The proposal is within a sustainable location near to services and facilities and no policy conflict is identified in this respect.

9.12 Paragraph 129 – Achieving appropriate densities – The development density remains as per the approved development and extant planning permission at the site and is considered appropriate given the sustainable location of the site and in the interests of making efficient use of the land and no policy conflict is identified in this respect.

9.13 Paragraphs 135-139 – Achieving well-designed places –The proposed design of the development is considered acceptable, and no policy conflict is identified in this respect.

9.14 Considering the titled balance it is not considered that the adverse impacts or harms resulting from the development would significantly nor demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development and therefore the officer recommendation is that planning is granted subject to the proposed 106 obligations and planning conditions.

Appendices and Plans

Appendix 1 - Officer committee report for original planning permission ref. PL/23/0814 to October 2023 Planning Applications Committee with full details of the approved development, including secured s106 obligations and conditions
Appendix 2 – Officer update report for original planning permission ref. PL/23/0814 to October 2023 Planning Applications Committee.

Plans

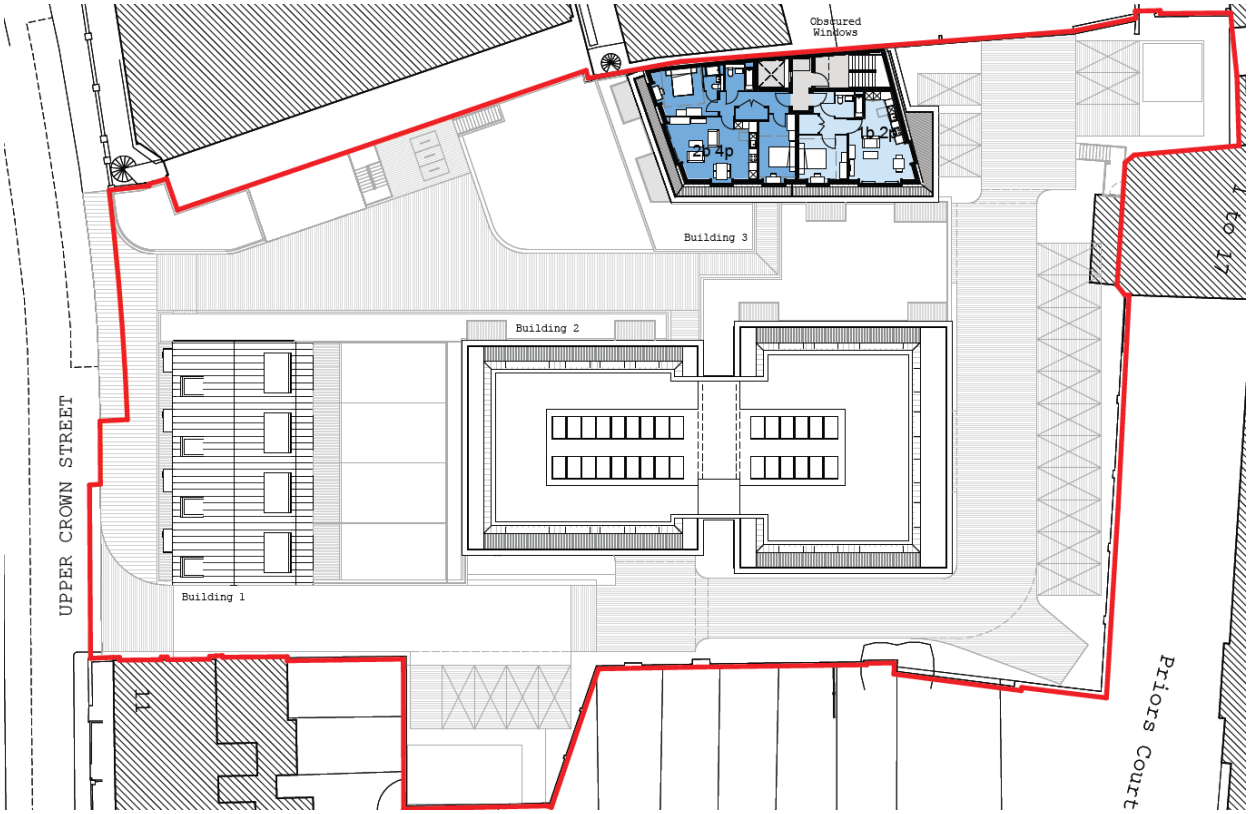
Proposed Site Plan

Proposed Ground Floor Plan – All Blocks

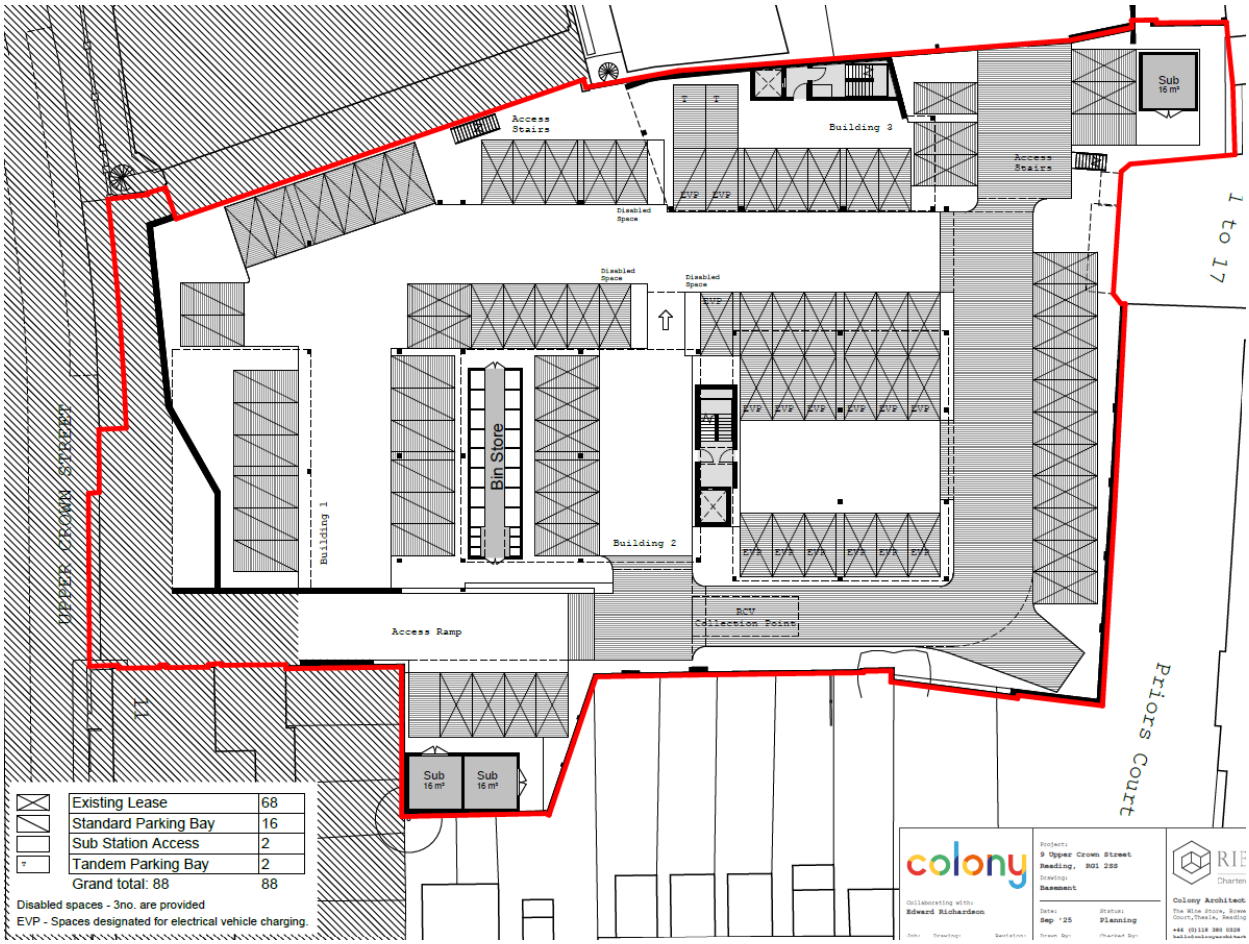
Proposed First Floor Plan – All Blocks

Proposed Second Floor Plan- All Blocks

Proposed Third Floor Plan – All Blocks



Proposed Fourth Floor Plan – All Blocks



Proposed Basement Level Car Parking Plan

South Elevation: Upper Crown Street

North Elevation: Rear Access Road

Proposed Site Elevations (South and North)

East Elevation: Access Road

Internal Street Elevation: Looking East

Proposed Site Elevations (East)

Internal Street Elevation: Looking West

East/West Elevation 01

Proposed Site Elevations (East and West)

East/West Elevation 02

Block D South Elevation

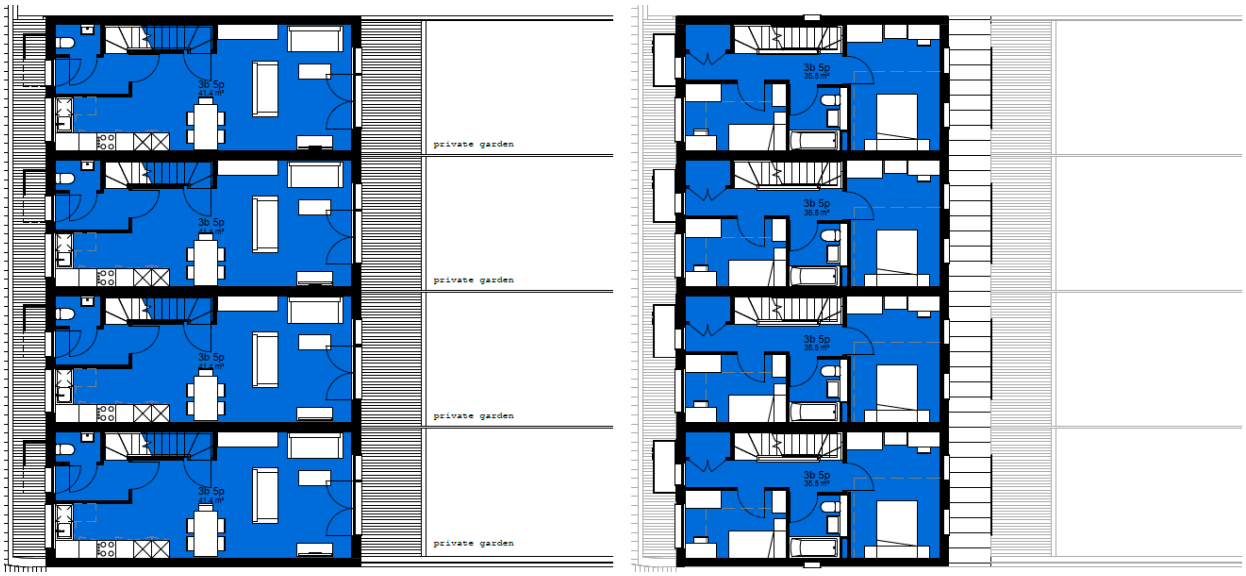
Block D West Elevation

Proposed Site Elevations (South and West)

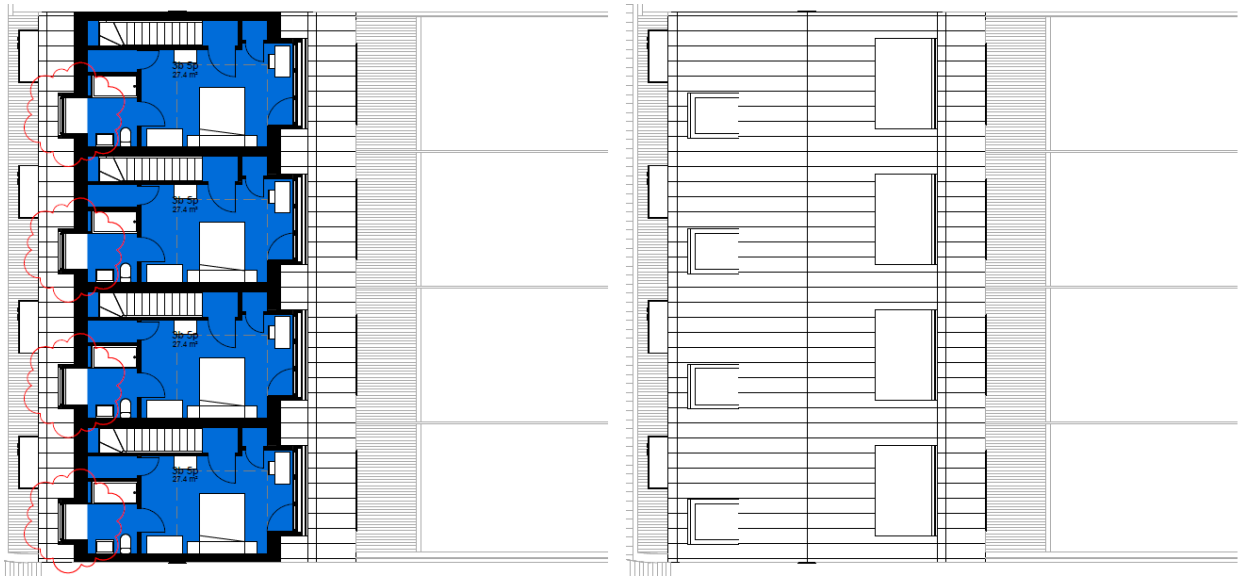
Site Section AA

Site Section BB

Proposed Site Sections

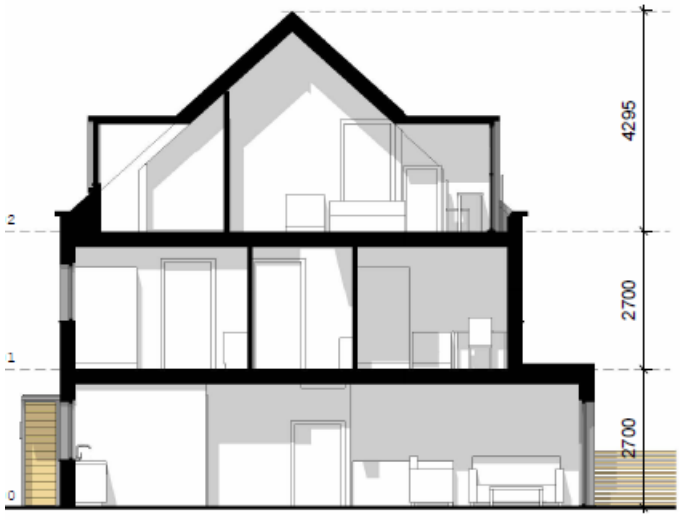


Block 1 – Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans



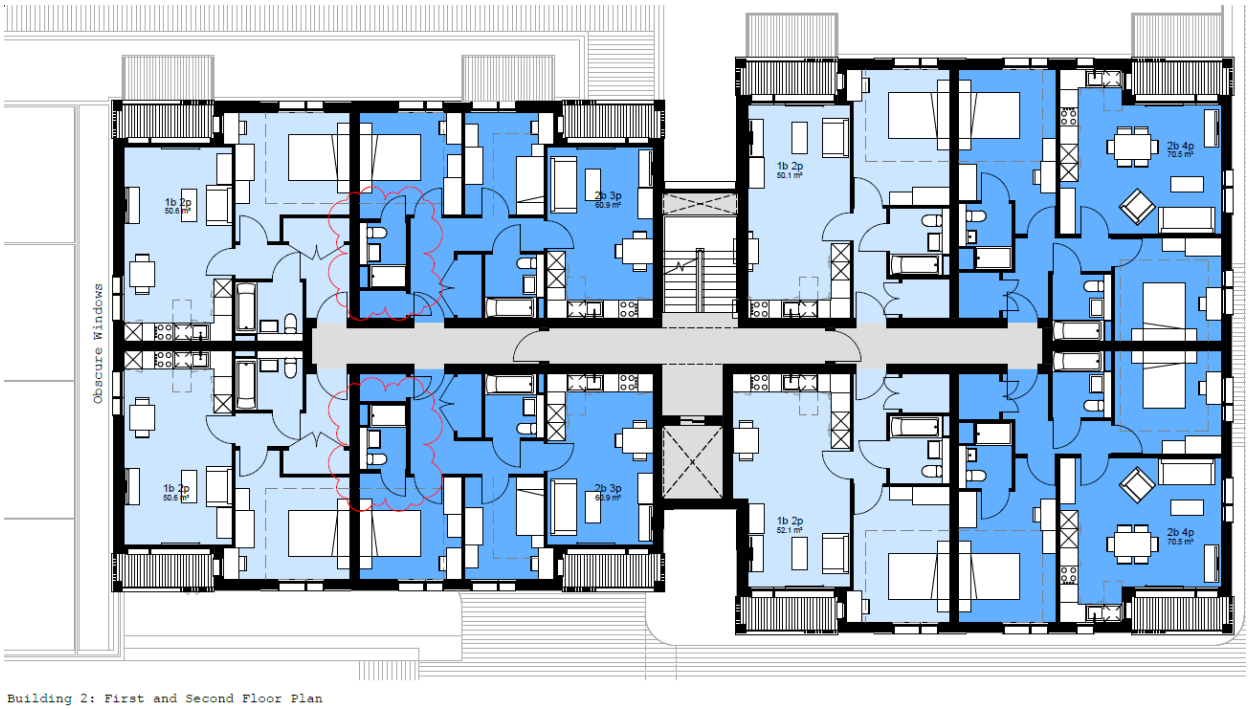
Block 1 – Proposed Second Floor and Roof Plans (Proposed Changes Circled Red)

Building 1 Proposed Elevations (Proposed Changes Circled Red)

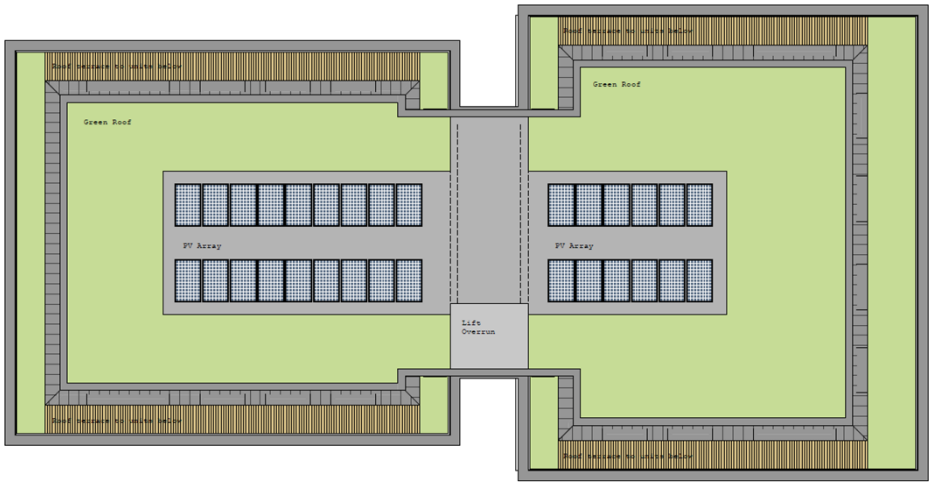


Building 1 Proposed Section

Block 2 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Changes Circled Red)



Block 2 – Proposed First and Second Floor Plan (Changes Circled Red)



Building 2: Roof Plan

Building 2 Proposed Roof Plan

Building 2: East Elevation

Building 2 – Proposed East Elevation (Proposed Changes Circled Red)

Building 2: West Elevation

Building 2 – Proposed West Elevation (Proposed Changes Circled Red)

Building 2: South Elevation

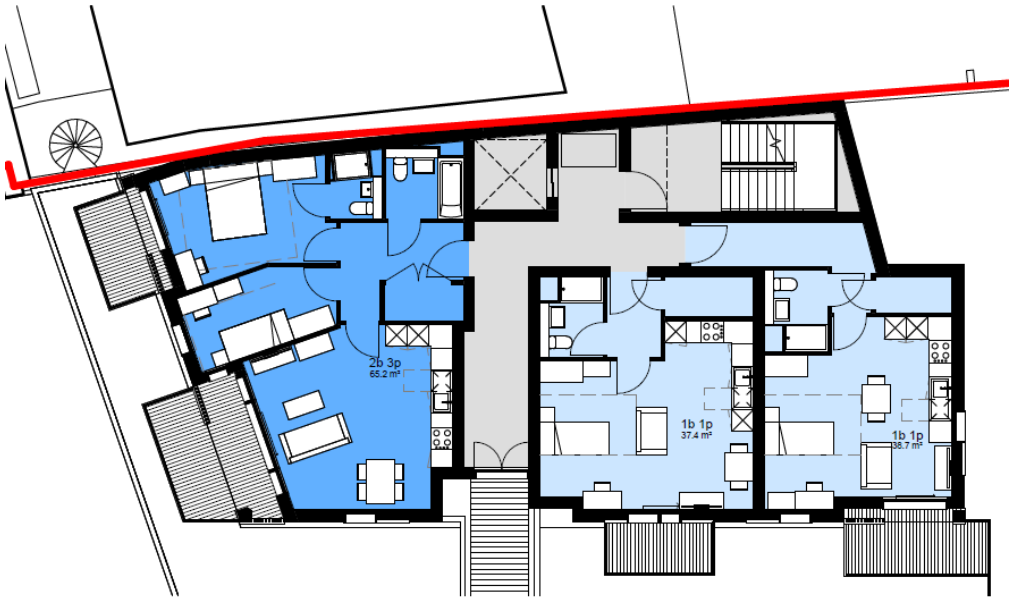
Building 2: North Elevation

Building 2 – Proposed North and South Elevations

Building 2: Section AA

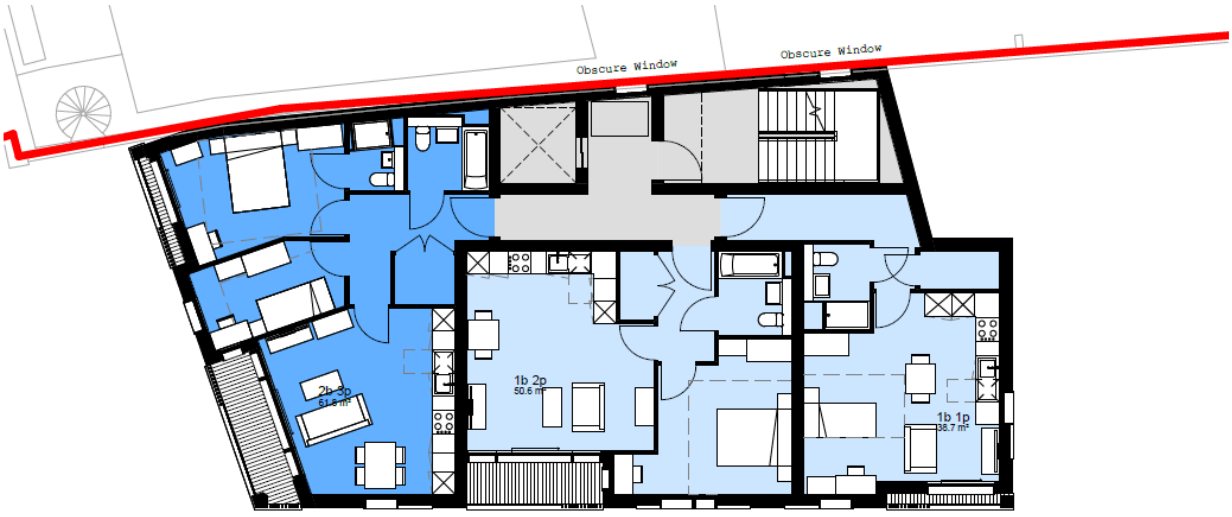
Building 2: Section BB

Building 2 – Proposed Sections



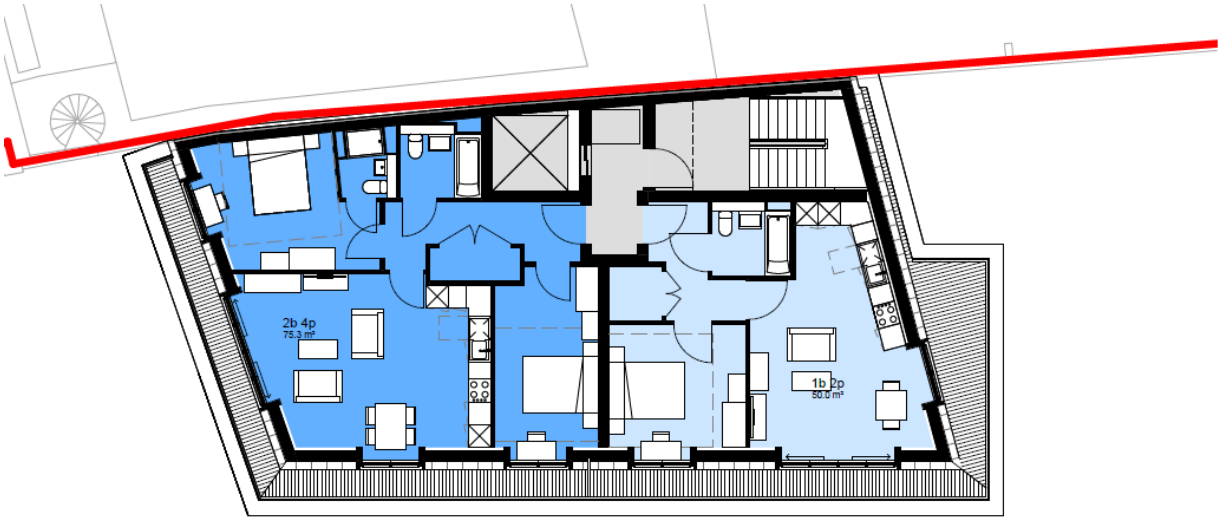
Building 3: Ground Floor Plan

Building 3 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan



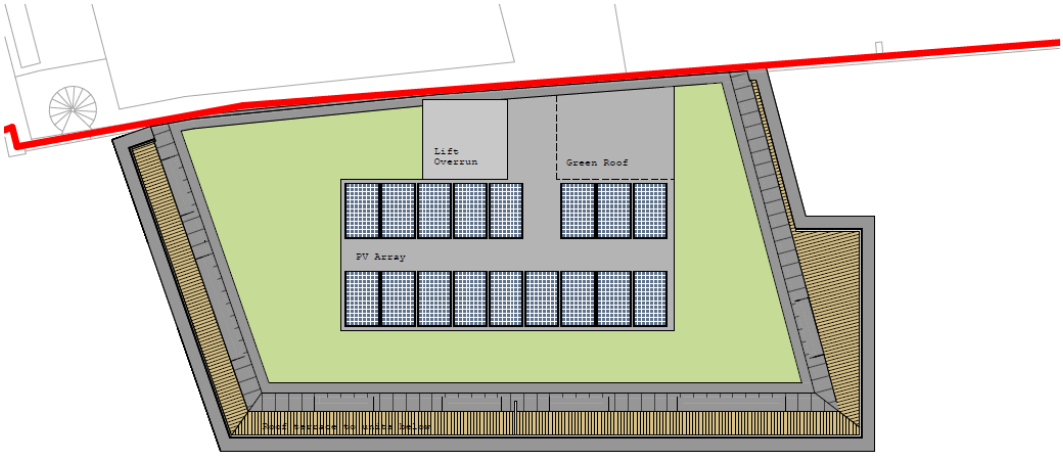
Building 3: First / Second / Third Floor Plans

Building 3 – Proposed First, Second and Third Floor Plan



Building 3: Fourth Floor Plan

Building 3 – Proposed Fourth Floor Plan



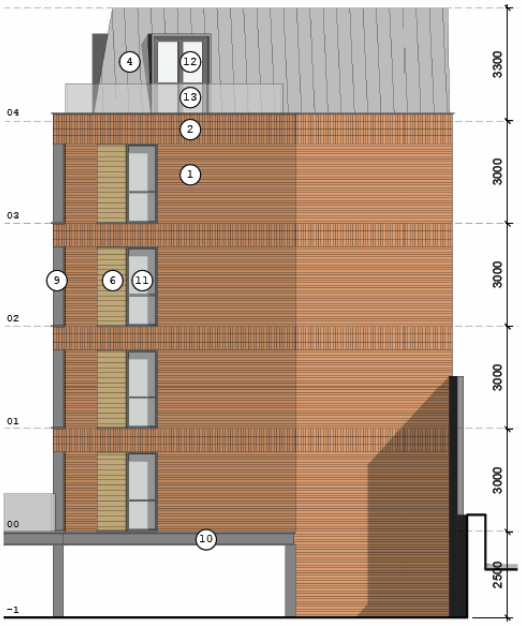
Building 3: Roof Plan

Building 3 – Proposed Roof Plan

Building 3: East Elevation

Building 3 – Proposed East Elevation

ıilding 3: South Elevation



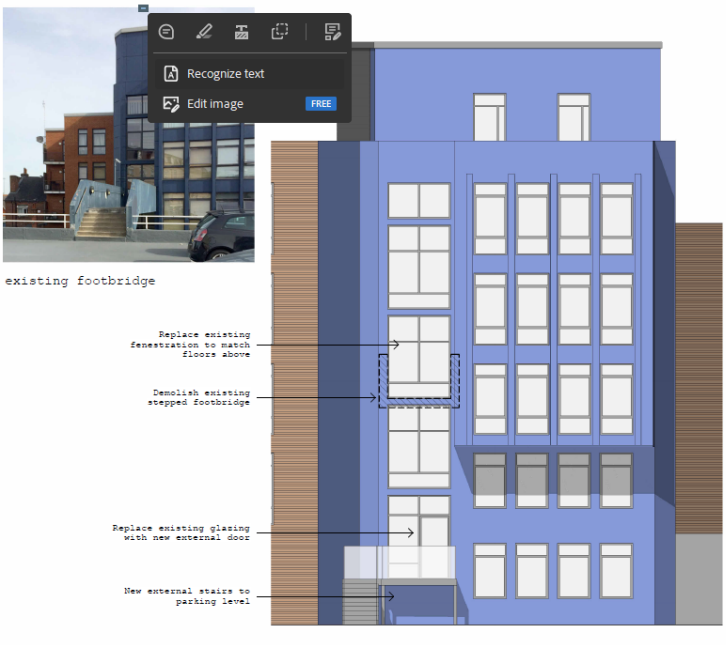
Building 3: North Elevation

Building 3 – Proposed South and North Elevations

Building 3: Section AA

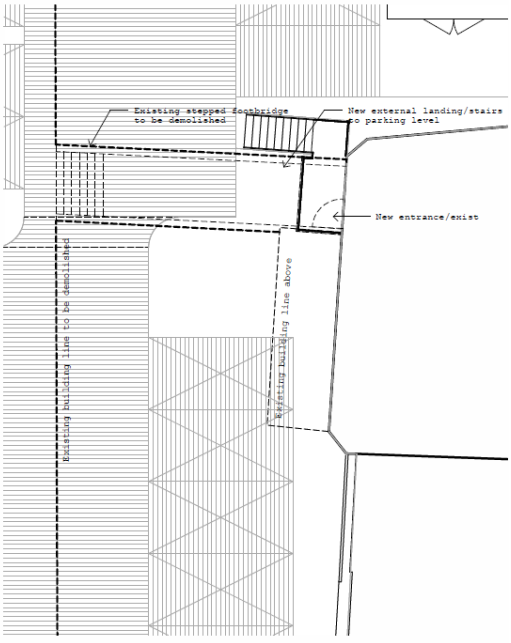
Building 3: Section BB

Building 3 – Proposed Sections



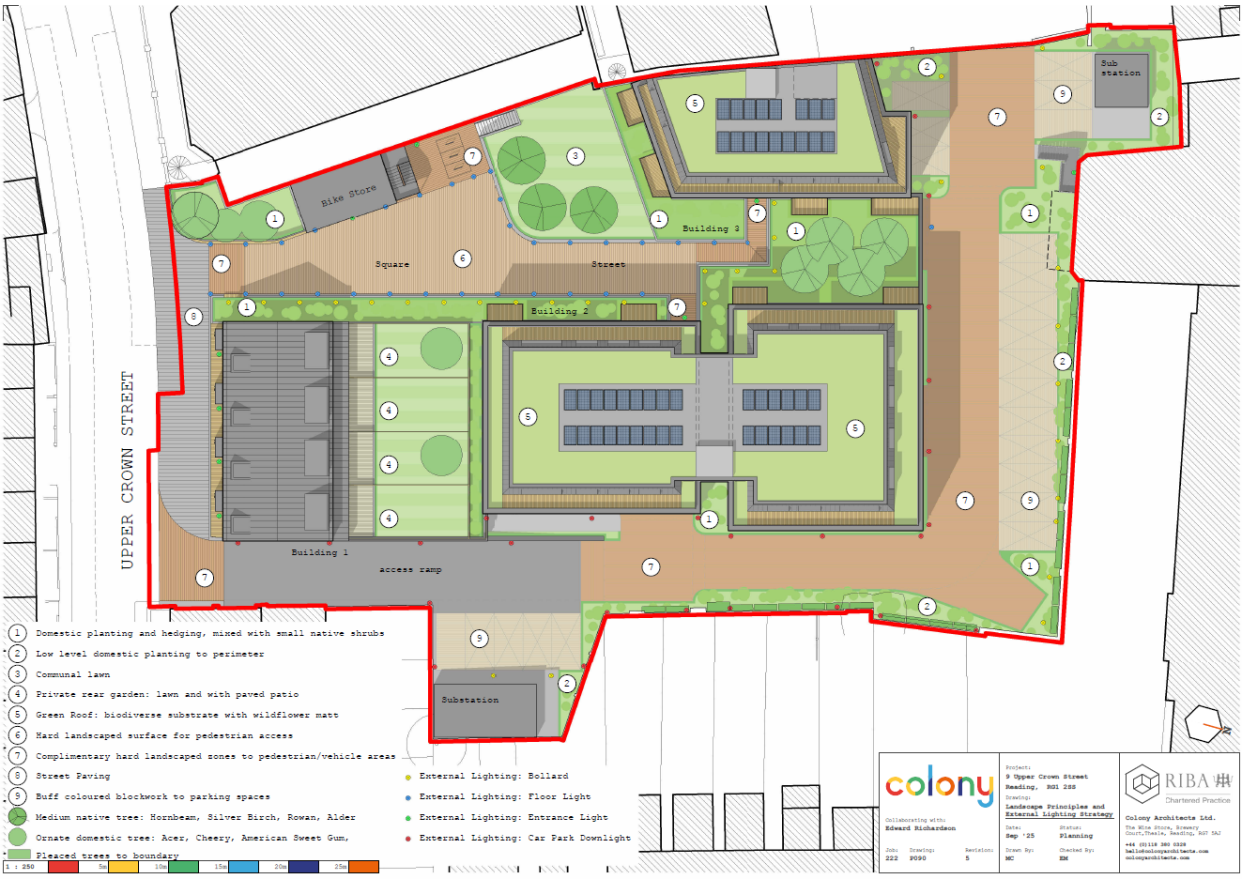
existing footbridge

Indigo house elevation



Proposed stair location

Proposed link to Indigo House



Proposed Landscaping Principles Plan

04 October 2023

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**
Ward	Katesgrove
Planning Application Reference:	230814
Site Address:	9 Upper Crown Street, RG1 2SS
Proposed Development	Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated re-use of frame with basement level used for car parking and servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of Indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access.
Applicant	Irongate Property (Reading) Ltd
Report author	Tom Bradfield
Deadline:	13/10/2023
Recommendations	Grant planning permission, subject to S106 (terms as follows) & conditions as follows
S106 Terms	To secure **affordable housing** on site consisting of fourteen units (30% provision) on site, to be 5x one bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent, 5x Two bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent and 4x one bedroom units of First Homes. Reading Affordable Rent (RAR) tenure rent levels to be capped at 70% of market rent in accordance with the Borough Council's published RAR levels. The Housing Development team have confirmed that the offer is acceptable. **Zero carbon offset financial contribution of £2,949.72.** **Employment, Skills and Training and Construction financial contribution of £8,820.75.**
Conditions	1. Full - time limit - three years 2. Approved Plans 3. Materials (samples to be approved) 4. EV Charging Points 5. Cycle Parking (pre-commencement) 6. Refuse Collection (to be approved) 7. Parking Permits 1 (notification to LPA) 8. Parking Permits 2 (notification to occupants) 9. Car Parking Management Plan 10. Construction Method Statement 11. Noise Assessment and Mitigation 12. Contaminated Land Assessment 13. Remediation Scheme (To be submitted)

	14. Remediation Scheme (Implement and Verification) 15. Unidentified Contamination 16. Hours of Construction/Demolition 17. No Bonfires 18. Waste Storage 19. Sustainable Drainage (To be approved) 20. Sustainable Drainage (As Specified) 21. Archaeology 22. Biodiversity Enhancements 23. Hard and Soft Landscaping 24. Hard and Soft Landscaping (Implementation) 25. Green Roofs 26. Thames Water – Piling Method Statement 27. Boundary Treatment 28. SAP Assessment – Design Stage 29. SAP Assessment – As Built
Informatives	• Positive and Proactive • Pre-commencement conditions • Highways • S106 • Terms and Conditions • Building Regulations • Complaints about construction • Encroachment • Contamination • Noise between residential properties • CIL • Parking Permits • Thames Water

1. Executive summary

1.1. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to a legal agreement and conditions as set out above.

1.2. The proposal is very similar to a scheme which was refused under planning reference 211614 and dismissed at appeal. The applicant has addressed the Inspector's reason for dismissing the appeal, and although officers had concerns regarding the layout and design of the scheme, the Inspector was satisfied that the proposals would be acceptable. The Inspector's decision is a significant material consideration in this case and must be given due weight.

1.3. The proposal would successfully redevelop a previously developed site adjacent to the town centre which is currently underused. It would provide market housing, affordable housing and retain the existing parking spaces on site. The proposals would have an appropriate design, ensure that there would be no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties and provide suitable accommodation for future residents. The proposal would have no adverse transport impacts, be acceptable in terms of ecology, biodiversity and sustainability. The application is therefore recommended to you for approval.

2. Introduction and Site Description

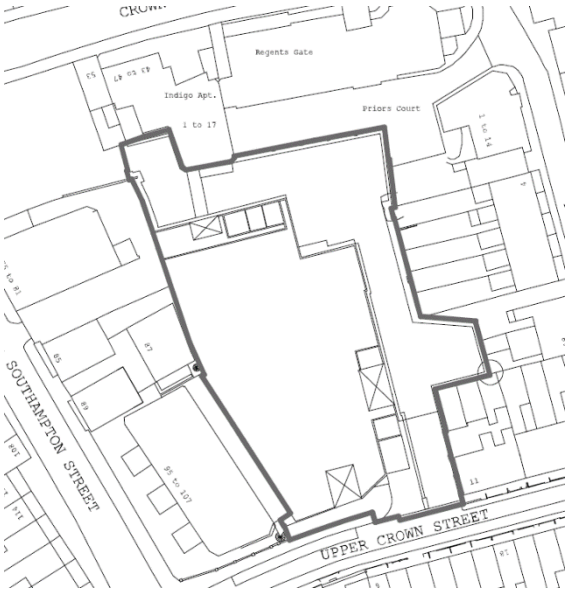
2.1. The application site is in current use as a data storage facility with roof deck car park above. The existing building is utilitarian in appearance and constructed from a mix of red brick and concrete frame. The site is accessed from Upper Crown Street and ground level via two vehicle ramps, one which slopes down to provide access to the data storage facility and to provide a servicing area for the building and three electrical

substations on the site, and one which slopes upwards to access the rooftop car park. The ground floor site level of the data storage facility is set down below the level of that of adjacent surrounding buildings to the south on Upper Crown Street and to the west on Southampton Street. The car park itself serves residents in the surrounding residential and commercial buildings, many of whom have long-term leases on car parking spaces on the site.

2.2. To the south and east of the site are modest two storey terraced residential dwellings on Upper Crown Street and Newark Street. To the west of the site is the rear of the properties fronting Southampton Street which are a mixture of commercial and residential ranging from single storey to five storeys in scale. To the north of the site is the rear of the large Indigo apartments building which ranges from four to six storeys in scale.

2.3. The application site is located outside of but adjacent to the Reading Central Area as defined by Policy CR1 (Definition of Central Reading). The site is also located within an area of potentially contaminated land and within an air quality management area.

2.4. The site location plan is below:



3. The proposal

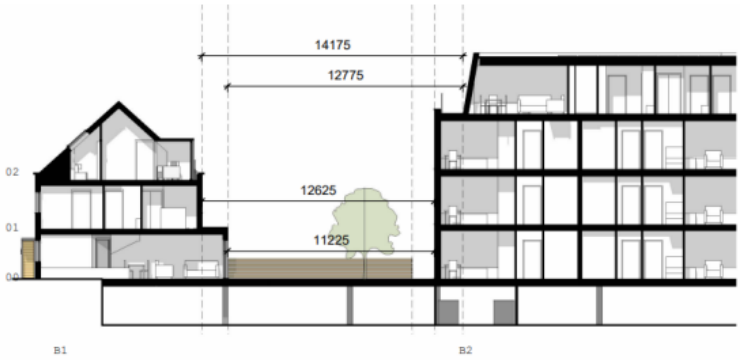
3.1. This application seeks to demolish the majority of the structures on the site, retaining some of the frame, and erect three buildings comprising 46 residential units. Building 1 would be four two storey houses which face south onto Upper Crown Street, Building 2 would be a four storey building containing flats behind Building 1 and Building 3 would be a five storey building on the western boundary. The mix of residential units would be as follows:

Type	Market	Affordable	Total
1 bedroom flat	13	9	22 (48%)
2 bedroom flat	11	5	16 (35%)
3 bedroom flat	4	0	4 (8.5%)
3 bedroom house	4	0	4 (8.5%)
Total	32 (70%)	14 (30%)	46 (100%)

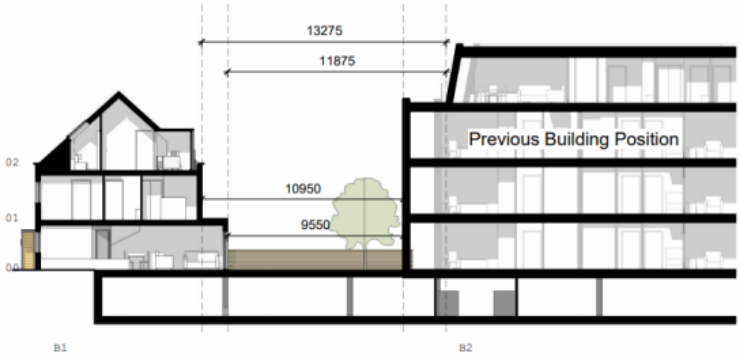
3.2. Vehicle access would be retained as existing, with additional pedestrian access into the courtyard area from Upper Crown Street. 86 car parking spaces would be provided on

site in a basement car parking area. 68 of these car parking spaces would replace the existing leased car parking spaces for residents beyond the boundary of the site. 16 spaces would serve the residents of the proposed development and 2 spaces would be for servicing of the substation. 36 cycle parking spaces for residents would be provided, with additional spaces in the gardens of the houses and 6 visitor cycle parking spaces in the communal amenity space.

3.3. The proposals are very similar to the previously refused scheme (ref. 211614, latterly dismissed at appeal). The only substantive physical difference between the two applications is the repositioning of Building 2, so that the gap between the proposed terrace of houses and the wall of Building 2 increases from 9.55m to 11.225m at ground floor and from 10.95m to 12.625m at first floor. This is illustrated in the drawing below, taken from the submitted Planning & Affordable Housing Statement:



Proposed relationship between B1 and B2 (2023)



Previous relationship between B1 and B2 (2022)

3.4. In order to facilitate this alteration, the unit mix is different from the previously refused scheme, which provided 21 one bedroom units, 11 two bedroom units and 14 three bedroom units.

3.5. The applicant has submitted the following documents for consideration:

- Planning and Affordable Housing Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Archaeological Assessment
- Contaminated Land Statement
- Ecology Statement
- Daylight/Sunlight Report
- Noise Impact Assessment
- External Daylight Study
- 3D Visuals
- Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Urban Drainage Statement
- Energy Assessment
- Energy & Sustainability Report
- Design & Access Statement
- Existing and Proposed Drawings (P001 – P041 & P090)

3.6. The previous application was a Major application which was refused under officers' delegated powers. This application is being referred to the Committee as it is a Major application with a legal agreement with a recommendation for approval.

4. Planning history

211614	Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated reuse of frame with basement level used for car parking & servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations & associated works to rear of indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access
	Refused: 20/06/2022 **Dismissed at appeal (APP/E0345/W/22/3313234): 27th April 2023**

4.1. The previous application was refused by the Local Planning Authority for the following reasons:

1. *The development, as a result of the re-provision of significant number of on-site vehicle parking spaces unrelated to the proposed residential use, results in a significant proportion of the site being taken up by parking spaces and hardstanding. This, together with the scale and siting of proposed buildings 2 and 3, results in a development which appears cramped in terms of the proposed buildings within it but also in relation to existing buildings surrounding the site at no.s 75-81, 85, 87 and 89 Southampton Street. The extent of hardstanding and parking spaces proposed, together with the scale and cramped layout of buildings 2 and 3 results in provision of poor-quality areas of on-site landscaping and communal open space. The layout and scale of the proposed buildings is detrimental to the usability of these spaces and provision of suitable landscaping. The re-provision of the significant number of on-site vehicle parking spaces for off-site users unconnected to the development also fails to provide a safe environment for future occupiers of the development due to the level of pedestrian and vehicle movements that would occur within the development and its buildings that would be unrelated to the to the residential occupiers of the site. The proposals are considered to be an overdevelopment of the site and to fail to create a safe or high-quality residential layout contrary to Policies CC7, EN14, and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

2. *The siting and the layout of proposed buildings 2 and 3 would result in direct overlooking between facing habitable rooms windows to the two buildings creating*

a loss of privacy and overbearing form of development for future occupiers. The presence of balconies to the facing elevations exacerbates this unacceptable relationship and inadequate separation distance between the two buildings. ***The siting and scale of proposed building 2 would result in an overbearing form of development for future occupiers of the proposed terrace of four dwellings (building 1) to the site frontage on Upper Crown Street and would be detrimental to the usability of their private amenity spaces.*** *The proposed development would fail to provide future occupiers with an acceptable standard of residential amenity or amenity spaces contrary to Policies CC8 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

3. *The siting of proposed building 3 directly on the west boundary of the site together with its scale is considered to result in an overbearing visually dominant relationship with the adjacent buildings at 85, 87, 89 Southampton Street which are either in residential use or have been granted prior approval for conversion to residential use. The siting of large windows directly on the boundary, whilst indicated on the proposed plans to be obscurely glazed, would result in a perception of overlooking to occupiers of these neighbouring buildings. The proposed development would be harmful to the residential amenity of both existing and future occupiers of no.s 85, 87 and 89 Southampton Street contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.*

4. *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure provision of a construction phase and end user phase employment skills and training plan or equivalent financial contribution, provision of a policy compliant level of on-site affordable housing and a carbon off-setting contribution, the proposals fails to adequately contribute to local labour and training needs, the housing needs of the Reading Borough and to achieve zero carbon homes standards contrary to Policies CC9, H3 and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the adopted Employment Skills and Training Supplementary Planning Document 2019, Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2021, Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document 2019 and Planning Obligations Under Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document 2015.*

4.2. The refused scheme was the subject of an Informal Hearing, which took place on 28th March 2023 and the Inspector's decision letter was delivered on 27th April 2023. The Inspector found the proposal acceptable in the majority of respects, but found that the proposal was unacceptable with regard to the relationship between Building 2 and the

proposed terrace of houses facing onto Upper Crown Street (Building 1) and upheld that part of Reason 2 (highlighted in bold in the refusal reasons above). All other reasons for refusal were dismissed. The Inspector found that the harm arising from the unacceptable relationship between the two buildings, in particular the overbearing nature of the building that would compromise the outlook from the proposed houses and the quality of the rear gardens to the extent that the living conditions of the occupiers of the houses would be unacceptable. The Inspector's decision is included at Appendix 1.

5. Consultations

5.1. The following consultation responses were received from statutory and internal consultees:

RBC Transport

5.2. The Transport team raised no objection to the proposals. The access arrangements would be acceptable, the parking layout would also be acceptable. The number of parking spaces would be below the Council's adopted standards, but given the site's proximity to the centre of Reading and local transport networks, a lower provision is acceptable. The surrounding roads have extensive parking restrictions which would prevent overflow parking. A condition would ensure that no parking permits would be issued for new residents. Cycle parking provision would be acceptable. Additional information relating to access arrangements, electric vehicle charging points and reinstatement of dropped crossings was requested and received.

RBC Housing Development

5.3. The Housing Development Team welcome the 30% affordable housing offer, but would advise the supply of three bedroom units to ensure the mix is policy compliant. The provision of 25% of Affordable Housing as First Homes is required by national policy, but the provision of the remainder of the Affordable Housing as Reading Affordable Rent units rather than a split between RAR and Shared Ownership is welcomed.

RBC Natural Environment

5.4. The existing site has no planting or soft landscaping, and the proposal would introduce a soft landscaping area with trees, as well as green roofs. The layout and the hard-soft balance on the proposed plans are acceptable hence the proposal is supported in terms of trees and landscape. Several conditions requested relating to landscaping.

RBC Waste & Recycling

5.5. Further information was requested relating to the collection of waste and recycling, which was provided and is advised is now acceptable and would be secured by condition.

RBC Environmental Protection

5.6. Additional information relating to noise and air pollution was required and has been provided. A variety of conditions relating to noise, air quality, land contamination, bin storage, hours of construction and a CMS are suggested.

RBC Ecology

5.7. The proposals would have no impact on protected species or priority habitats, therefore no objection to the proposals. Conditions relating to landscaping and biodiversity enhancements are suggested.

Berkshire Archaeology

5.8. No objection subject to a condition relating to archaeological investigations.

Public Consultation

5.9. 144 neighbouring properties were consulted by letter and four site notices were displayed at the application site.

5.10. Nine responses were received and raised the below points:

- Loss of light (particularly to the City Gate building)
- Loss of privacy (particularly to the City Gate building)
- Loss of outlook from surrounding properties
- Disruption during construction through noise, dust and debris
- Lack of provision of secure car parking, bins and bicycles during construction and following construction
- Lack of carbon capture
- Too much car parking
- Too little car parking
- Resultant traffic would increase congestion on surrounding streets
- Demolition of the existing building could harm the structure of surrounding buildings
- Interference with access arrangements to parking for surrounding flats
- Development is too large
- Inappropriate access
- Landscaping would not be sufficient and would not grow well given the scale of buildings
- Impact on archaeological remains

6. Legal context

6.1. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.3. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.4. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Policy – National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023

Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
Section 4 – Decision Making
Section 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy
Section 8 - Promoting healthy and safe communities
Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land
Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policies:

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing (2021)
Planning Obligations under S106 (April 2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (Dec 2019)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)
Parking Standards and Design (2011)

7. Appraisal

7.1. The main considerations are:

- Principle of Development
- Future Residents' Amenity
- Neighbour Amenity
- Design, Character and Appearance of the Area
- Unit Mix and Affordable Housing
- Transport
- Ecology
- Sustainability
- S106 Legal Agreement

Principle of Development

7.2. The site is not allocated for development, but generally the proposals would align with the principles of the NPPF and the Local Plan which encourage the use of previously developed land where suitable opportunities exist.

7.3. The loss of the existing data storage use on the site would result in the loss of employment land, although given the use as a data centre, the number of employees is very low compared to the size of the site. The site is not located within a Core Employment Area, and is surrounded by residential uses, accessed via a modest, narrow road, there is no objection to the loss of employment land in this instance. Furthermore, the existing building is utilitarian in appearance and not considered to be of any architectural merit, so its loss would be acceptable, providing the replacement buildings maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area, in accordance with

Local Plan Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm). The design of the proposals is assessed elsewhere in the report.

7.4. The proposed replacement of the existing employment use on the site with residential development would provide additional dwellings to the Borough's housing stock on previously developed land - the principle of which aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting meeting annual housing targets. The application site is also situated within a predominately residential area, whereby its location and accessibility are considered to accord with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and the Intensity of Development).

7.5. The proposal is very similar to the previously refused scheme (ref. 211614). The principle of redeveloping this site was considered acceptable by officers then, and was considered acceptable by the Inspector at appeal stage. Given the differences between the two schemes are minimal, the principle of residential development on this site is considered acceptable. The previous officer report and the Inspector's decision are attached as appendices.

Future Residents' Amenity

7.6. Local Plan Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) states that new build housing will need to comply with the nationally prescribed space standards. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) requires dwellings to be provide with functional private or communal open space where possible. Local Plan Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) requires that homes should also have adequate natural light, outlook and privacy.

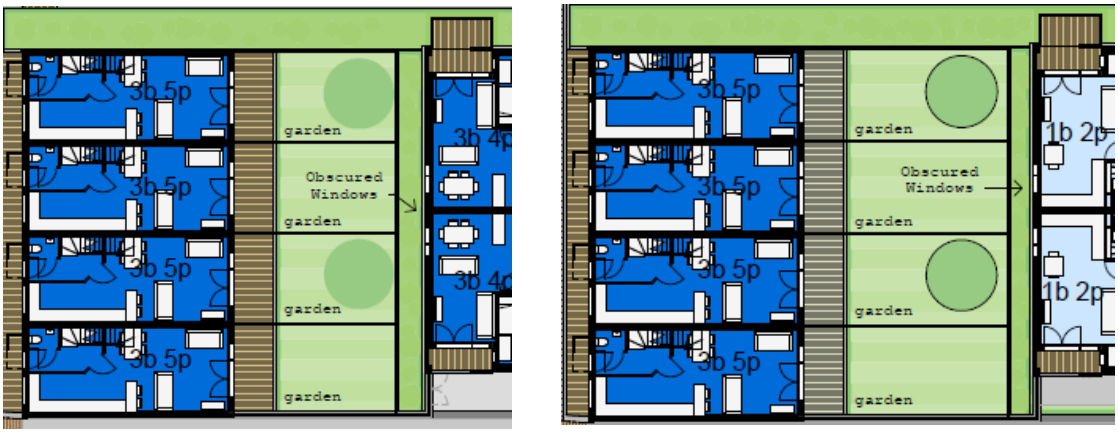
7.7. The previous scheme (ref. 211614) was refused on various grounds, several relating directly to future residents' amenity. The Inspector dismissed the appeal on the grounds that the relationship between Building 2 and the terrace of houses fronting Upper Crown Street would be unacceptable. The Inspector stated:

"The size and proximity of Building 2 to the rear of the terraced houses and their rear gardens would result in it being overbearing to the occupiers of these houses. The appearance of the building would be softened with a living wall on this elevation, which would also have some articulation from the siting of obscure glazed windows. In addition, the setting in of the mansard roof from this elevation would be significant, limiting its presence when seen from ground level in particular. I also recognise that for the easternmost house in the terrace, only part of the outlook would be onto Building 2. Nevertheless, the size and proximity of Building 2 would result in it being a dominant and oppressive presence that would compromise the outlook from the houses and the quality of the rear gardens to the extent that the living conditions of occupiers of the houses would be unacceptable.

I acknowledge that other properties may exist in the area with a similar outlook, and I saw during my site visit that neighbouring gardens are relatively small, in some instances smaller than those proposed for the terraced houses. However, development locally has been piecemeal in nature, and in the case of the older houses on Upper Crown Street and Newark Street these are of considerable age far predating modern standards for residential development. They also do not back onto buildings of the size and height of the proposed Building 2. In any case, the combination of factors identified above would result in unacceptable living conditions for the future occupiers of these properties. Even if a similar combination of factors does exist locally, this does not change my view that the appeal proposal would be unacceptable in this regard."

7.8. The current proposal increases the distance between the rear elevations of the houses and the wall of Building 2 by just under 2m. This also results in longer gardens for the houses. The increased distance between the houses and the side wall of Building 2 would ensure that the outlook from these properties would be significantly improved when compared to the previous scheme, and would be considered acceptable. Furthermore, the increase in the size of the gardens would contribute to the improved outlook both from within the properties and from within the gardens themselves. It is considered that this change overcomes the Inspector's concerns regarding the living

conditions of the future residents in the houses. A section comparison between the two schemes can be seen earlier in this report (between paras 3.3 and 3.4), and a floorplan comparison can be seen below, previous scheme on the left and proposed scheme on the right:



7.9. Buildings 2 and 3 would be separated by between 9m and 10m across the communal amenity space in the centre of the site with windows and balconies facing across this space. The appeal scheme had a similar relationship, and the Inspector found that this would be acceptable, and would ensure acceptable levels of privacy for the new units (para. 9 in the Inspector's Report). Furthermore, the Inspector found that the outlook and light provision would be acceptable for these units (para. 10 in the Inspector's report). Given the previous appeal decision is a significant material consideration when assessing a planning application, and the relationship between these two buildings has not changed, the proposals are considered acceptable in this regard.

7.10. The communal amenity space would be located between Buildings 2 and 3. It would include both hard and soft landscaping and be visible from Upper Crown Street. The Inspector identified that the communal amenity space would be "relatively compressed" (para. 15 in the Inspector's Report), however that given the landscaping it would be generally attractive and useable. The current proposal is similar in this regard, and the communal amenity areas are considered appropriate.

7.11. The units would all meet the relevant space standards, would have private amenity space and would receive appropriate levels of light and privacy.

7.12. The proposal would include adequate mitigation with regard to air quality through the implementation of an appropriate ventilation arrangement. Conditions are recommended to ensure that this is secured.

7.13. The proposal includes adequate noise mitigation to ensure that there would be no impact on future residents from external noise. Further mitigation is proposed to ensure that there would be no adverse impact as a result of noise between the two uses or from mechanical plant. Conditions securing these are recommended.

7.14. Overall, officers consider that the proposal would provide suitable future living conditions for residents on a constrained site adjacent to the town centre, and is therefore considered to comply with the Local Plan policies above.

Neighbour Amenity

7.15. Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

7.16. The site is surrounded by residential uses on all sides. To the north are Indigo Apartments and Regents Gate, to the west a currently vacant site with planning permission for residential at 75-81 Southampton Street, a mix of offices (with permission to convert to residential) and residential uses at 85, 87 and 89 Southampton Street and

purely residential at City Gate Apartments (95-107 Southampton Street). To the south is Upper Crown Street itself, with a terrace of houses on the other side, and to the east mainly terraced houses with Priors Court in the north-eastern corner.

7.17. The previous scheme was refused and dismissed based on the position of Building 3 resulting in harm to numbers 85, 87 and 89 Southampton Street through loss of privacy through the perception of overlooking and an overbearing presence which would be harmful to the residents' amenity.

7.18. The Inspector found that there would be no harm to the living conditions of the current and future occupants at numbers 85, 87 and 89 Southampton Street. With regards number 85, which is currently in residential use, the Inspector stated that given the urban setting and separation distance of approximately 16m, there would be no harmful loss of outlook, or perception of overlooking (Paras. 20 & 21 in the Inspector's decision letter).

7.19. Number 87 Southampton Street is currently an office building, but has an extant planning permission to extend the building to provide a flat at existing roof level. Building 3 does not extend beyond the southern elevation of number 87, so there would be no impact on this side. The Inspector considered that it would extend beyond the northern direction, but that there would be no loss of outlook. The Inspector also determined that there would be no harm to the living conditions of potential future residents in the proposed new flat (paras 22 and 23 in the Inspector's Report). It was accepted at appeal stage that there would be no harm to number 89 given the position and orientation of the buildings.

7.20. Given that the size and position of Building 3 has not changed, these assessments carry significant weight in the planning assessment and accordingly, officers advise that there would be no harm identified to the living conditions of the neighbouring residents at 85, 87 and 89 Southampton Street.

7.21. The relationship between the previous proposals and the other surrounding residential buildings (in particular Indigo Apartments and City Gate) was considered acceptable as part of the previous application, and given the relationships between the buildings and the proposal has not changed in any substantive manner, is still considered acceptable.

Design, Character and Appearance of the Area

7.22. Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) states that "all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area". The NPPF in paragraph 130 c) states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments "are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities)".

7.23. One of the reasons for the refusal of the previous scheme related to the development appearing cramped due to the scale and siting of Buildings 2 and 3 and their relationship with the existing buildings around the site, resulting in poor quality landscaping and open space and the proposal was considered to be an overdevelopment of the site.

7.24. However, the Inspector disagreed with this assessment and considered that the site is within an area of mixed character, with low-rise terraced properties and larger buildings of up to six storeys in close proximity. The Inspector also noted that the site has restrictions relating to re-provision of car parking spaces for surrounding leaseholders. They held that Buildings 2 and 3 would be positioned appropriately, closer to the taller buildings around the site, ensuring that their height and massing would be in keeping with the immediate context. As discussed earlier in the report, the Inspector also determined that despite the close proximity of the buildings, the communal space would be acceptable. The Inspector found that the proposal was acceptable in terms of its effect on the character and appearance of the area and that it would provide adequate, functional communal amenity space (paras. 12 – 19 of the Inspector's letter).

7.25. The nearest Conservation Area is Market Place/London Street, the edge of which is approximately 60m to the northeast. There is also a row of Grade II Listed Buildings at 92-106 Southampton Street, approximately 40m to the west. Given the position of the site, distances involved and intervening buildings, the proposal would not be readily visible from these locations and would have no impact on heritage assets.

7.26. The overall design of the scheme has not changed, beyond the slight reduction in Building 2, as discussed earlier in the report. The proposal would create a row of terraced properties on Upper Crown Street, which would be an appropriate design response to the immediate context of the area. Furthermore, as the Inspector identified, the scale, position and design of the larger Buildings 2 and 3 would be in keeping with the character of the area and would be considered acceptable. The proposal would represent an improvement compared to the existing building, and would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area. Although officers have previously refused a similar scheme, the appeal decision found that the proposals would be an appropriate design response. This carries significant weight in the planning balance, and officers recommend that the proposals are now considered acceptable in this regard.

Unit Mix and Affordable Housing

7.27. Local Plan Policy H2 states that wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6 of the Local Plan, in particular for family homes.

7.28. The proposal would provide 46 units at the following mix:

Type	Market	Affordable	Total
1 bedroom flat	13	9	22 (48%)
2 bedroom flat	11	5	16 (35%)
3 bedroom flat	4	0	4 (8.5%)
3 bedroom house	4	0	4 (8.5%)
Total	32 (70%)	14 (30%)	46 (100%)

7.29. 24 family sized units would be provided (52%), with the remainder of the mix being one bedroom units. Provision of this level of family housing exceeds the policy requirements of 50% of units on sites outside the Town Centre. There has been a change in the unit mix from the scheme which was considered at appeal, but the proposal would still comply with Policy H2.

7.30. Local Plan Policy H3 requires development to make an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading Borough. For a development of this size, 30% of the total dwellings are expected to be provided as affordable housing. If proposals fall short of the policy, then the developer should clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower contribution through an open-book viability assessment.

7.31. The proposal would provide 30% affordable housing, as per the above table. The Housing Development Team have indicated that whilst their preference would be to include three bedroom units in the mix, the provision of the entirety of the remainder (after First Home allocation) as Reading Affordable Rent (RAR) would be a significant benefit. Furthermore, the Inspector accepted the affordable housing offer at appeal stage. Given the proposals offer 30% Affordable Housing on a site adjacent to the town centre, with a high proportion of RAR units, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in this regard.

Transport

7.32. Policy TR1 of the Local Plan requires developments to promote and improve sustainable transport. Policy TR3 states that consideration will be given to the effect of a new development on safety, congestion and the environment. Proposals should provide acceptable access to the site and ensure that there would not be a detrimental impact on the functioning and safety of the transport network.

7.33. The site is located within the Zone 2, primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.

7.34. The site is currently in use as a data centre with a private car park providing 74 car parking bays on the roof provided on a lease basis to occupiers of buildings surrounding the proposed site. This existing parking area contains parking spaces which are separately leased out on 999-year leases. The submitted Car Parking Plan confirms that leased spaces cannot be removed and are proposed to be provided off-site during the construction phase. The Inspector accepted the legal requirement for parking reprovision as a constraint of the site, but did not identify that it had an impact on the good design of the proposals. Interim arrangements for car parking provision would be a Civil matter between the Applicant and the leaseholders and not a matter for consideration as part of the planning application.

7.35. The development will provide a total of 86 car parking spaces at basement level. The existing access from Upper Crown Street is to be retained which will lead to the ramp to the basement parking area. The access to the proposed parking area would be acceptable. The proposed parking layout is deemed acceptable, and the dimensions of the parking spaces comply to current standards.

7.36. 68 parking spaces would replace the existing leased parking spaces and 16 spaces are to be provided for residents of the proposed development and 2 spaces for the servicing of the substation. Although the overall parking provision falls below the Council's current adopted standards for a Zone 2 development, given the close proximity of the site to the town centre and transport networks, a lower parking provision is considered acceptable in this location. The surrounding road network has extensive parking restrictions in place preventing unauthorised on-street parking, any overflow in parking would not affect flow of traffic on the classified road network. New residents would be restricted from receiving Parking Permits by condition.

7.37. A total of 21 cycle storage spaces would be required for the development. Cycle storage can be provided in the private garden areas for houses. For the flats, two tier cycle stands providing 36 spaces for residents would be provided at street level. This provision is in excess of the Council's current standards, and is therefore considered acceptable. Three Sheffield stands providing a total of 6 spaces are proposed for visitors located within the main communal spaces, which is considered acceptable.

7.38. Overall, the proposals would represent an appropriate development in transport terms, and it would comply with the Local Plan.

Ecology

7.39. Policy EN12 seeks to protect existing green space, ensure that there would be no net loss of biodiversity, and where possible to demonstrate that there is a net gain for biodiversity.

7.40. The proposal is accompanied by an ecological survey which demonstrates that there would be no impact on existing species at the site. Several conditions are recommended to ensure that the proposals would provide landscaping details, the installation of Swift bricks and details of green roofs is carried out to ensure adequate biodiversity net gain on site.

Sustainability

7.41. Local Plan Policy H5 'Standards for New Housing' seeks that all new-build housing is built to high design standards. In particular, new housing should adhere to, water

efficiency standards in excess of the Building Regulations, zero carbon homes standards (for major schemes), and provide at least 5% of dwellings as wheelchair user units. Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and Policy CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that development proposals incorporate measures which take account of climate change.

7.42. An energy and sustainability statement was submitted as part of the application. This demonstrates that the proposal would not meet zero carbon targets, but would achieve circa 70% carbon reduction through higher fabric standards and the low carbon and renewable energy systems, namely photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps.

7.43. The Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD states in paragraph 3.11 that "in achieving Zero Carbon Homes for major residential developments, the preference is that new build residential of ten or more dwellings will achieve a true carbon neutral development on-site. If this is not achievable, it must achieve a minimum of 35% improvement in regulated emissions over the Target Emissions Rate in the 2013 Building Regulations, plus a Section 106 contribution of £1,800 per remaining tonne towards carbon offsetting within the Borough (calculated as £60/tonne over a 30 year period."'

7.44. Residual emissions would be offset with a carbon offset payment of £1,800 per tonne, in accordance with Policy H5 and the SPD. This contribution would be £2,949.72.

7.45. Although it is unfortunate that the proposed development cannot achieve Zero Carbon, the submitted Sustainability Statement demonstrates that the development achieves a 35% improvement along with a carbon offsetting in the form of a financial contribution, which will be secured through a S106 legal agreement. Officers are therefore satisfied that the development would be policy compliant in this regard.

7.46. Policy EN18 requires all major developments to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) with runoff rates aiming to reflect greenfield conditions and, in any case, must be no greater than the existing conditions of the site. The applicant has submitted a Surface Water Drainage Strategy which demonstrates that the proposed drainage rate would be a reduction when compared against the Brownfield runoff rate and provides a pipes' network to the attenuation tank. As such, the proposal complies with Policy EN18 and is considered acceptable subject to the conditions recommended above.

Legal Agreement

7.47. The overarching infrastructure Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) allows for necessary contributions to be secured to ensure that the impacts of a scheme are properly mitigated. The following obligations would be sought and as set out in the recommendation above:

- To secure affordable housing on site consisting of fourteen units (30% provision) on site, to be 5 one bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent, 5 Two bedroom units of Reading Affordable Rent and 4 one bedroom units of First Homes. Reading Affordable Rent (RAR) tenure would be capped at 70% of market rent as per published RAR levels. The Housing Development team have confirmed that the offer is acceptable.

- In the event that a Registered (affordable housing) Provider is not secured for the provision of the Affordable Housing on site, the units to be offered to the Council to be provided by the Council as Affordable Housing. In the event that neither a Registered Provider or the Council can come forward to provide Affordable Housing on-site, the developer to pay to the Council a default sum equivalent to 12.5% of the Gross Development Value of the development for provision of Affordable Housing elsewhere in the Borough. To be calculated (the mean average) from two independent RICS valuations to be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to first occupation of any market housing unit. In this event, the sum to be paid prior to first occupation of any market housing unit and index-linked from

the date of valuation.

- Zero carbon offset financial contribution of £2,949.72.

- Employment, Skills and Training and Construction financial contribution of £8,820.75.

8. Equality implications

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9. Conclusion & planning balance

9.1 As with all applications considered by the Local Planning Authority, the application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

9.2 Any harmful impacts of the proposed development are required to be weighed against the benefits in the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. Having gone through this process officers consider that the benefits of the scheme in providing housing, affordable housing, redeveloping an underused brownfield site and providing a sustainable development would be sufficient to recommend the proposals for approval.

9.3 It is considered that officers have applied a suitable planning balance when reaching this conclusion. As such, this application is recommended for Approval.

Appendix 2

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL **ITEM NO. 12**
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 4 October 2023

Ward: Katesgrove
Application No.: 230814
Address: 9 Upper Crown Street, RG1 2SS
Proposals: Demolition of existing buildings and structures, associated re-use of frame with basement level used for car parking and servicing, erection of 3 no. residential blocks containing 46 no. dwellings above, associated parking (including replacement), access works and landscaping, relocation of substations and associated works to rear of Indigo apartments to facilitate pedestrian access.
Applicant: Irongate Property (Reading) Ltd

RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main agenda report

1. Natural Environment Team Consultation Response

1.1 Additional comments from the Natural Environment team were received since publication of the Committee Report. They can be summarised as:

- Additional green space has been provided which is an improvement
- The proposed tree species are generally acceptable, but trees for purely "ornamental" value should be avoided
- There would be a significant net gain in green spaces as a result of the proposal, which is positive
- A condition to secure the landscaping is proposed

2. Additional Plans and Elevations

2.1 Following publication of the committee report, a request has been made for more plans and elevations showing the scheme to be included, which are provided below.

Proposed Site Plan

South Elevation: Upper Crown Street

North Elevation: Rear Access Road

East Elevation: Access Road

Proposed Site Plan – Ground Floor

1 to 17
Priors Court
Sub Station
Access Stairs
Obscured Windows
1b 1p
1b 1p
2b 3p
Building 3
2b 4p
2b 4p
1b 2p
1b 2p
2b 3p
1b 2p
1b 2p
1b 2p
1b 2p
Building 2
Access Stairs
lawn
Visitor Cycle Spaces
36 Spaces
Cycle Store
garden
Obscured Windows
garden
garden
garden
access ramp
Substation
3b 5p
3b 5p
3b 5p
3b 5p
Building 1
11
UPPER CROWN STREET

View from Upper Crown Street / Southampton Street Junction

Upper Crown Street Approach

Upper Crown Street: Pedestrian entrance

Upper Crown Street: Vehicle entrance

Proposals from Upper Crown Street

Pedestrian entrance

Main square looking north

Main square looking south

Case Officer: Thomas Bradfield

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Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**
Ward	Norcot
Planning Application Reference:	PL/26/0550
Site Address:	Wilson Primary School, Wilson Road, Reading, RG30 2RW
Proposed Development	Full planning application for a new storage building in school playground (retrospective).
Applicant	Reading Borough Council
Report author	Gary Miles
Deadline:	23 July 2026
Recommendations	Grant planning permission, subject to conditions as follows
Conditions	1. *AP1 – Approved Plans* 2. *M3 – Materials As specified*
Informatives	1. *I1 – Positive and Proactive*

1. Executive summary

1.1. The school has limited storage space for outdoor equipment. The application is for a storeroom in the playground of the Primary School for the storage of playground equipment, toys and games and school playground paraphernalia. The application is part retrospective as the development is nearly completed other than external rendering and painting. The proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its effect on the character of the area and the effect on neighbouring amenity.

1.2. The proposal is recommended for approval subject to the conditions as outlined above.

2. Introduction and site description

2.1. The retrospective application for a new storeroom in the playground of Wilson Primary School. To create a purpose-built storeroom to store playground equipment etc.

2.2. Wilson Primary opened in 1904; the redbrick Edwardian buildings were opened for the first time in 1905. Wilson Primary School retains many original features and is a good example of buildings dating back to that era. The school is not listed or located within a conservation area. The school is located between Wilson Road and Tofrek Terrace, made up of a series
of brick-built buildings mainly fronting Wilson Road, whilst the playground areas lie between the school buildings and the rear of the gardens of the properties in Tofrek Terrace.

2.3. The application is required to be determined by the Planning Applications Committee as the land is owned by Reading Borough Council and the Council is the applicant.

Site visit photographs 21st May 2026

Looking north

Looking northwest

Looking west

3 The Proposal

3.1 REG3 (retrospective) planning permission is sought for a storeroom measuring 3.37m long by 2.91m wide by 2.5m in height. The development is constructed from a single skin of concrete blocks. The storeroom has no windows, has double wooden ledged and braced doors painted white to match the door frame. The roof is an EPDM rubber flat roof with white facia board and black gutter and downpipe. The store will be finished in render/painted to match existing walls of the adjacent area.

3.2 Plans received:

Drawing no: 101-Pre Existing Plan, dated Apr 26
Drawing no: 102-Site Layout Plan - As-Built, dated Apr 26
Drawing no: 103-Building Dimensions - As-Built, dated Apr 26
Drawing no: 104-Elevations – As-built, dated Apr 26
Drawing no: 105-Site Block Plan – As Existing, dated Apr 26
Drawing no: 106-Block Plan – As-built
Drawing no: 107-Location Plan, dated Apr 26
Received by the LPA 24th April 2026

4 Relevant Planning History

Nothing of relevance.

5 Consultations

5.1 Internal Consultations

None – it was not considered relevant to consult internal consultees on an application of this scale.

5.2 External Consultations

A planning notice was attached to the school railings outside the main entrance in Wilson Road whilst second notice was placed on a streetlamp column in Tofrek Terrace outside the pedestrian school entrance on 21st May 2026 and left in place for the statutory 21-day consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

6. Legal context

6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.2 The NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.3 Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

Local Plan Update

6.4 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

6.5 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application and listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

7. Appraisal

7.1. **i) Character and appearance**

Policy CC7 sets out relevant considerations for design.

The development is functional in appearance its small scale and unobtrusive siting mean that it is considered acceptable. The structure will be finished in render and painted to match the existing adjacent wall colour to fit with its surroundings

7.2 The proposal is considered compliant with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

ii) Residential Amenity

7.3 Policy CC8 states that a development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties. The following points have been considered as part of this application:

7.4 The structure is set down lower than the high boundary wall which runs between the school and the rear gardens of residential properties in Tofrek Terrace and which screens the development from neighbours. The structure is not considering overbearing, nor harmful to privacy. The structure does not harm neighbouring amenity and is therefore in accordance with Policy CC8.

8. Equality implications

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this application.

9. Conclusion & Planning Balance

9.1 The application is required to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

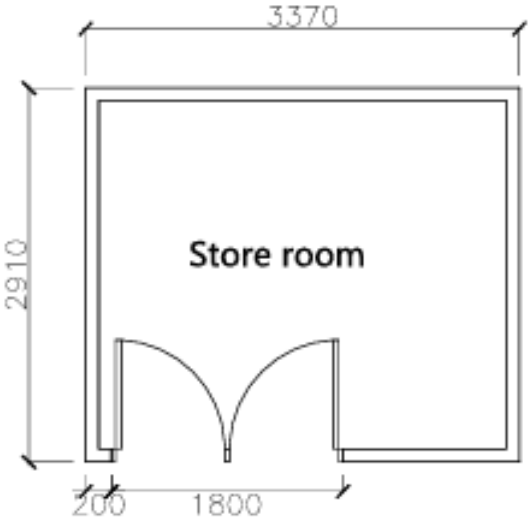
9.2 The application for the retrospective storeroom is not considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing School or the wider area. The storeroom is not considered harmful to the amenity of neighbours. The proposal is considered to be acceptable and is in accordance with policies within the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and NPPF.

Plans

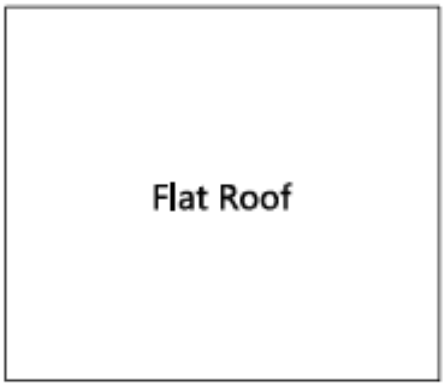
Location Plan

Block Plan

Floor & Roof Plan As Built

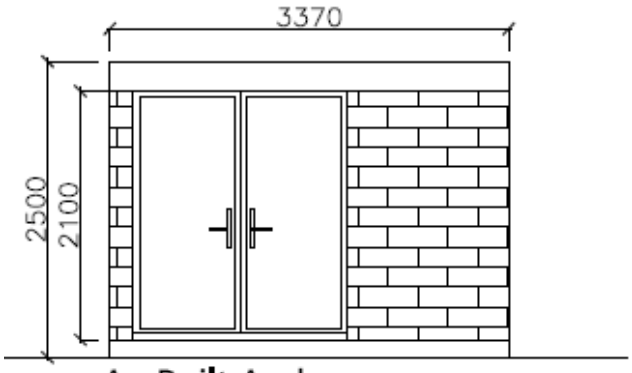


As-Built And
Proposed Plan

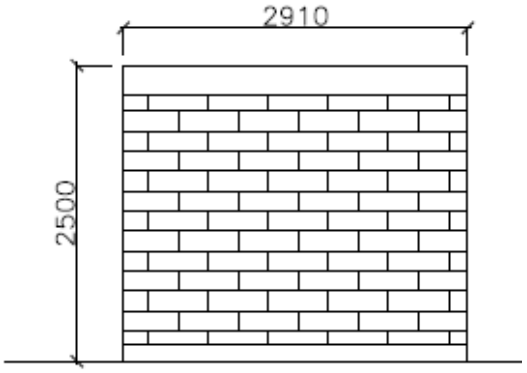


As-Built And
Proposed Roof Plan

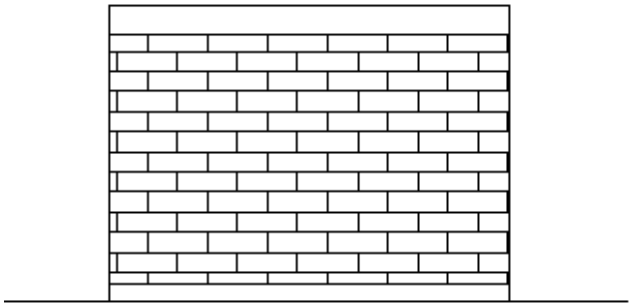
Elevations As Built



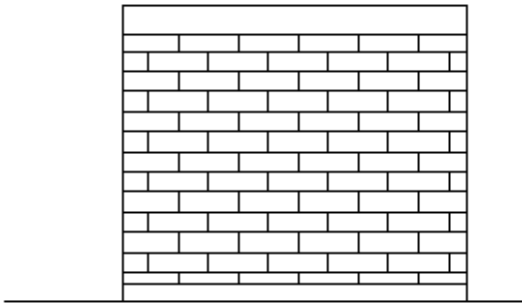
As-Built And
Proposed Front Elevation



As-Built And
Proposed Side Elevation



As-Built And
Proposed Rear Elevation



As-Built And
Proposed Side Elevation

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Planning Applications Committee

22 July 2026

Title	**PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT**
Ward	Thames Ward
Planning Application Reference:	PL/25/0697 Removal/variation of conditions
Site Address:	Former Gas Holder site, Alexander Turner Close, Reading, RG1 3EA
Proposed Development	Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space without complying with conditions 2 (approved plans), 11 (noise mitigation), 12 (ventilation strategy), 26 (SuDS) and 35 (vehicle parking) of planning permission ref. PL/19/0627 for changes to design, layout, unit mix, vehicle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, noise mitigation, ventilation strategy and energy strategy
Applicant	Mr Joshua Austin
Report author	Matthew Burns
Deadline:	13 week decision date: 22/08/2025 Extension of time date: 31/07/2026
Recommendations	GRANT Variation of conditions of planning permission PL/19/0627 as specified below
Conditions	*All condition number references as per original planning permission decision notice attached as appendix 3 to this report* <u>Varied Conditions as proposed:</u> 2. List of approved plans – varied accordingly to reflect the proposed plans submitted 11. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development implementation of noise mitigation measures – varied to reflect the proposed revised noise assessment and mitigation scheme submitted 12. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development implementation of the ventilation system – varied to reflect the proposed revised strategy submitted 26. Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved SuDS strategy, maintenance and management plan – varied to reflect the proposed revised SuDS scheme submitted 35. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development submission and approval of details of visitor parking spaces and provision of all vehicle parking for each phase prior to occupation of that phase – varied to reflect the revised vehicle parking proposals and phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655

	Other Conditions varied to reflect various approval of details reserved by condition (APC) applications and non-material amendment (NMA) applications that have been approved since the original planning permission was granted: 3. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development submission and approval of cycle parking details for that phase – phased approach introduced following approved of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 4. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development implementation of the vehicle access serving that phase – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 5. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development implementation of the approach refuse and recycling stores – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 7. Condition requiring submission and approval of details of surface water infiltration changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/23/1852 15. Prior to occupation of Buildings A and B provision of the lifts serving each building – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 17. Condition requiring submission and approval of contamination assessment changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/23/1060 18. Condition requiring submission and approval of contamination remediation assessment changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/24/0361 21. Condition requiring submission and approval of an arboricultural method statement changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC re. PL/23/1546 22. Prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level submission and approval of a habitat enhancement scheme (including Peregrine Falcon platform) – trigger for submission of details changed to prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1544 23. Prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level submission and approval of scheme for re-use of 1887 cast iron item - trigger for submission of details changed to prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level following approval of NMA ref PL/23/1545 24. Condition requiring submission and approval of a construction method statement changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/23/1585 25 i). Condition requiring submission and approval of a scheme to provide an ecological buffer zone along the bank of the River Kennet during construction changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/24/0550. Condition 25 split into parts i) and ii) following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1544 25 ii). Prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level submission and approval of a scheme to provide, maintain and manage an ecological buffer zone along the bank of the River Kennet during occupation of the development – trigger for submission of details changed to prior to commencement beyond foundation level following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1544 27. Prior to occupation of each phase of the development implementation of the approved SuDS scheme for that phase (as approved under condition 26) – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655

	28. Condition requiring submission and approval of a land gas assessment changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/23/1565 29. Condition requiring submission and approval of a land gas remediation strategy changed to a compliance condition following approval of APC ref. PL/23/1589 31. Prior to commencement of development of any phase beyond foundation level submission and approval of an external lighting scheme for that phase - phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 32. Prior to commencement of development of any phase beyond foundation level submission and approval of a glint and glare study for that phase – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 33. Prior to commencement of development of any phase beyond foundation level submission and approval of a hard and soft landscaping scheme for that phase – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 34. Prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level submission and approval of a scheme of materials for all external surfaces for that phase – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 36. Prior to occupation of each phase submission and approval of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan for that phase – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 38. Prior to occupation of each phase submission and approval of details of boundary treatments for that phase – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 39. Prior to occupation of any part of the development submission and approval of details of all on-site play facilities and provision of all play facilities prior to occupation of 50% of the dwellings – trigger for provision of play facilities changed to prior to occupation of 50% of the dwellings following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 40. Prior to occupation of each phase submission and approval of details of measure to prevent pests and vermin accessing the bin stores for that phase - phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 41. Prior to occupation of any part of the development submission and approval of details of entrance signage and sculptural elements and implementation prior to occupation of 50% of the dwellings – trigger for implementation changed to prior to occupation of 50% of the dwellings following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 42. Prior to occupation of each phase submission and approval of as-built SAP assessment for each dwelling - phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 43. Prior to occupation of any part of the development submission and approval of details of an electric vehicle charging scheme and no phase of the development to be occupied until the scheme for that phase has been implemented - phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 44. Prior to commencement of development of any phase submission and approval of details of finished floor levels for that phase - phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 45. Prior to occupation of each phase submission and approval of security strategy and no phase to be occupied until the strategy for that phase has been implemented – phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655

	48. Implementation of the development in accordance with phasing plans - phased approach introduced following approval of NMA ref. PL/23/1655 <u>Review of other conditions as per the original permission, for inclusion on the future decision notice (as per Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions) summarised as follows:</u> 6. No construction piling to be carried out unless details first submitted and approved by the LPA – no change 8. Flat roof of the car park not to be used for roof garden or similar amenity area – no change 9. No fixing or installing of miscellaneous item to the external faces or roof of any building without the prior approval from the LPA – no change 10. Provision and maintenance of 7 wheelchair user adaptable units within Buildings A and B – no change 13. Construction, demolition and delivery hours (compliance condition) – no change 14. No burning of construction of green waste on site – no change 16. All demolition to be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season – no change 19. Prior to commencement of construction above foundation level submission and approval of a validation report demonstrating implementation of the approved contamination remediation measures – no change 20. Reporting of any unidentified contamination – no change 30. Prior to occupation of any part of the development submission and approval of validation report demonstrating implementation of the approval land gas remediation measures – no change 37. Prior to occupation of any part of the development implementation of all approved flood mitigation and protection measures – no change 46. Within 5 months of occupation of the 65 dwellings submission and approval of a travel plan – no change 47. Annual review of the travel plan for 5 years from first approval – no change
Informatives	As per the extant planning permission

1. Executive summary

1.1. This application seeks to vary conditions attached to the extant planning permission for the redevelopment of the former Gas Holder site at Alexander Turner Close, which already benefits from an implemented permission for 130 residential dwellings.

1.2. The proposed amendments are primarily required to address updated Building Regulations, fire safety and energy efficiency requirements. The changes include a second stair core and evacuation lift in Building B, revisions to internal layouts, updated parking, cycle parking and refuse arrangements, amendments to landscaping and drainage, and a revised energy strategy removing reliance upon gas combi boilers and instead proposed photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps.

1.3. The development would continue to provide 130 dwellings, retain the approved affordable housing provision secured through the existing Section 106 Agreement, and deliver the same public open space, riverside landscaping and pedestrian connections benefits as the approved scheme.

1.4. Officers consider that the proposed changes would have no unacceptable impacts on design quality, residential amenity, transport, biodiversity, flood risk or the wider character of the area. In particular, the revised energy strategy would significantly improve the environmental performance of the development and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

1.5. Taking account of the Development Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and all material considerations, the proposed amendments are considered acceptable, and planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to revised conditions and the continued application of the existing Section 106 obligations.

2. Introduction and site description

2.1. The application site measures 0.71 hectares and is broadly triangular in shape. It is bounded by the River Kennet to the south and the east, railway lines to the north, which sit on a 3.5-meter-high embankment, and residential development to the west. This includes the Kennet Walk development and the more recent development along Robert Parker Road and Alexander Turner Close.

2.2. The site was formerly occupied by a 33-metre-high Gas Holder, ancillary buildings and a water tower. However, these buildings were demolished under prior approval demolition consent ref. PL/20/1269/DEM in 2022 with the site cleared down to hardstanding.

2.3. The north and south boundaries of the site benefit from existing vegetation, predominately in the form of trees, although the majority of these are situated beyond the application boundary for the site. There is a pedestrian footbridge crossing the River Kennet adjacent to the site, which provides access to New Town. In terms of vehicular access to the site, the only access is from Alexander Turner Close which connects to Robert Parker Road.

2.4. As well as the Grade II Listed New Town Primary School building, which is situated to the south of the site on the opposite side of the river, the railway bridge to the north-east of the Site is also Grade II listed. These and other local heritage assets are given full consideration in the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) which accompanies this application. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area.

2.5. Part of the site falls within the Reading Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to its proximity to the railway line where it passes through the built-up area. The site also falls within Flood Zone 2.

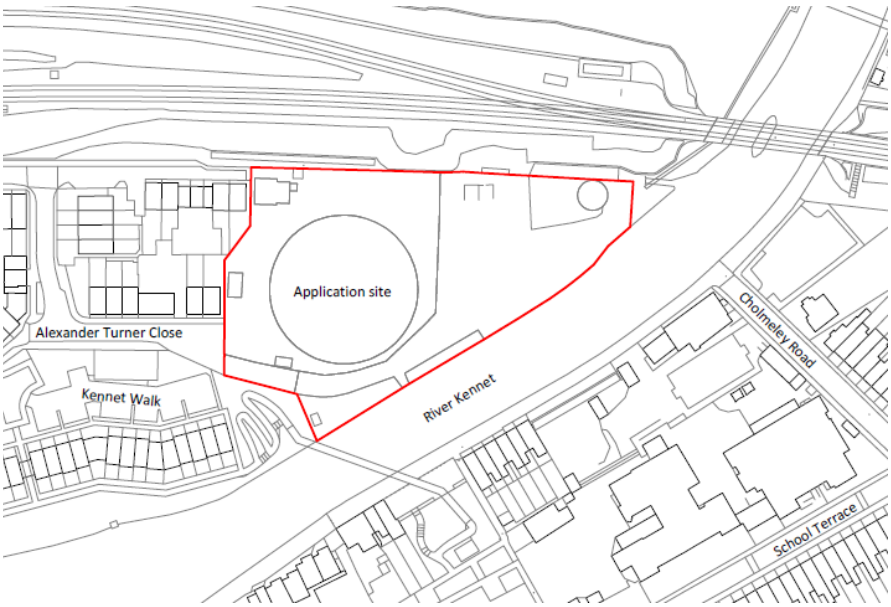


Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

2.6. The site also forms the far eastern corner of the East Side Major Opportunity Area (EMOA) which has been allocated for development as a new community at the eastern fringes of the centre in the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. Within the EMOA the Gas Holder Site is allocated under Policy CR13d (Gas Holder) for residential development of up to

46-70 dwellings which should enhance the character of the mouth of the Kennet and should maximise the potential of the site to be a river gateway to Reading.

2.7 Planning permission ref. PL/19/0627/FUL was granted at the site on 16th July 2021 for d*emolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.* The planning permission was implemented on 8th July 2024 when works to set out the foundations of the access road into the site from Alexander Turner Close were carried out on site. No further works beyond this have progressed at the site since 2024.

2.8 The approved development is for the erection of 3 new buildings at the site ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space. The approved buildings consist of a 5 storey apartment building (Building A) parallel with but set back from the river edge, a taller 9 storey building on the northern boundary incorporating a covered 2 storey car park (Building B) and a 2 storey building (Building C) forming an extension to the existing homes along Alexander Turner Close. 127 car parking spaces would be provided as part of the development.

2.9 A copy of the officer committee report (and update report) to November 2019 Planning Applications Committee with full details of the approved development, including secured s106 obligations as well as the original planning permission decision notice showing the full approved conditions, are attached to this report as appendix 1, 2 and 3.

2.10 Approved Building A comprises 38 market apartments (including 3 wheelchair accessible homes) consisting of 13 x 1-bedroom apartments, 20 x 2-bedroom apartments and 5 x 3-bedroom apartments. Approved Building B comprises 82 units including 4 wheelchair accessible homes) consisting of 35 x 1-bedroom apartments, 45 x 2-bedroom apartments and 2 x 2-bedroom apartments. This includes 3 x 2-bedroom duplexes and 2 x 3-bedroom duplexes at ground floor level which form part of the affordable housing provision. The building is split into two staggered but connected parts with 114 car parking spaces to be provided within the two-level covered car park including accessible and electric charging spaces. Building C comprises solely affordable housing units with 10 to be provided. This consists of 2 apartments (1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom) at ground floor level with 8 x 2-bedroom apartments located at first and second floor level. 13 car parking spaces (including disabled parking) would be located to the front of the building.

2.11 The approved development as a whole provides for a unit mix of 48 x 1-bedroom apartments (36.9%), 74 x 2-bedroom apartments (56.9%) and 8 x 3-bedroom apartments (6.2%). All dwellings would have access to private amenity space. In Buildings A and B this would be in the form of the balconies or terraces at ground floor whilst the ground floor units in Building C would have private rear gardens. The section 106 legal agreement linked to the extant planning permission secures provision of a total of 15 of the dwellings (12 x 2 bed units and 3 x3 bed units) as affordable housing units equating to 12% of the total number of dwellings proposed. This level of affordable housing provision was agreed when the extant planning permission was granted following independent review of a viability appraisal submitted with the application which verified that it was not viable for the development to provide a policy compliant (30%) level of affordable housing and following agreement for a deferred payment mechanism with the applicant that would ensure the Council shared in any improvements in the viability position of the development (also secured as part of the existing s106 legal agreement).

2.12 The approved design for all three buildings proposes to use red brick, with detailing and accents in grey and white brick. Dark grey materials are used for window frames and other features such as metal balustrades and metal gable pitched roofs to each building. The design approach is influenced by the industrial character of the site and surrounding area. In terms of context within the site, Building A relates to the river frontage and the access road, Building B relates to the open space and the railway line and Building C relates to

the access road and the existing development to the west of the site. The development has been designed to reduce in height to the west where the site abuts the existing terraced houses and to rise in height to the east to mark a 'gateway' into Reading.

2.13 Vehicular access into the site is from Alexander Turner Close and a network of pedestrian routes would run through the development site and notably the approved development includes provision of a physical connection to the existing footbridge over the Kennet in the south west corner of the site.

2.14 The approved development also includes a 520m2 public community garden, located between Buildings A and B and the river frontage. This area includes 2 x 50m2 play areas (to Local Area for Play specifications) and space for informal play, native planting and sheltered seating by the river. A viewing platform is also to be provided that projects out into the river and provides informal seating areas. A nature corner is proposed as a sunken area to the east of Building B, which provides an ecologically diverse area of approximately 160m2.

2.15 A selection of the approved plans and visuals for this extant planning permission is shown below:

Figure 2 – Approved Site Plan

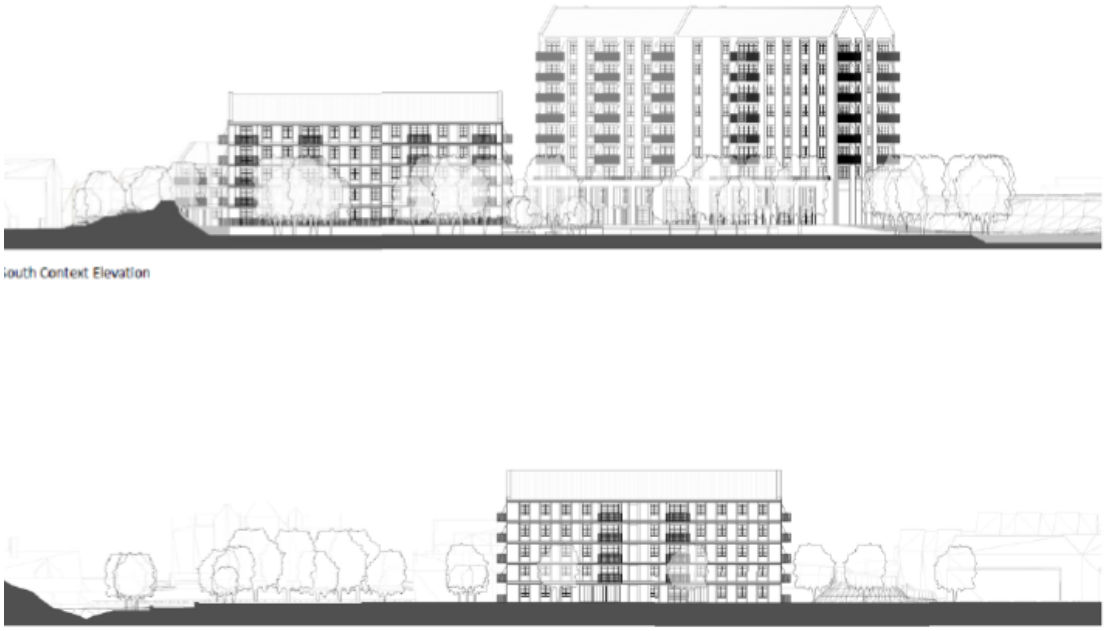


Figure 3 – Approved South Elevations (viewed from River) (Buildings A and B shown top and Building A below)

Figure 4 - Approved East and west Elevations (Buildings A and C shown top, Buildings A, B and C shown below)

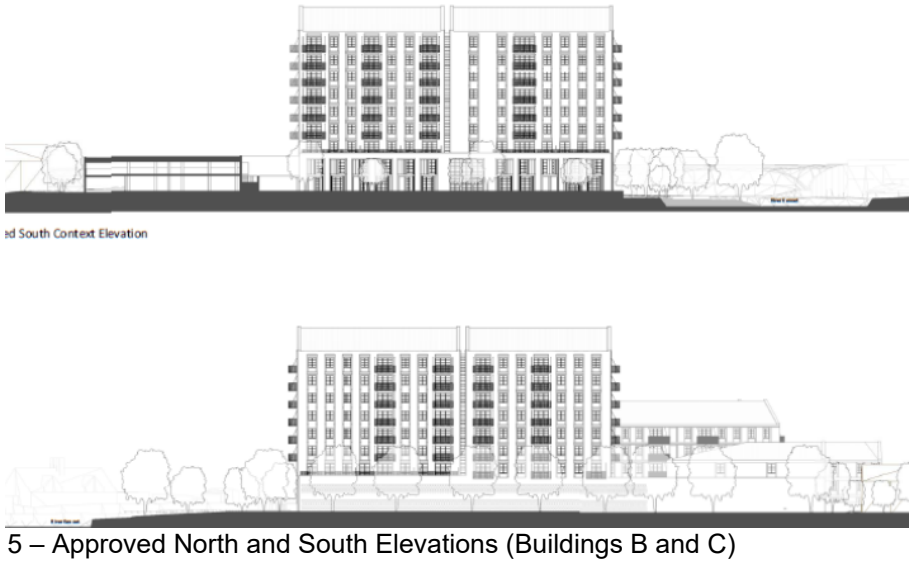
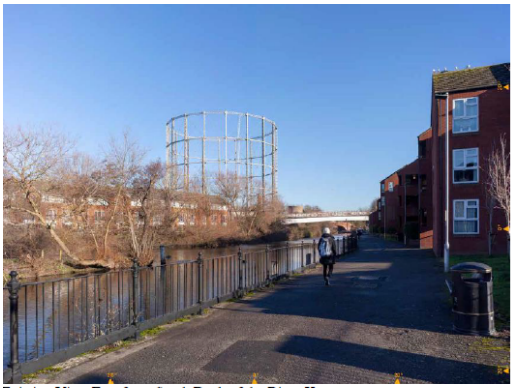


Figure 5 – Approved North and South Elevations (Buildings B and C)

Figure 6 – Approved East and West Elevations (Buildings A and B)

Figure 7 – Approved North and South Elevations (Buildings B and C top, Buildings A, B and C below)

Existing View West from South Bank of River Kennet



Existing View East from South Bank of the River Kennet

Proposed View West From South Bank of River Kennet

Proposed View East from South Bank of the River Kennet

Existing View North from Cholmeley Road and Grade II Listed Newtown Primary School

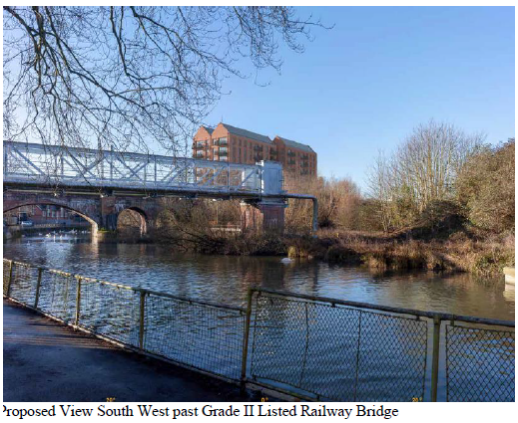
Existing View North from Cumberland Road

Proposed View North from Cholmeley Road and Grade II Listed Newtown Primary School

Proposed View North from Cumberland Road

Existing View South West past Grade II Listed Railway Bridge

Existing View North West from Liverpool Road


Proposed View South West past Grade II Listed Railway Bridge

Proposed View North West from Liverpool Road

Proposed Visual Looking Directly North towards the Application site from Kennet Side across the River

Proposed Visual Looking East From Alexander Turner Close at the Entrance to the Site

Proposed Visual Looking North West from the River Bank within the site

Figure 8 – Existing and Proposed Visuals of the Approved Development

2.16 As per the Council's Scheme of Delegation the application is required to be determined by Planning Applications Committee given it relates to a s73 variation of conditions application of a planning permission for a major category development.

3. The Proposal

2.1 The application seeks to vary the approved plans condition (condition no.2) attached to planning permission ref. PL/19/0627 under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act), as well as conditions 11 (noise mitigation), 12 (air quality mitigation), 26 (SuDS) and 35 (vehicle parking) for changes to the design, layout, unit mix, vehicle parking, refuse storage, landscaping, noise mitigation and ventilation strategy and energy strategy of the approved development.

2.17 The application explains that the proposed changes are sought in order to comply with latest Building Regulations and the Building Safety Act as well as latest energy efficiency and fire safety legislation and requirements which have emerged since planning permission for the development was granted.

2.18 More specifically the proposed changes to the approved development include:

- Introduction of second stair core and fire evacuation lift in Building B and minor associated internal changes to the configuration of this building. This results in an increase in the width of the building at first floor and above by 3.5m to accommodate the additional stair core and lift and the west elevation of Building B projecting further over the single storey part of the covered car park to the east and provision of an additional column of windows to serve the stair core. The height and ground floor footprint of Building B and its (and of all buildings within the development) would not be increased and would remain as approved.
- Addition of lift overruns to the roof of Building B to accommodate the new lift cores.
- The internal access road length has been extended by 10m into the site to reduce the distance for Fire Tenders to Building B
- Reduction and increase in floor space of 49 dwellings within Building B as a result of internal reconfiguration of the building to accommodate the additional stair and lift cores
- Reduction in the floor space of 3 dwellings within Building C to adhere to Nationally Described Space Standards storage requirements.
- Change to the approved dwelling mix of the development as a result of the above changes to the size of units within Buildings B and C from 48 x 1 bedroom apartments (36.9%), 74 x 2 bedroom apartments (56.9%) and 8 x 3 bedroom apartments (6.2%) as approved to 48 x 1 bedroom apartments (36.9%), 73 x 2 bedroom apartments (56.15%) and 9 x 3 bedroom apartments (6.92%).
- Re-configuration of cycle stores for each building.
- The approved electric vehicle charging spaces relocated from within the covered car park, with the 12 approved external spaces to the front of Building C now proposed to be the electric vehicle charging spaces.
- Changes to the approved mechanical ventilation system to instead provide natural smoke ventilation with louvres and roof vents and ventilation shafts added to stair and lift cores and to the covered car park and part of the car park roof removed to improve natural smoke ventilation;
- Loss of 2sqm of green roof as a result of partial removal of the flat roof from the car park but with mitigation for this proposed in the form of planting of 8 additional trees within the site
- Introduction of decentralised energy sources to the development to replace the approved gas combi boilers. Photovoltaic Panels proposed to be added to the roofs of the buildings and exhaust Air Source Heat Pumps proposed for each dwelling to provide hot water with heating provided by electric panel heaters.
- Reduction by 5 spaces of the total number of car parking spaces to be provided within the development from 127 to 121 and number of electric vehicle charging spaces reduced from 13 to 12 (10% of total number of spaces to be provided) as a result of the relocation of electric vehicle charging spaces from the covered car park to external parts of the site and need to accommodate sprinkler tank within the car park.
- Minor change to access to car park
- Minor changes to external landscape layout to facilitate direct access to bin stores and the extension to the access road within the site necessitating relocation of 5 trees to be provided as part of the approved development to alternative locations within the site
- The bin stores have been amended to all buildings to accommodate food waste bins. The bin store to Building A has been amended to provide a second access door and dropped kerb and the location of the refuse stores in Buildings B and C amended to ensure the distances from the stores to the collection point does not exceed 10m.

2.19 The table below (figure 9) details the full range of proposed changes to the approved development:

	Category of Change	Change Proposed	Reason for Change
Block A	Fire	Evacuation Lift added, Lift Lobby requiring natural smoke ventilation riser sizes enhanced, and chimney added above habitable floor level.	To comply with BS9991
	Energy	Substation at ground floor level has been replaced with a bike store	To ensure substation and LV switch room can be adjacently located
		Service intake riser has been added	In line with the revised energy strategy
		Photovoltaic Panels added to the roof	To comply with Building Regulations Part L
	Maintenance	Eves / valley gulleys and access hatch added to the roof	To enable maintenance access for the roof and photovoltaic panels
Block B	Fire	Electric vehicle (EV) parking relocated externally	To comply with Building Regulations Part B which restricts EV parking spaces in undercroft areas
		Road length has been extended	To comply with distance requirements from the Block B fire hydrant in line with Building Regulations Part B
		Sprinkler tank has been added below the car park surface level	To comply with Building Regulations Part B
		Additional louvres added to the car park and car park roof reduced	To enable natural ventilation of the car park
		Staircore reconfigured to provide protected escape staircase and natural smoke ventilation to stair wells added	To comply with BS9991
		An additional staircore and evacuation lift and protected lobby has been added	To comply with BS9991 for apartment buildings over 18 metres

	Category of Change	Change Proposed	Reason for Change
		Unit B001 enhanced from 88 sq m to 113 sq m	To accommodate the additional staircore which is required by BS9991 for buildings over 18 metres
		Units B208, B308, B408, B508, B608, B708 and B808 (all 2 bed apartments) enhanced from 71 sq m to 72 sq m	To accommodate the additional staircore / evacuation lift which is required by BS9991 for buildings over 18 metres
		Units B202, B203, B302, B303, B402, B403, B502, B503, B602, B603, B702, B703, B802, B803 (all 2 bed apartments) enhanced from 71 sq m to 73 sq m	To accommodate travel distances required by BS9991 for buildings over 18 metres
		Units B209, B309, B409, B509, B609, B709, B809 (2 bed apartments) reduced from 71 sq m to 50 sq m (1 bed apartments)	To accommodate the additional staircore/ evacuation lift which is required by BS9991 for buildings over 18 metres
		Units B207, B307, B407, B507, B607, B707 and B807 changed from 1 bed apartments (50 sq m) to 2 bed apartments (71 sq m)	To accommodate the additional staircore / evacuation lift which is required by BS9991 for buildings over 18 metres
		Units B201, B204, B301, B304, B401, B404, B501, B504, B601, B604, B701, B704, B801 and B804 reduced from 72 sq m to 71 sq m	To accommodate the additional staircore / evacuation lift which is required by BS9991
		Evacuation Lift incorporated, lift lobby requiring natural smoke ventilation, riser sizes enhanced, chimney added above habitable floor level, and lobbied residential corridors have been added	To comply with BS9991
	Energy	Cold water room has been repositioned under the car park ramp	To ensure the weight of the tank is at ground level and to enable the refuse strategy to be compliant with British Standards
		The Coms room has been relocated adjacent to the second staircore and plant has been added to the roof	To ensure the M&E strategy works
		Photovoltaic panels added to the roof of the car park and roof of Block B	To comply with Building Regulations Part L
	Storage	The bike store which is surplus from Block C has been reallocated to the Block B car park	To ensure substation and LV switch room can be adjacently located
		The refuse areas have been reconfigured	To accommodate the second staircore required by Building Regulations Part B for buildings over 18 metres and tenant access added to ensure compliance to British Standards

	Category of Change	Change Proposed	Reason for Change
	Maintenance	An access hatch has been added from the car park to the roof, a second refuse access point has been added adjacent to Block B, eves / valley gulleys and access hatches have been added to the roof	To improve maintenance for the roof and for the photovoltaic panels
Block C	Fire	Natural smoke ventilation added to the staircore	To comply with Building Regulations Part B
		Angled corner of the building recessed	To enable escape route from Block B Car Park in line with Building Regulations Part B
		External car parking bays converted to EV parking bays	To comply with fire requirement in Building Regulations Part B to exclude EV parking spaces from undercroft areas
	Energy	Bike storage area reduced and Low Voltage (LV) room added	To ensure substation and LV switch room can be adjacently located
		Service risers have been added within the staircores	To ensure the M&E strategy works
	Storage	Unit C002 (3 bed apartment) reduced from 106 sq m to 102 sq m	To comply with NSS storage requirements
		Unit C102 (2 bed apartment) reduced from 70 sq m to 65 sq m	To comply with NSS storage requirements
		Unit C101 (2 bed apartment) reduced from 70 sq m to 69 sq m	To comply with NSS storage requirements
Layout	EV parking	EV parking spaces moved externally	To comply with fire requirement to exclude EV parking spaces from undercroft areas
	Footways	Footways and road widths adjusted to meet minimum requirements	To accommodate external EV parking spaces
	Landscaping	Minor adjustments to the landscaping	To accommodate external EV parking spaces

Figure 9 – Table of Proposed Changes

2.20 It is pertinent to note that the application does not propose any changes to the approved total number of dwellings which would remain as 130 nor to the quantum, tenure or mix of affordable housing secured as part of the s106 agreement linked to the extant planning permission which remains as 12 x 2 bed and 3 x 3 bed dwellings (5 x affordable rent tenure dwellings and 10 x shared ownership tenure dwellings). The existing s106 agreement stipulates within in it that it would also be linked to any s73 variation of condition planning permission that is granted.

2.22 <u>Plans and Documents Submitted:</u>

Drawing Title	Approved Drawing (PP ref. 190627)	Proposed Drawing Number
Existing Site Plan	E0-010	-
Site Location Plan	P0-001 P	-
Proposed Site Plan	16035 P0-010 P1	16035 P0-010 P3
Proposed Plan – Ground Floor	16035 P0-100 P1	16035 P0-100 P6
Proposed Plan – First Floor	16035 P0-101 P1	16035 P0-101 P5
Proposed Plan – Second Floor	16035 P0-102 P	16035 P0-102 P4
Proposed Plan – Third Floor	16035 P0-103 P	16035 P0-103 P3
Proposed Plan – Fourth Floor	16035 P0-104 P	16035 P0-104 P3
Proposed Plan – Fifth to Eighth Floor	16035 P0-105 P	16035 P0-105 P3
Proposed Plan – Roof	16035 P0-109 P	16035 P0-109 P3
Proposed Plans – Block A	16035 P1-100 P1	16035 P1-100 P3
Proposed Plan – Block B Ground Floor	16035 P1-200 P1	16035 P1-200 P3
Proposed Plan – Block B First Floor	16035 P1-201 P	16035 P1-201 P3
Proposed Plan – Block B Second Floor	16035 P1-202 P	16035 P1-202 P2

Drawing Title	Approved Drawing (PP ref. 190627)	Proposed Drawing Number
Proposed Plan – Block B Third Floor	16035 P1-203 P	16035 P1-203 P2
Proposed Plan – Block B Fourth to Eighth Floor	16035 P1-204 P	16035 P1-204 P2
Proposed Plans – Block C	16035 P1-300 P	16035 P1-300 P3
Proposed Sections	16035 P2-201 P	16035 P2-201 P3
Proposed Context Elevations – Block A	16035 P3-011 P1	16035 P3-011 P3
Proposed Context Elevations – Block A (2)	16035 P3-012 P1	16035 P3-012 P3
Proposed Context Elevations – Block B	16035 P3-013 P2	16035 P3-013 P4
Proposed Context Elevations – Block B (2)	16035 P3-014 P2	16035 P3-014 P4
Proposed Context Elevations – Block C	16035 P3-015 P1	16035 P3-015 P3
Proposed Context Elevations – Block C (2)	16035 P3-016 P1	16035 P3-016 P3
Proposed Elevations – Block A South and East	16035 P3-101 P	16035 P3-101 P2
Proposed Elevations – Block A North and West	16035 P3-102 P	16035 P3-102 P2
Proposed Elevations – Block B - South	16035 P3-201 P1	16035 P3-201 P3
Proposed Elevations – Block B - North	16035 P3-202 P	16035 P3-202 P2
Proposed Elevations – Block B – East and West	16035 P3-203 P1	16035 P3-203 P2
Proposed Elevations – Block C – South and North	16035 P3-301 P	16035 P3-301 P2
Proposed Elevations – Block C – West	16035 P3-302 P	16035 P3-302 P3
Proposed Area Plan – Ground Floor	-	16035 P0-400 P2
Proposed Area Plan – First Floor	-	16035 P0-401 P3
Proposed Area Plan – Second Floor	-	16035 P0-402 P3
Proposed Area Plan – Third to Fourth Floor	-	16035 P0-403 P3
Proposed Area Plan – Fifth to Eight Floor	-	16035 P0-405 P3

Drawing Title	Approved Drawing (PP ref. 190627)	Proposed Drawing Number
Hardworks Strategy Plan	716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-201 P2	716-FH-01-XX-00-DP-L-201 P4
Levels Strategy Plan	716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-301 P1	716-FH-01-XX-00-DP-L-301 P2
Softworks Strategy Plan	716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-401 P2	716-FH-01-XX-00-DP-L-401 P3
Illustrative Masterplan	716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-101 P1	716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-101 P2
Landscape Base – Additional Trees	n/a	716-FHA

4. Planning history

4.1. Pl/19/0627/FUL - Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space. Granted on 16th July 2021 (with linked s106 agreement).

4.2 PL/20/1269/DEM - Application for prior notification of proposed demolition of gas holder and ancillary structures - Granted on 20th January 2021.

4.3 PL/23/1060/APC – Application for approval of details reserved by condition 17 (Ground Investigation) of planning permission ref. 190627 - Approved on 24th October 2023.

4.4 PL/24/0361/APC – Application for approval of details reserved by condition 18 (Land Remediation Strategy) of planning permission ref. 190627 – Approved on 5th July 2023.

4.5 PL/23/1544/NMA - Non-material amendment to the wording of Condition 22 (Habitat Enhancement Scheme) and Condition 25 (Ecological Buffer Zone) of planning permission 190627 to amend the triggers for submission of the details required by both conditions – Agreed on 8th Apil 2024.

4.6 PL/23/1545/NMA - Non-material amendment to the wording of Condition 23 (re-use of 1887 cast iron item) of planning permission ref. 190627 – Agreed on 13th March 2024.

4.7 PL/23/1546/APC - Approval of details under condition 21 (Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement) of planning permission ref. 190627 – Approved on 16th May 2024.

4.8 PL/23/1565/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 28 (Gas site investigation) of planning permission ref. 190627 – Approved on 3rd April 2024.

4.9 PL/23/1585/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 24 (Construction and Demolition Method Statement) of application 190627 – Approved on 4th July 2024

4.10 PL/23/1589/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 29 (Land Gas Protection Scheme) of planning permission ref. 190627 – Approved on 3rd April 2024

4.11 PL/23/1655/NMA - Non material amendment to planning permission ref. 190627 (Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space) to amend the description of development and wording of conditions 2 (approved plans), 3 (cycle parking), 4 (vehicle access), 5 (refuse storage), 11 (noise mitigation), 12 (ventilation), 15 (lifts), 27 (SuDS implementation), 31 (external lighting), 32 (glint and glare study), 33 (hard and soft landscaping), 34 (materials), 35 (vehicle parking), 36 (landscape and ecological management plan), 38 (boundary treatment), 39 (on site play facilities), 40 (refuse storage – pest mitigation), 41 (entrance artwork), 42 (SAP – as built), 43 (electric vehicle charging), 44 (floor levels), 45 (CCTV) and addition of new condition 48 (phasing), to allow for phased implementation of the development – Agreed on 23rd April 2024

4.12 PL/23/1852/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by Conditions 7 (Surface Water Infiltration) and 26 (Sustainable Drainage Strategy) of planning permission ref. 190627 – Approved on 8th April 2024.

4.13 PL/24/0303/NMA - Proposed non material amendment to planning permission ref. 190627 (Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space) for proposed changes to design to address updated Building Regulations on fire safety, changes to the energy strategy for the development and changes to unit mix – Withdrawn on 22nd July 2024

4.14 PL/24/0550/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by condition 25(i) (Ecological Protection Plan) of planning permission ref. 190627 (as amended by non-material amendment ref. 231544) – Approved on 31st May 2024

4.15 PL/25/1045/APC - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Condition 19 (Contamination Remediation Validation Report) of planning permission ref. PL/19/0627 – Under Consideration.

5. Consultations

5.1 Environment Agency – No objection, subject to the conditions attached to the original planning permission being re-applied to any varied permission.

5.2 HSE Fire Safety – Are content with the fire safety design of the proposals. Identify some detailed matters that the applicant will need to consider during the later regulatory stages of the development design.

5.2 RBC Transport – No objection, subject to the conditions attached to the original planning permission being updated to reflect the revised proposals and reapplied to any varied planning permission.

5.3 RBC Natural Environment – No objection, subject to the conditions attached to the original planning permission being updated to include the additional tree planting and reapplied to any varied planning permission.

5.4 RBC Ecology Adviser – No objection, subject to the conditions attached to the original planning permission being reapplied to any varied planning permission.

5.5 RBC Environmental Protection – No objection, subject to the conditions attached to the original planning permission being updated to incorporate the additional noise mitigation measure proposed and reapplied to any varied planning permission.

5.6 RBC Waste Services – No objection to the proposed revised refuse stores and collection arrangements for development.

Public Notification

5.7 A site notice was displayed at the application site on 28th May 2025.

5.8 2 x representations have been received with is summarised as follows:

- Robert Parker Road has a problem with loud car noise at antisocial hours due to speeding, this will become worse if the road is to service an additional 130 residential units and additional speed humps to Rover Parker Road should be provided.
  Officer comment: The development is already subject to an extant and implemented planning permission; this application considers only the proposed changes to that approved planning permission. The implemented consent is for 130 new residential units, and this application does not re-open consideration of matters that have already obtained planning permission and to which changes are not sought as part of this application.
- Is the peregrine box that is proposed to be provided with the development still proposed.
  Officer comment: Yes, this requirement is secured under condition 22 of the extant planning permission and is not proposed to be changed as part of this variation application. This condition would be carried across and replicated as part of any s73 variation of condition planning permission that is issued.

6. Legal context

6.1 Section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

6.2. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

6.3. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

6.4. In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.5. Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

NPPF December 2024 (as amended February 2025)
2. Achieving sustainable development
4. Decision-making
8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
9. Promoting sustainable transport
11. Making effective use of land
12. Achieving well-designed places
15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN2: Areas of Archaeological Significance
EN8: Waterspaces
EN9: Provision of Open Space
EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
EN17: Noise Generating Equipment
EN18: Flooding and Drainage
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H5: Standards for New Housing
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
CR1: Definition of Central Reading
CR2: Design in Central Reading
CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading
CR6: Living in Central Reading
CR13 – East Side Major Opportunity Area
CR13d - Gas Holder Site

Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Affordable Housing (2021)
Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
Employment, Skills and Training (2013)

Local Plan Update

6.6 The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. The submission draft of the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) was submitted on 9th May 2025

and examined earlier this year. At the time of writing, the examination-in-public of the partial update to the local plan is in the process of taking place. Stage 1 hearings were held virtually on 11th and 12th November 2025. Stage 2 hearings took place in February 2026.

6.7 Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

6.8 Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to these applications listed above is that, other than Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be 'out of date'. Policy H1 is out of date because the Council is not currently meeting its annual housing targets for general housing as calculated using the standard method in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (as required now Policy H1 is out of date) or for the provision of Affordable Housing.

6.9 Whilst at this time, the examination of the LPPU has reached a fairly advanced stage the weight that can be attributed to policies within the LPPU depends on the degree to which modifications are proposed to relevant policies. Where it is considered any updated policies within the LPPU that are relevant to the changes to the approved development proposed by this s73 variation of conditions application can be attributed significant weight this will be outlined in this report if relevant.

6.10 It is noted that paragraph 11 of the NPPF states: "d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

6.11 Paragraph 11 is often called 'the tilted balance'. With regard to policies which must be given weight in determining adverse impacts it refers to paragraphs 66 and 84 of chapter 5; 91 of chapter 7; 110 and 115 of chapter 9; 129 of chapter 11; and 135 and 139 of chapter 12. Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 is over 5 years old, and the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing supply, currently demonstrating 3.55 years. As such, Policy H1 is out of date, and the tilted balance would be engaged, an assessment of the overall planning balance will form part of the conclusion of this report.

7. Appraisal

7.1 The Planning Practice Guidance on flexible options for planning permissions confirms that section 73 applications are considered against the…

"…Development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the 2004 Act, and conditions attached to the existing permission. Local planning authorities should, in making their decisions, focus their attention on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission".

7.2 With this context in mind, many of the matters that have already been considered appropriate, are not repeated in this assessment, in view of the overriding policy context not changing so significantly in the intervening time to alter those findings. Furthermore, technical matters not impacted by the proposed changes are not explicitly referenced within this appraisal, with the s106 obligations and conditions included on the original permission satisfying these elements satisfactorily (barring in a number of instances an update to the plans referenced). Instead, as per the guidance above, the focus of attention is on the proposed changes to the development and national and local policy and other material considerations which have changed significantly. Firstly, since the original decision was issued in May 2024, the NPPF has been updated (most recently in February 2025). Other than Policy H1, the local policy context has not significantly altered, with the same Local Plan (2019) still in place, although the Local Plan is in the process of being updated this is not yet at a stage where significant weight can be given to updated policies, as discussed in paragraphs 6.6 to 6.11 above.

7.3 It is also relevant to acknowledge from the outset of this appraisal that, from a procedural perspective, it is considered appropriate for these proposals to be presented as a section 73 application. The three recent Case Law cases of *Finney*, *Armstrong* and *Fiske* have all been considered, with the proposals not changing operative wording of the original description of development (as per *Finney*), that the scope of the changes align with the approach taken in *Armstrong* and do not create a fundamental conflict between the conditions and the permission (*Fiske*).

7.4 *The NPPG (para 015) also sets out that:*

> *Permission granted under section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted subject to new or amended conditions. The new permission sits alongside the extant permission, which remains intact*
> *and unamended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new permission or the one originally granted.*
>
> *A decision notice describing the new permission should be issued, setting out all the conditions related to it. To assist with clarity decision notices for the grant of planning permission under section 73 should also repeat the relevant conditions from the extant planning permission unless they have already been discharged.*
>
> *As a section 73 application cannot be used to vary the time limit for implementation, this condition must remain unchanged from the extant permission. If the original permission was subject to a planning obligation, then this may need to be the subject of a deed of variation.*

7.5 With all of the above in mind, the main considerations for the amendments proposed are considered to involve:

i) Design Matters
ii) Amenity Matters
iii) Sustainability
iv) Transport Matters
v) Natural Environment
vi) Other Matters

i) Design Matters

7.6 The proposed external changes to the appearance of the development are considered to be minor when compared to the approved scheme. Notably the overall footprint of the proposed buildings and their height are not proposed to change and remain as approved.

7.7 The most notable proposed change relates to Building B, the tallest building within the development at 9 storeys, which is proposed to be increased in width between the 1st and 8th floors by 3.5m to accommodate the accommodate the additional stair and lift core in order to comply with latest Building Regulations and Fire Safety legislation. The increase in width would extend the upper floors of the building further west above the approved single storey part of the covered car park area meaning the overall footprint of Building B would not increase just the width of the upper floors. The appearance of the external elevations of the building would remain as approved, just wider with an additional column of windows to serve the new stair core which would reflect the appearance and proportions of the approved windows to Building B. Approved and proposed south elevation of Building B is shown in figures 10 and 11 below which shows these changes.

Figure 10 – Approved Building B South Elevation

Figure 11 – Proposed Building B South Elevation (proposed changes shown circled)

7.7 As the largest building within the development the increase in width of the building would have a visual impact notably when viewed from the River Kennet, albeit it is considered that this impact would not be a significant one when viewed in the context of the approved development as a whole nor one which would be detrimental to the appearance of the development as a whole when viewed from the surrounding area.

7.8 External changes at roof level are also proposed to Building A (5 storeys) and Building B which include additional of lift overruns, enlarged risers' additional risers, vent, plant equipment and addition of photovoltaic panels. Figures 12 and 13 below show the approved and proposed north and west elevations of Building A. The approved roof design of both Buildings A and B is distinctive and includes full twin gable design presenting a wharf/warehouse style development and was considered a positive aspect of the

development when planning permission was granted. The proposed minor roof top additions would not interrupt the twin gable appearance of the development with the additional elements set back from the edges of the roof and below the ridge height of both of the buildings such that they are not considered to have a detrimental impact upon the appearance of these buildings or the development as whole when viewed from the surrounding area.

Figure 12 – Approved Building A North and West Elevations

Figure 13 – Proposed Building A North and West Elevations (changes shown circled)

7.9 Further changes are proposed to the ground floor elevations of Building B with the addition of ventilation louvres to the ground floor car park level of Building B to the north elevation facing the railway and additional windows to the south elevation serving the new stair core. No concerns are raised in respect of these changes from a visual perspective; the louvres would introduce some limited visual interest in what under the approved scheme is a plain brick wall (see figures 14 and 15 below).

Figure 14 – Approved Building B North Elevation

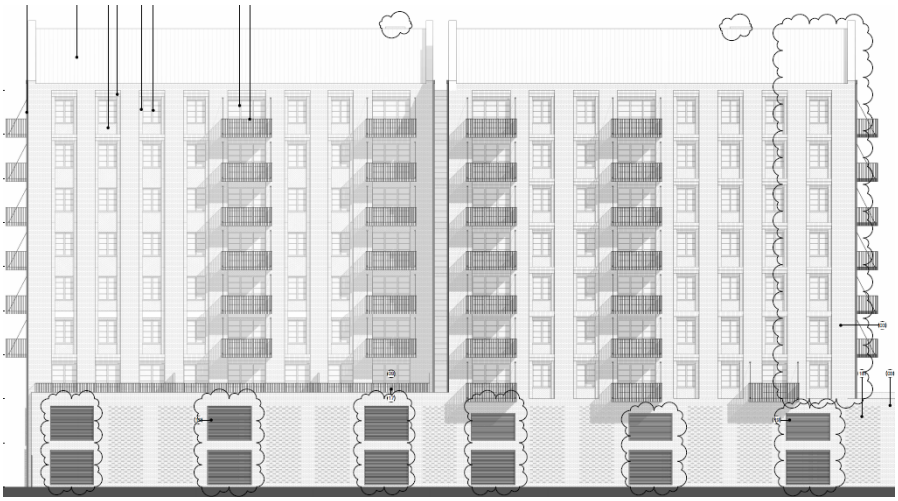


Figure 15 – Proposed Building B North Elevation (proposed changes shown circled)

7.10 The proposed partial removal of the approved flat roof from the first floor of the two-storey covered car park in the north west corner of the site which connects Buildings B and C to provide nature ventilation to this space is considered to have limited impact from a visual perspective given the flat nature of the approved roof (see figures 16 and 17 below). Whilst this may result in some minor additional light spill from car headlights from some more distant views it is not considered that this would have a significant adverse impact upon the appearance of the car park or wider development.

Figure 16 – Approved Site Layout Plan

Figure 17 – Proposed Amended Site Layout Plan

7.11 Some changes to ground level external areas with the site are also proposed. This includes a 10m extension to the eastern end of the approved access road replacing an area of grasscrete with hardstanding to allow fire trucks to service Building B at a suitable distance in accordance with latest Fire Safety regulations. A further 5m long strip of grasscrete is also proposed to be removed and replaced with hardstanding in front of Building B from where the bin collection point is proposed in order to prevent bins from becoming stuck or difficult to move over the grid structure surface of grasscrete (see figures 16 and 17 above). The proposed removal of the specified grasscrete areas also necessitates re-location of 3 new trees to be planted as part of the approved scheme. In order to facilitate safe access to the car park 2 new trees approved to be planted either side of the car park entrance are also proposed to be to be re-located. The trees are to be re-located to the riverside area within the site. To mitigate for the loss of the grasscrete area together with the partial loss of the green roof to the car park it is also proposed to plant 8 additional trees within the site also along the riverside.

7.13 Whilst loss of the areas of grasscrete and replacement with hardstanding is disappointing the reasons behind this are understood and are required in the case of fire tender access to accord with separate statutory legislation. It is not considered that loss of the grasscrete would result in a significant adverse impact upon the appearance of the development or the landscaped character of the area between the buildings and the river frontage which would be retained and was considered a benefit of the approved development. The planting of 8 additional trees within the site to mitigate for loss of these areas is welcomed whilst it is also pertinent to note that that the proposal variations to the approved development would not change the overall amount of functional communal outdoor open space to be provided. The approved 520m2 community garden, located between Buildings A and B and the river frontage which includes 2 x 50m2 play areas (to Local Area for Play specifications) and space for informal play, native planting and sheltered seating area by the river including viewing platform projecting out into the river and a ‘nature corner’ to the east of Building B, which provides an ecologically diverse area of approximately 160m2 would continue to form part of the development as already approved.

7.14 In overall terms the proposed external changes to buildings and external areas within the approved development are considered to be minor in nature and acceptable. The proposed amendment to do not change the conclusions officer reached when considering the design and appearance of the development subject to the extant planning permission and the varied development is considered to be an enhancement to the character of the site, surrounding area and waterside area and would continue to comply with Policies CR13d (Gas Holder Site), CC7 (Design and The Public Realm), EN11 (Waterspaces) and CR2 (Design in Central Reading). Condition 34 attached to the extant planning permission to secure submission and approval of a schedule of all external materials prior to commencement of the development beyond foundation level in order to ensure a high-quality finish to the development would be carried across and re-applied to a s37 variation of condition planning permission. and.

ii) Amenity Matters

Neighbouring Occupiers

7.15 The site's only immediate neighbours are the residential properties to Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road to the west. The proposed enlargement of Building B and additional of the new column of windows from 1st to 8th floor has most potential to impact on neighbours surrounding the site. However, this building is located 45m from the closest residential properties on these roads such that the proposal to move the 1st to 8th floor flank elevation of this building 3.5m closer to Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road would still retain significant separation distance such that no additional overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of daylight or overshadowing impacts are considered to result from the proposed changes. The proposals would not move the development any closer to the river and a separation distance of over 50m to the dwellings to the south on the opposite side of the river along Kennet Side and the playground of New Town Primary School would be retained as per the approved scheme such that no adverse impacts are identified as a result of the proposed changes in this respect.

7.16 The other changes to the proposed development as set out in paragraph 2.18 to Buildings A, B and C and external areas within the site are considered to be minor and to not result in any adverse impacts upon the amenity of existing neighbouring occupiers as per the approved development.

Standard of Accommodation for Future Occupiers

7.16 To accommodate the proposed additional stair and lift core to Building B and to meet the storage requirements for some dwellings in line with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) which require between 1 and 2.5 square metres of built in storage to be provided for each dwelling a number of the flats are proposed to be reconfigured internally within Buildings B and C. This results in various changes to the internal floor spaces of the dwellings within these buildings, with the floorspace of some units increasing and some decreasing. However, in all cases the dwellings would continue to adhere to the NDSS. The proposed amendments are not considered to adversely impact upon outlook or receipt of daylighting to any of the proposed dwellings. in accordance with Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity).

7.17 A noise assessment and mitigation scheme for all the new residential units was submitted and approved when the extant planning permission was granted which included consideration of noise from the railway line to the north of the site. An updated noise assessment has been provided with the current variation application which takes into potential noise from the proposed additional plant equipment which includes the air source heat pumps and mechanical ventilation heat recovery (MVHR) system. The updated noise assessment has been reviewed by RBC Environmental Protection Officers who are satisfied that the noise mitigation measures including glazing and ventilation specifications are sufficient and would ensure that the additional plant equipment proposed would not adversely impact upon noise levels within the proposed dwellings or that of existing

residential occupiers surrounding the site and would accord with Policies CC8 and EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources).

7.18 The proposed variations to the approved development are not considered to result in any adverse impacts upon the residential amenity of existing occupiers surrounding the site or future occupiers of the development itself. Conditions 11 (noise assessment) and 12 (ventilation) of the extant planning permission would be updated as part of any new s73 variation of condition planning permission to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the updated noise and ventilation strategy.

iii) Sustainability

7.19 The approved energy strategy for the development proposed that each flat would be provided with a gas combi boiler for hot water provision and heating. The revised energy strategy submitted with this variation application sets out that in line with latest Building Regulation requirements the gas combi boilers for each flat would be replaced within Exhaust Air Source Heat Pumps (EASHP) equipped with hot water cylinders and MVHR for hot water generation whilst electric panel heaters are now proposed for heating. The proposed incorporation of decentralised energy provision in the form of EASHP together with roof based photovoltaic panels is considered to be a benefit of the development resulting from the proposed changes and accords with Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) which requires development to incorporate decentralised energy provision. The proposed switch away from gas combi boilers reduces the development's reliance upon fossil fuels, minimises energy use and would reduce carbon emissions of the development.

7.20 The approved development was projected to achieve a 20% improvement of the carbon emissions savings required under 2013 Building Regulations whereas the revised proposal is projected to achieve an 80.6% improvement which represents a significant improvement in the projected carbon savings performance of the development. This projection has been independently reviewed on behalf of the Council by a specialist energy consultant who has verified applicants revised energy strategy and approach. The s106 agreement linked to the extant planning permission incudes a requirement to provide a carbon off-setting contribution to off-set the carbon savings of the development to zero and this requirement would be carried across and linked to any s73 variation of condition planning permission. In this instance given the projected performance of the development is higher the contribution required to offset the development to carbon zero is likely to be lower. Condition 42 of the extant permission requires the applicant to provide as built confirmation in the form of SAP assessments that the development has achieved the projected performance in respect of carbon savings. This condition would continue to comply and would be carried across to any new s73 variation of condition planning permission, and it would be the SAP assessments submitted under this condition which would determine the level of carbon off-setting contribution required for the development.

7.21 The Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019) which was not adopted when the extant permission was granted outlines that Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP's) should be sequentially prioritised over Air Source Heat Pumps. The applicants revised energy strategy outlines that GSHP's were considered but that concerns over the level of additional plant equipment and space required for this in terms of impact this would have upon the building layouts and amount of open space able to be provided adjacent to the river mean that they were discounted. Officer view is that this justification is weak. However, the revised energy strategy with removal of reliance upon gas combi boilers and introduction of on-site decentralised energy sources represents a very significant improvement in the energy efficiency performance of the development (as has been independently verified) compared to the approved scheme and as such officers consider the revised proposals to be acceptable and welcome changes to the approved development.

7.22 A revised SuDS strategy for the development has been submitted. This has been reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) who advise the scheme is acceptable

and incorporates only very minor changes compared to the approved SuDS strategy for the development which was approved under condition 26 of the extant planning permission. Condition 26 would be updated as part of this s73 variation of condition application to refer to the updated strategy. The scheme ensure that run off rates at the development would result in betterment compared to the existing site and therefore comply with Policy EN18 (Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Systems).

7.23 The revised proposals are considered to comply with Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) and CC4 (Decentralised Energy).

iv) Transport Matters

7.24 RBC Transport Officers have reviewed the revised proposals and raise no objection to the reduction in overall number of parking spaces for the development by 6 from 127 to 121 spaces. The site is located partly within Zone 1 and partly within Zone 2 as defined by the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) which are the parts of the Borough located in and around the town centre and which are well served in terms of public transport. The level of parking provision required for a development in accordance with the SPD differs depending upon what zone it is located in, for example each 1 bed dwelling in Zone 1 is required to be served by 0.5 parking spaces whereas in Zone 2, 1 space per 1 bed dwelling is required.

7.25 Given the sites location partly within both Zones 1 and 2 parking provision requirements for the approved development were agreed with RBC Transport Officers at a bespoke level in between the requirements for Zones 1 and 2. A survey of car ownership for flats within Reading based upon census data was provided at the time to help inform what the required level of car parking provision for the development should be. The survey at the time identified that 48% of flats within Reading did not have car or van in the household. Based upon this it was agreed with RBC Transport Officers that a ratio of 0.62 spaces per flat was representative. This resulted in a total parking requirement for the development of 81 spaces. However, 127 spaces at a ratio of 0.97 spaces per flat were approved as part of the development which included 13 visitor parking spaces in excess of the agreed minimum requirements for the development.

7.26 An updated parking survey for flats within Reading has been submitted with the current variation application which shows that the number of flats within reading without a car or van in the household has increased to 52%. Given this, the sustainable location of the site and that the approved development already provided in excess of the parking provision that was agreed when planning permission for the approved scheme was granted RBC Transport Officers do not object to the proposed reduction in parking provision for the development by 6 spaces to 121 spaces and the amended development is considered to comply with Policy TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) and the SPD. Condition 35 of the extant planning permission would be updated to require provision of the revised number and layout of vehicle parking spaces prior to occupation of the development.

7.27 Given the overall reduction in parking spaces at the site as well as the proposals to relocate all the electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces to external parts of the site (in front of Building C) the proposals also seek to reduce the number of EV charging points to be provided from the approved 13 to 12 to minimise the impact of the spaces on external pedestrian movements and landscaping to the front of Building C. Policy TR5 requires that for communal car park area for flats at least 10% of spaces should be provided with EV charging points. Given the revised parking provision for the development of 121 spaces the proposed provision of 12 EV charging spaces meets this requirement as it considered to be acceptable. Condition 43 of the extant planning permission secures submission and approval of full details of the EV charging points prior to occupation of the development, and this would be carried across and re-applied to a s73 variation of condition planning permission.

7.28 The approved development secures provision of 74 secure, covered and lockable cycle parking spaces for the development which spaces located within stores within each of the three buildings. This exceeds the cycle parking provision required for the development in accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011) of 68.5 spaces by 5 spaces. As a result of internal re-configuration of the buildings to provide more waste storage and additional plant requirements the revised proposals would provide 72 cycle parking spaces in stores spread through the 3 buildings. This number of cycle parking spaces still exceeds the minimum number of spaces required as per the SPD and therefore is considered to be acceptable and accord with Policy TR5. Condition 3 (cycle parking) of the extant permission would be carried across to a s73 variation of condition planning permission which requires full specifications of the cycle stands to be submitted prior to occupation of the development.

Waste Storage and Collection

7.28 The approved bin stores within each building have been enlarged to accommodate food waste bins. This is because food waste collection service was not offered by RBC when planning permission for the approved development was granted. RBC Waste Officers have reviewed the stores and are satisfied that these are of adequate size for the requisite number of bins required for each building. Revised refuse collection points within the site have also been proposed and are considered to be acceptable by RBC Waste Officers with these all being located within 10m of the access road and therefore appropriate for the RBC Waste Collection Operatives to empty to bins into the refuse collection lorries. Figure 18 below shows the refuse collection points highlight in green and the routes from the stores to the collection points shown with a red dotted line. The submitted Waste Strategy plan confirm that building management staff would be responsible for moving the bins from the stores to the collection points and back on collection days. Condition 5 of the extant permission would be updated to secure that the development is carried out and operated in accordance with the updated waste storage and collection arrangements and condition 40 from the extant permission would be re-applied to secure details of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing the bin stores are submitted and agreed with the LPA prior to occupation of the development. The revised waste storage and collection proposals for the site are acceptable and would comply with Policy CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage).

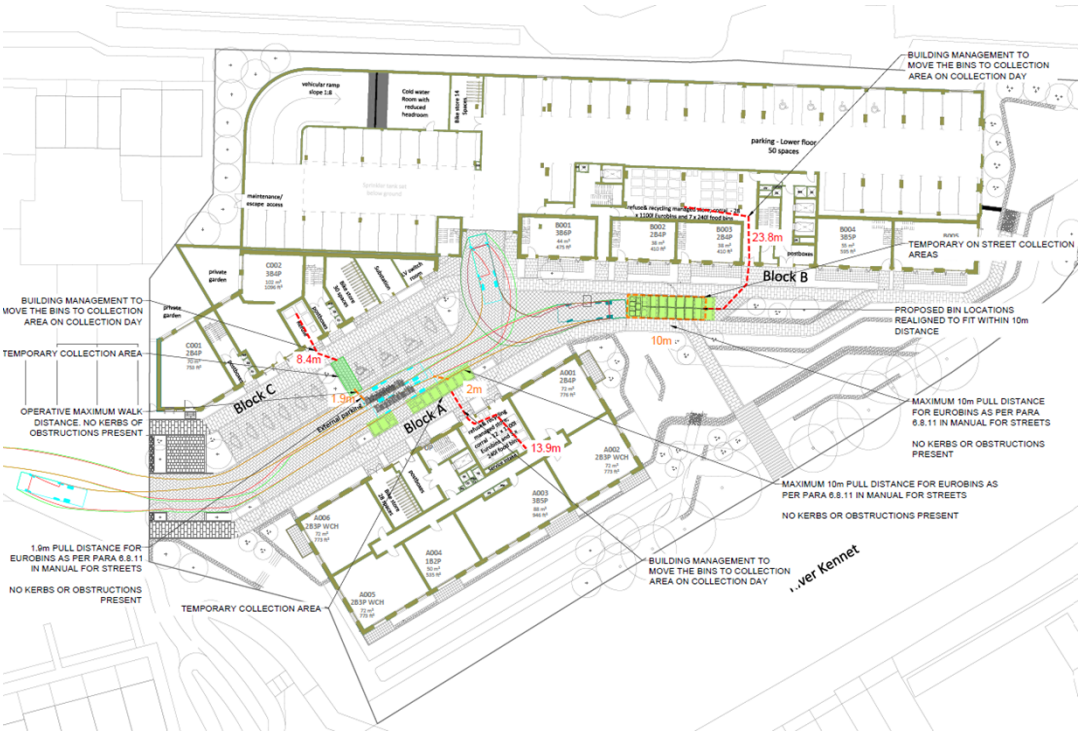


Figure 18 – Refuse Collection Points (Highlighted Green)

7.29 Swept path drawings have been submitted to demonstrate how waste collection vehicles would access the waste collection points and turn within the site in order to enter and leave in forward gear. RBC Transport Officers have reviewed the swept path plans are satisfied that safe access to the waste collection points and within the site generally would be achieved. Suitable access to the waste collection point for Building B would be provided as a result of the 10m extension of the access road in front of this building.

7.30 The proposed amendments to the vehicle parking, cycle parking, access and waste storage and collection arrangements considered to be acceptable and to comply with Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters), TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) and CC5 (Waste Minimisation and Storage).

v) Natural Environment

Trees and Landscaping

7.31 The proposed changes do not increase the overall footprint of built development within the site and would, including the proposed extension to the access road, not result in any additional impacts upon the limited existing trees within the site which are located to the site perimeter, nor do they necessitate any additional tree removal. Condition 21 attached to the extant permission ensures that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan (as approved under approval of details reserved by condition application ref. PL/23/1546/APC) and this condition would be carried across to a new s73 variation of condition planning permission. The RBC Natural Environment Officer is satisfied that the proposed amendments to the scheme would not result in any additional adverse impact upon existing trees at or near the site, subject to the details already approved under condition 21 being secured as part of a new s73 planning permission.

7.32 The RBC Natural Environment Officer is satisfied with the proposed siting of the 5 trees to be relocated within the development as well as the siting of the 8 new trees to be planted to provide mitigation for partial loss of the green roof to the car park. Figure 19 below shows the proposed locations for the trees to be re-located and for the additional new trees. The amended development is considered to ensure that there would be no additional harm to retained trees and would, as per the approved scheme, continue to provide an acceptable landscaped setting for the development next to the river in accordance with Policies EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland), CC7 (Design and The Public Realm), CR2 (Design in Central Reading), CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading) and EN11 (Waterspaces). Conditions 33 and 38 of the extant planning permission require full details of the hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatment details for the development to be submitted and approved by the LPA prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level and this condition would be carried across and re-applied to a s73 variation of condition planning permission.

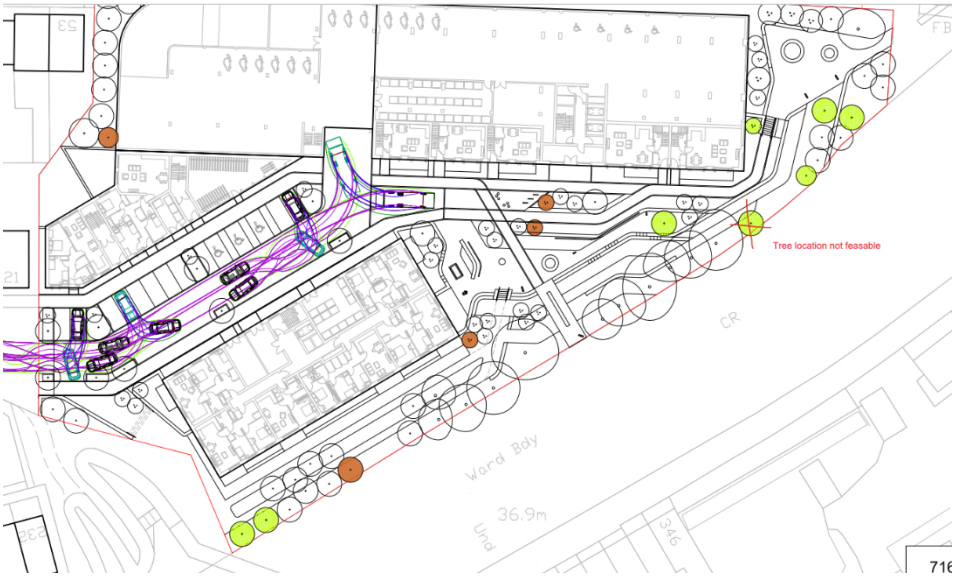


Figure 19 – Proposed trees to be relocated shown in brown and proposed new trees shown in green

Biodiversity

7.33 An addendum to the biodiversity assessment considered when the approved development was granted planning permission has been submitted with the proposed variation application. This considers the proposed partial loss of the green roof from the car park and loss of the grasscrete area in front of Building B. The addendum assessment concludes that, even with partial loss of the green roof and loss of the grasscrete area the proposed planting of 8 additional trees would ensure that in terms of habitat units the development would provide for a betterment of on-site biodiversity compared to the approved scheme. Grasscrete by its nature carries very limited to no biodiversity benefit. Given the extant planning permission was granted prior to the introduction of statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements then any s73 variation of this permission is exempt from these requirements. Nonetheless, the RBC Ecology Adviser has reviewed the proposals and whilst acknowledging that partial loss of the green roof is disappointing is satisfied with the mitigation for this proposed in terms of the additional tree planting which would result in an overall betterment compared to the approved scheme. The reviewed proposals are considered to comply with Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) and would ensure that a net gain in on-site biodiversity is achieved.

7.34 The minor nature of the proposed changes to the development is such that this is not considered to result in any new impacts upon protected species on or around the site. When planning permission for the approved scheme was granted evidence of peregrine falcons was reported near the site and condition 22 (habitat enhancement) of the extant planning permission includes a requirement for a peregrine perch to integrated into Building B. This requirement and condition would be carried across and replicated on a s73 variation of condition planning permission. The Construction Method Statement (CMS) approved under condition 24 of the extant planning permission requires a temporary perch to be installed during construction of the development and this has been in place at the site since the gas holder structure was demolished under the separate prior approval consent. A temporary nest was also provided with the perch which was in use by peregrines at the site in 2023. After the nest was vacated the nesting box was then closed to allow the developer to implement the planning permission at the site given if there were nesting peregrines present on site Natural England would very likely not issue a licence for such works to commence in such proximity to the nest. However, as per the requirements of condition 24 the temporary perch remains and would do for the duration of the construction period of the development. The RBC Ecology Adviser has confirmed that in 2025 the peregrines nested in a nesting box location on the rooftop of The Blade.

7.35 The proposed amendments to the development are considered to be acceptable from a trees, landscaping, biodiversity and ecological perspective and would comply with Policies EN12, EN14, CC7, CR2, CR3 and EN8.

vi) Other Matters

7.36 The site as a result of its former use as a gas holder is subject to potential contamination. The extant permission includes conditions 17 (contamination assessment), 18 (contamination remediation), 28 (land gas assessment) and 29 (land gas remediation) to secure strategies to bring the site into a suitable condition for its proposed use as a residential development in accordance with Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources). Since the extant planning permission was granted approval of details reserved by condition applications (ref. PL/23/1565, PL/23/1589, PL/1060 and PL/24/0361) have been submitted in respect of these conditions and strategies approved. These conditions would be carried across and re-applied to a s73 variation of condition planning permission to secure that the development is carried out in accordance with these details.

7.37 Condition 24 of the extant permission required submission and approval of construction method statement (CMS) prior to the commencement of development to demonstrate how construction activities from the development would not result in adverse impacts upon surrounding occupiers and the surrounding highway network in accordance with Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) and TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters). A CMS was approved under approval of details reserved by condition application ref. PL/23/1585. A condition requiring the development to be carried out only in accordance with the approved CMS would be applied to the new s73 variation of condition planning permission.

7.38 Condition 25 of the extant permission secured submission and approval of a scheme to demonstrate how an Ecological Buffer Zone alongside the River Kennet would be protected during construction and then subsequent occupation of the development at the request of the Environment Agency (EA) and to protect the watercourse and its ecological value in accordance with Policies EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) and EN11 (Waterspaces). A subsequent non-material amendment application (ref. PL/23/1544) was approved to split the condition into 2 parts, with part i) to require details of how the buffer zone would be provided and maintained during construction of the development to be submitted and agreed prior to development commencing and part ii) to require details of how the buffer zone would be provided and maintained during occupation of the development to be submitted and agreed at a later stage, prior to commencement of development above foundation level. Part i) of the condition was approved under approval of details reserved by condition application ref. PL/24/0550 with the development having not yet reached a stage where part ii) requires details to be approved. This condition would be carried across to a new s73 variation of condition planning permission to require the development to be constructed in accordance with the details already approved under part i) of the condition and to require the details under part ii) to be submitted for approval prior to commencement of any development beyond foundation level.

7.39 The EA have been consulted on the proposed changes to the development and raise no objection subject to implementation of relevant conditions as attached to the extant planning permission (including condition 25 discussed above, condition 6 (no construction piling unless methodology agreed with the LPA in consultation with the EA) and condition 7 (surface water infiltration details) where a scheme has already been approved under approval of details reserved by condition application re PL/23/1852/APC. Compliance with all these conditions would be secured as part of a new s73 variation of condition planning permission.

7.40 Conditions 31 and 32 of the extant planning permission requires details of the external lighting for the development and a glint and glare study to be submitted and approved by the LPA prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level in order that the lighting is design as to not adversely impact upon existing surrounding occupiers, future

occupiers of the development, biodiversity or the railway line to the north of the site in accordance with Policies CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) and EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network). These conditions would be re-applied and carried across as part of a s73 variation of condition planning permission.

7.41 Condition 36 of the extant permission requires a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to be submitted and agreed prior to occupation of the development in order to ensure establishment and success of the landscaping and ecological enhancements proposed as part of the development in accordance with Policies EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network), EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) and CC7 (Design and The Public Realm). This condition as well as condition 39 to secure provision of all on-site play facilities prior to occupation of the development in accordance with Policy EN9 (Provision of Open Space) would be carried across and re-applied as part of a s73 variation of condition planning permission.

7.42 Condition 37 of the extant planning permission requires the development to be undertaken in accordance with approved flood mitigation measures in accordance with Policy EN18 (Flooding and Drainage). No changes to these measures are proposed as part of this application and this condition would be re-applied to a s73 permission.

7.43 Condition 23 of the extant planning permission requires a scheme for re-use of the cast iron sign formerly present within the gas holder site to be submitted and agreed with the LPA. This condition was amended under non-material amendment ref. PL/23/1545 to require these details to be submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of development beyond foundation level (rather than prior to the commencement of development as originally approved). Condition 41 of the extant permission requires details of new signage and sculptural elements at the entrance to the site from Alexander Turner Close to be submitted and approved by the LPA prior to occupation of the development. Both conditions would be carried across and re-applied to a section s73 variation of condition planning permission in the interests of the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area in accordance with Policies CC7 (Design and The Public Realm), CR2 (Design in Central Reading) and CR3 (Public Realm in Central Reading).

7.44 Condition 44 of the extant permission required details of the finished floor level of the development to be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of development beyond foundation level and would be re-applied as part of a new s73 variation of condition planning permission in the interests of the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area in accordance with Policies CC7 (Design and The Public Realm) and CR2 (Design in Central Reading).

7.45 Condition 45 of the extant planning permission requires submission and approval of a CCTV Strategy prior to occupation of the development in the interest of the safety of future occupiers of the development and public and would be re-applied in accordance with Policy CC7 (Design and The Public Realm).

7.46 Conditions 46 and 47 secure submission and approval of a Travel Plan within 5 months of occupation of the development and subsequent annual review of this document to encourage modal shift away from the car in accordance with Policy TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and would be carried across to a s73 variation of condition planning permission.

7.47 It should also be noted that a non-material amendment (ref. PL/23/1655) to the original planning permission was granted to allow for phased implementation of the development with phase 1 consisting of the de-contamination of the entire site and construction of the new access road and Building C (containing 10 x affordable dwellings only) and construction of the rest of the development forming phase 2 of the development. This non-material amendment revised the wording of a number of conditions of the original planning permission to facilitate approval of relevant details on this phased basis. Paragraph 4.11 above shows the full description of the non-material amendment that was granted above

and the conditions which were amended to facilitate phased approval and this approach to these conditions would be carried across and replication on any s73 variation of condition planning permission granted as a result of this current application to incorporate the proposed changes with the phased approach to the development.

Unit Mix

7.48 As discussed in the above sections of this report various minor internal changes to the layout of each building are proposed. As a consequence of this a small change to the approved dwelling mix of the development is proposed. The mix would change from 48 x 1-bedroom apartments (36.9%), 74 x 2-bedroom apartments (56.9%) and 8 x 3-bedroom apartments (6.2%) as approved to 48 x 1-bedroom apartments (36.9%), 73 x 2-bedroom apartments (56.15%) and 9 x 3-bedroom apartments (6.92%). The revised dwelling mix would continue to comply with Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) which states that development in Central Reading should provide for no more than 40% of the total number of dwellings proposed as 1-bedroom units and a minimum of 5% of the total number of dwellings as 3-bedroom units. The proposed increase in 3-bedroom units is a welcomed change.

Fire Safety

7.49 HSE Fire Safety were not a statutory consultee when planning permission for the approved development was granted but have reviewed and commented on the current variation of condition application and advise that they are content with the proposed fire safety design in so far as it relates to land use planning considerations. HSE identify a number of detailed fire safety matters that the applicant will need to take into account during the more detailed later regulatory stages of the development design.

S106 Legal Agreement

7.50 The existing s106 agreement linked to the extant planning permission stipulates within in it that it would also be linked to any s73 variation of condition planning permission that is granted and therefore all the s106 obligations secured as part of this existing agreement (which are set out in the recommendation box at the top of the main agenda and update reports to November 2019 Planning Applications Committee attached as appendix 1 and 2 to this report) would continue to be secured and linked to a s73 variation of condition planning permission.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

7.51 In terms of the Reading Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the proposals are a CIL liable development. The total CIL liability of the approved scheme is around £2.6 million with the increase in floor space proposed as art of this s73 variation of condition application increased the total liability to around £2.7million. Albeit these figures are likely to reduce given the applicant can claim exemption from CIL for any affordable housing provided as part of the development.

8. Equality implications

8.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues, and priorities in relation to this particular application.

9. Conclusion

9.1 As confirmed at paragraph 7.1 to 7.3 above, section 73 applications are required to be considered against the development plan and material considerations, under section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and conditions attached to the existing permission, with a particular focus on national and development plan policies, and other material considerations which may have changed significantly since the original grant of permission. This has been set out in the above assessment.

9.2 As is the case for all planning applications, including applications under s73, any harmful impacts of the proposed development are required to be weighed against the benefits in the context of national and local planning policies.

9.3 When considering the application and development subject of the extant planning permission (ref. PL/19/0627) officers concluded that the development demonstrated a number of public benefits including provision of 130 good quality new dwellings on a sustainably located brownfield site in the town centre, including 15 affordable dwellings (12% provision) and deferred payment mechanism to ensure the Council shared in any future improvements in the viability position of the development. The approved scheme also secures provision of high-quality riverside area of open space including landscape and biodiversity enhancements and provision of new pedestrian link to the footbridge over the river Kennet from within the site whilst the design and appearance of the buildings was found to show good visual quality. The approved development satisfied the majority of the requirements of the site allocation Policy CR13d (Gas Holder) with the East Side Major Opportunity Area of the town centre in terms of using the site for residential development, enhancing the character of the Kennet, providing a set back from the edge of the river to reflect its wildlife significance and addressing contamination at the site.

9.4 The only notable shortall of the approved development identified was that it did not provide for continuous public access along the river frontage within the site which Policy CR13d states should be sought. However, this was due to the location of the existing ramped access to the footbridge over the Kennet which severs this route whilst the Environment Agency also advised that they would not support continuous across the river frontage of the site given this would be within the 10m buffer zone area between the development and river secured to be provided under condition 25 of the extant permission to protect the biodiversity of the waterway. Overall, in carrying out a planning balance assessment it was accepted that the benefits of the development outweighed the harms and the officer recommendation to grant planning permission was confirmed by November 2019 Planning Applications Committee.

9.5 Officer can advise that with regard to the changes sought through this application then, the revised proposals represent a significant improvement in the development in respect of carbon emissions and provision of decentralised energy. That aside the benefits and harms of the development summarised above are considered to remain materially unaltered for the reasons outlined in this report. Therefore, the planning balance assessment of the proposals is still considered to fall in favour of granting planning permission for the proposed varied development subject to the recommended varied conditions and the obligations forming part of the existing s106 legal agreement that would continue to apply to and be linked to any variation of condition planning permission granted under s73.

9.6 Furthermore, as set out in paragraphs 6.6 to 6.11 of this report and unlike when planning permission for the approved scheme was granted in 2024 the Council cannot now

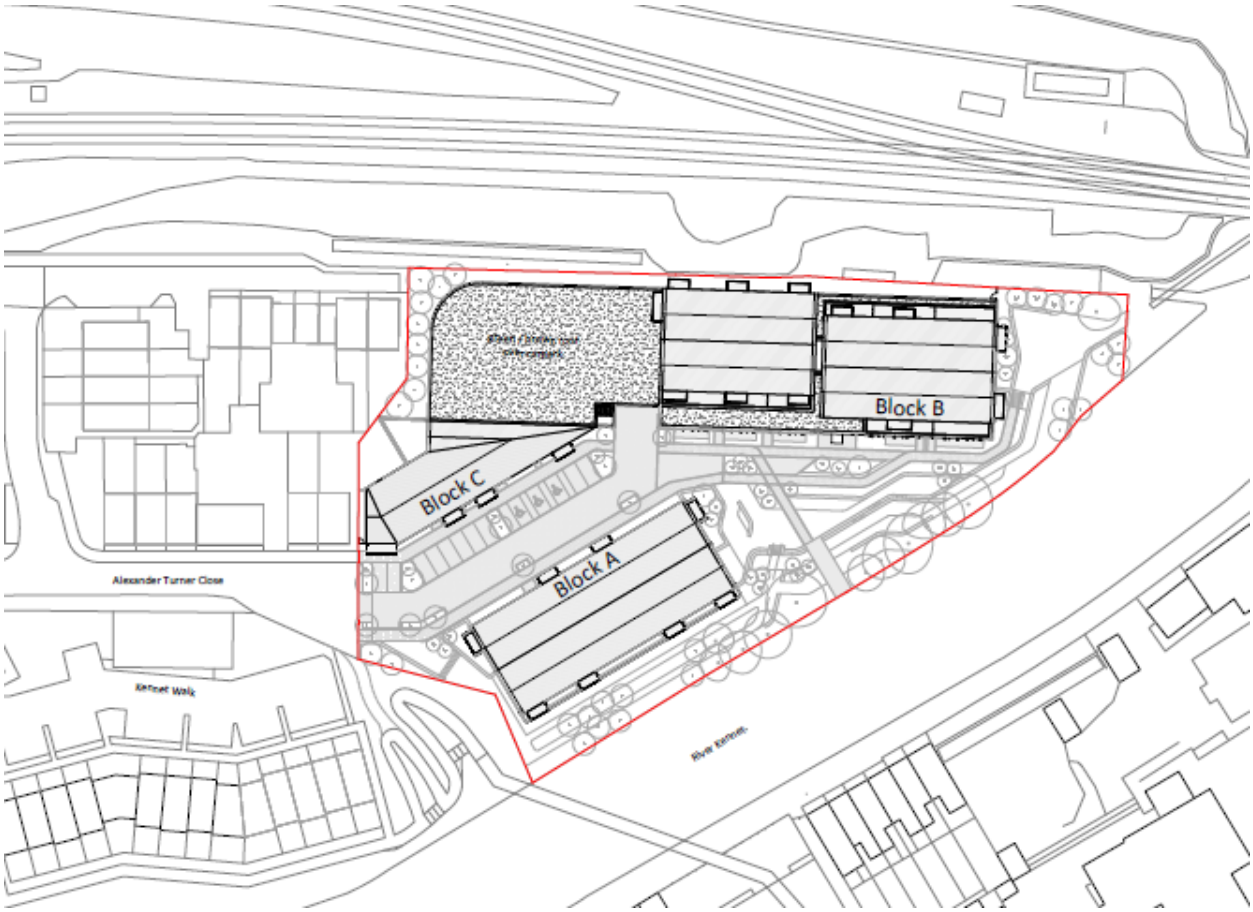
demonstrate a 5-year housing supply as Policy H1 of the Local Plan 2019 is out of date, and therefore the development must be assessed in line with Paragraph 11d(i and ii) of the NPPF (December 2024) referred to as the 'titled balance' and against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. When applying the titled balance as described in paragraph 11 it is considered that the planning balance weighs more heavily towards granting planning permission for the development and more so than when the extant planning permission was granted. The limited harms identified would not significantly or demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits and therefore the officer recommendation to grant the variation planning application subject to the varied conditions and terms of the existing s106 legal agreement is considered to be reinforced.

Plans & Appendices

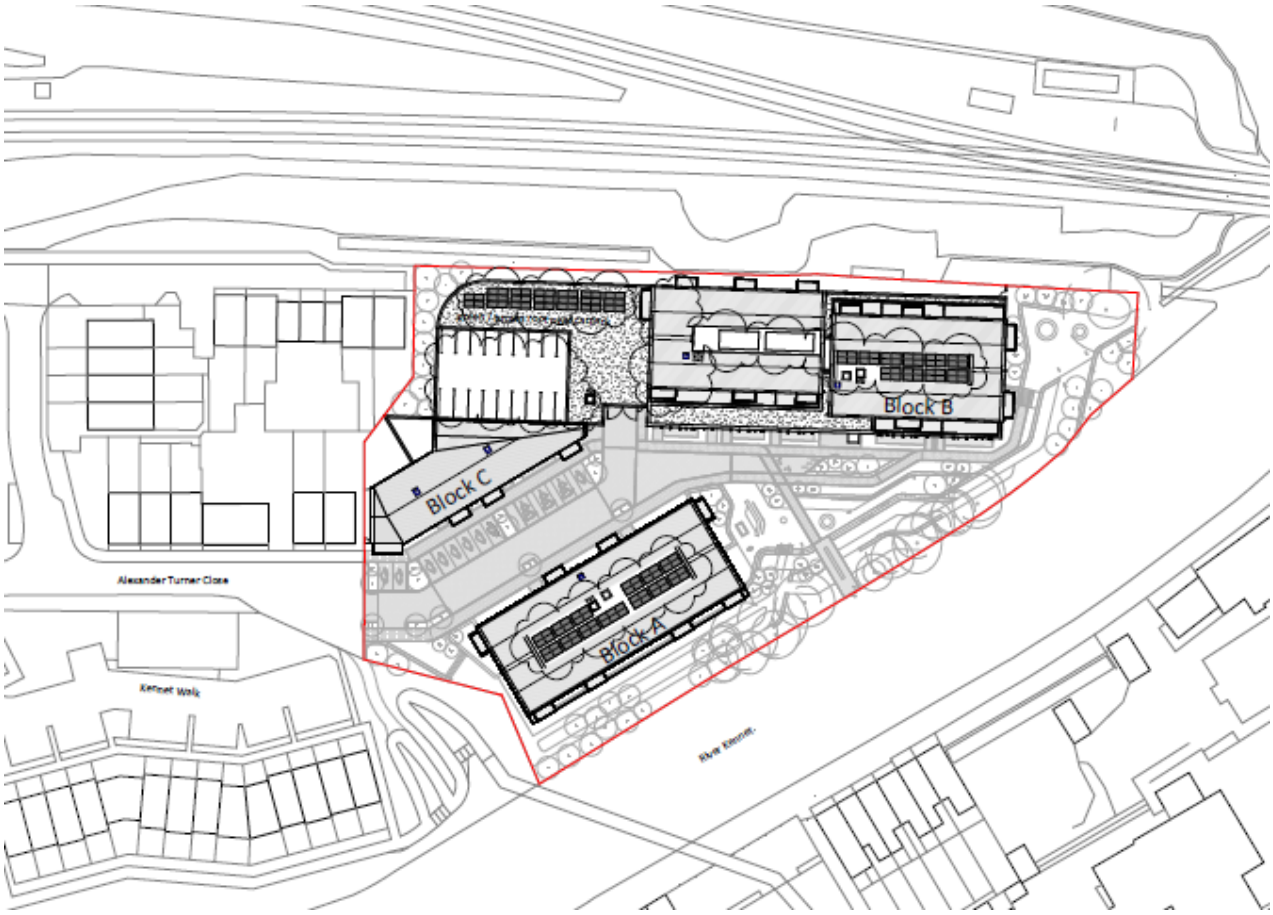
Appendix 1 - Committee report to November 2019 Planning Applications Committee for original planning permission ref. PL/19/0627 including approved plans.

Appendix 2 – Update report to November 20219 Planning Applications Committee for original planning permission ref. PL/19/0627

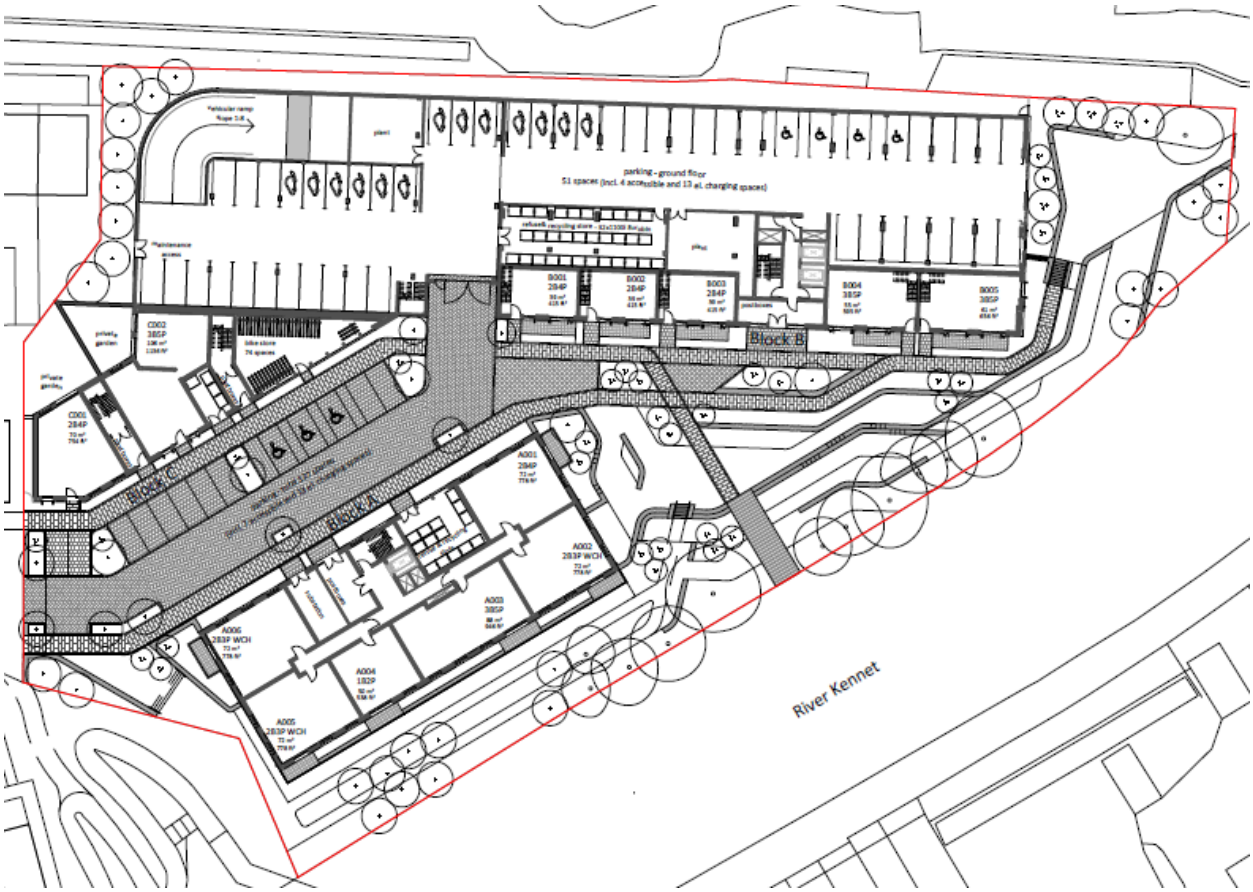
Appendix 3 – Decision notice for original planning permission ref. PL/19/0627



Approved Site Plan



Proposed Site Plan



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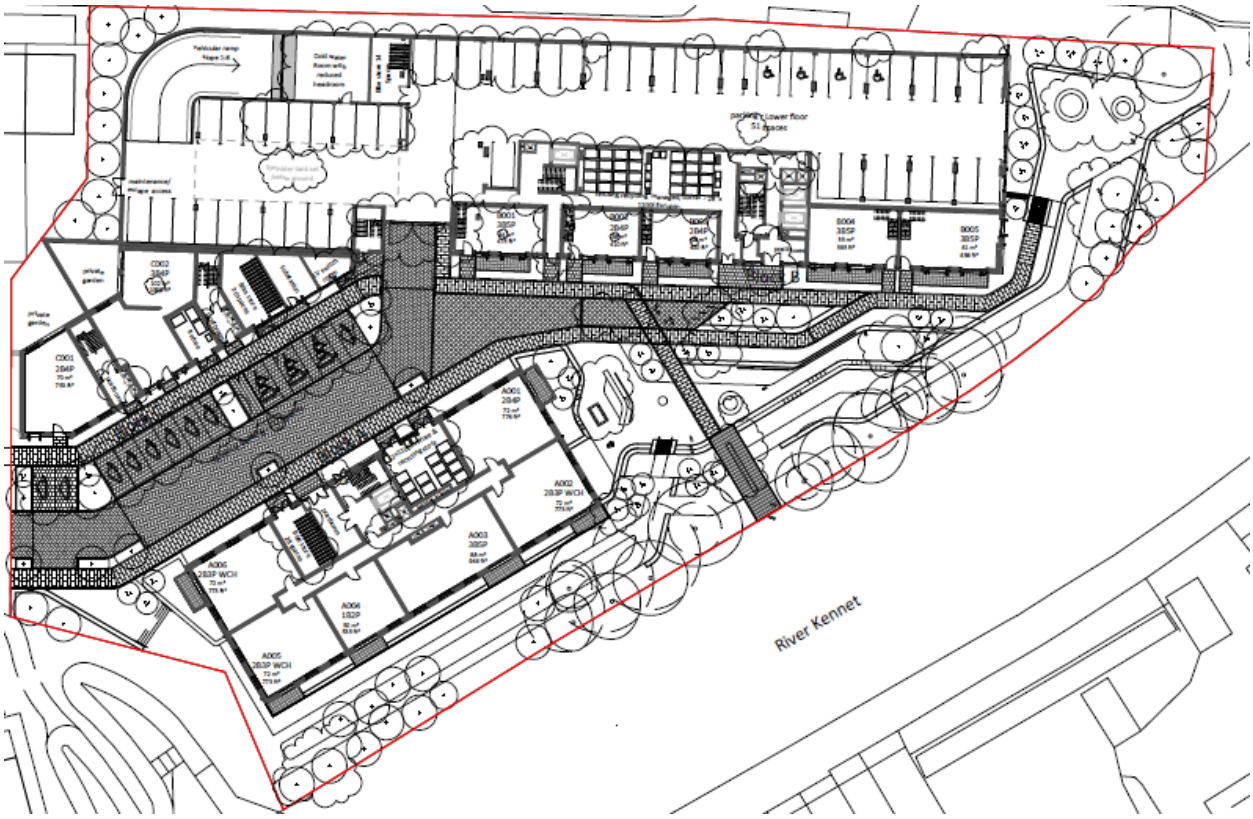

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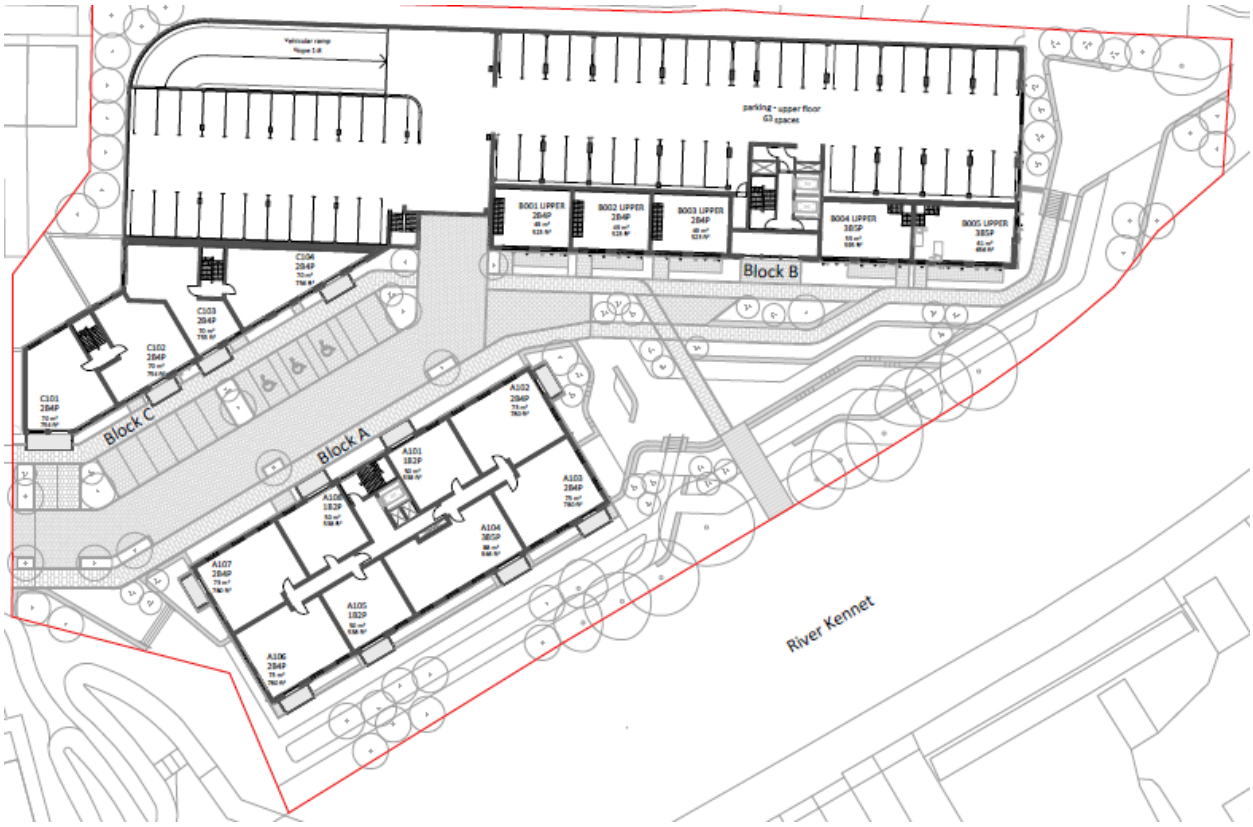

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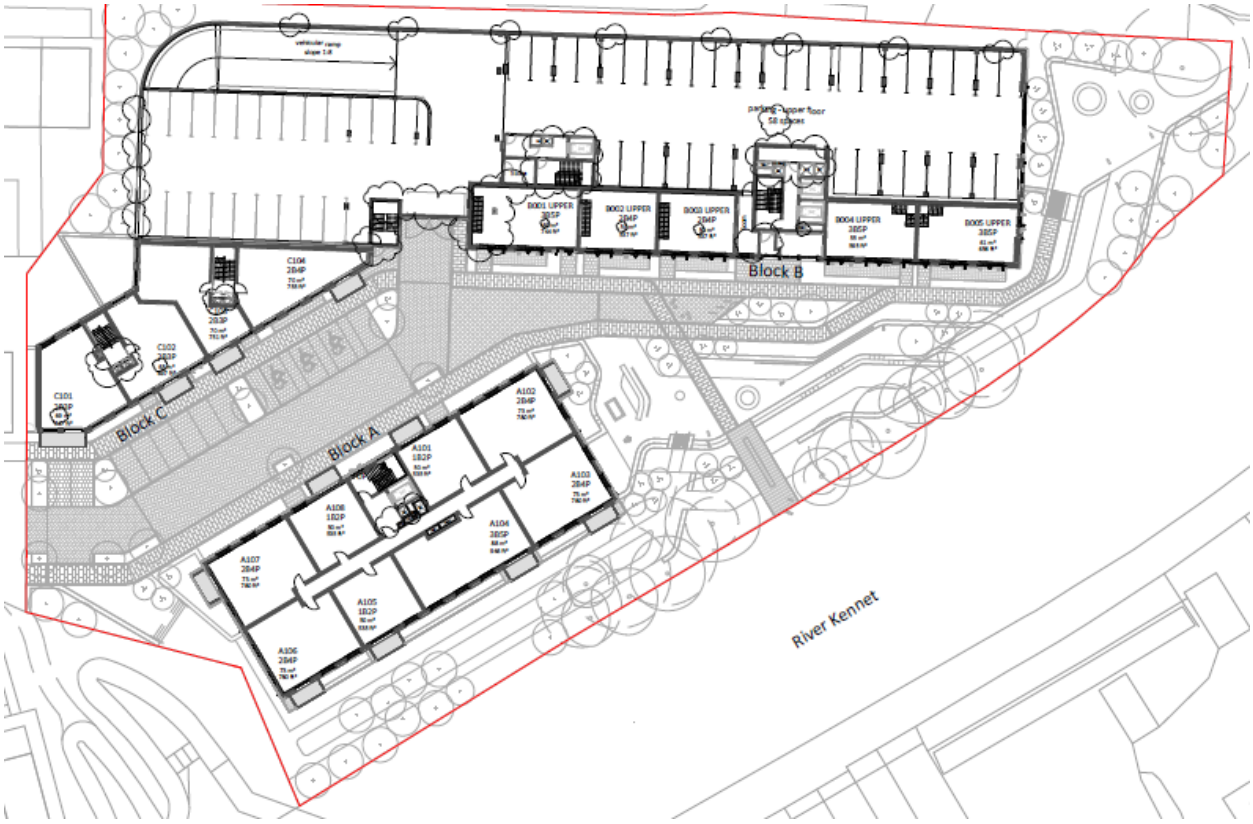

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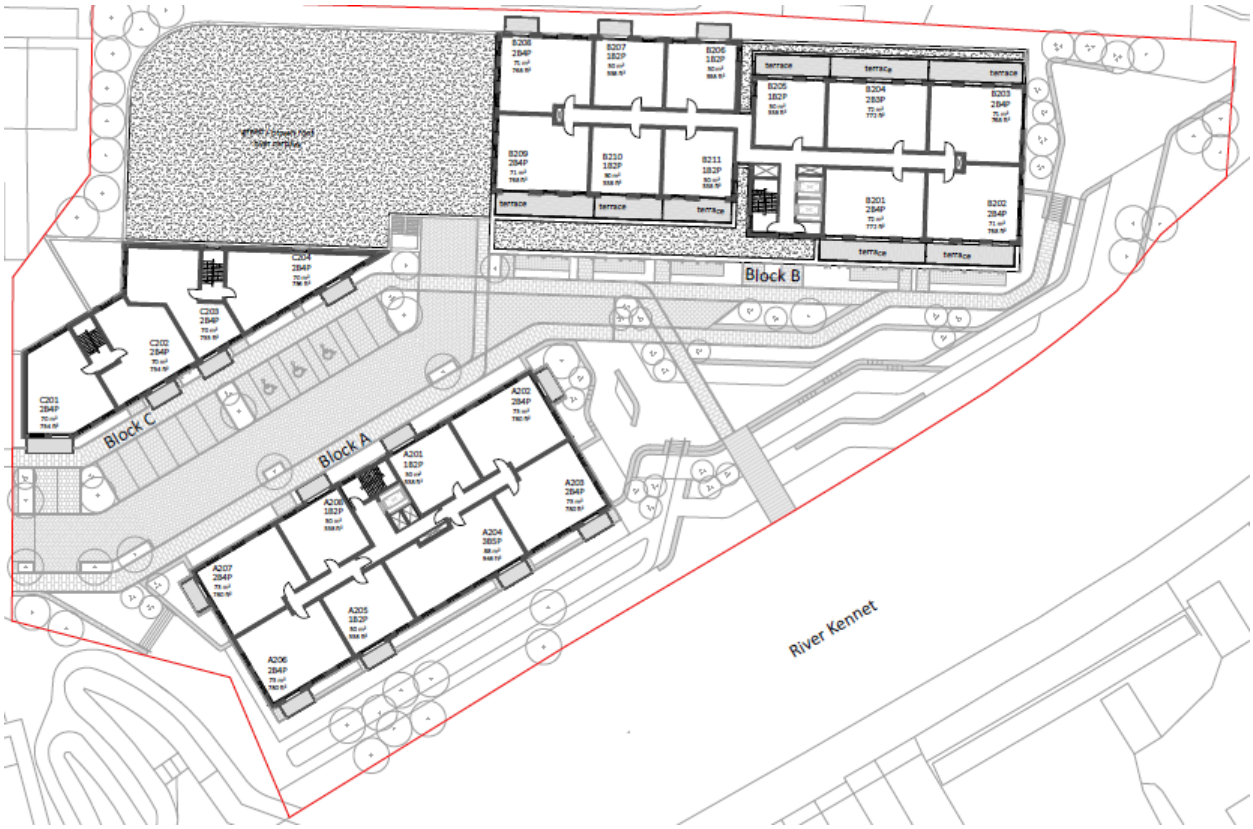

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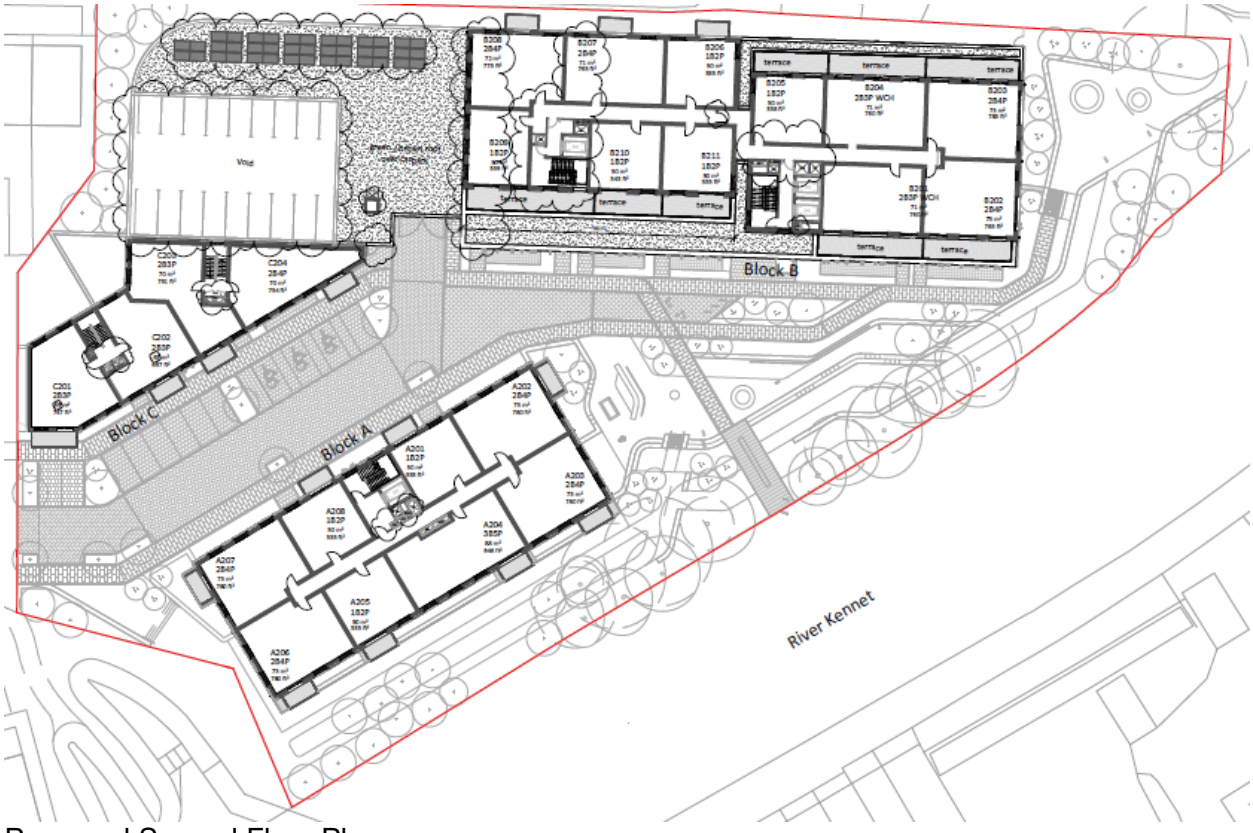

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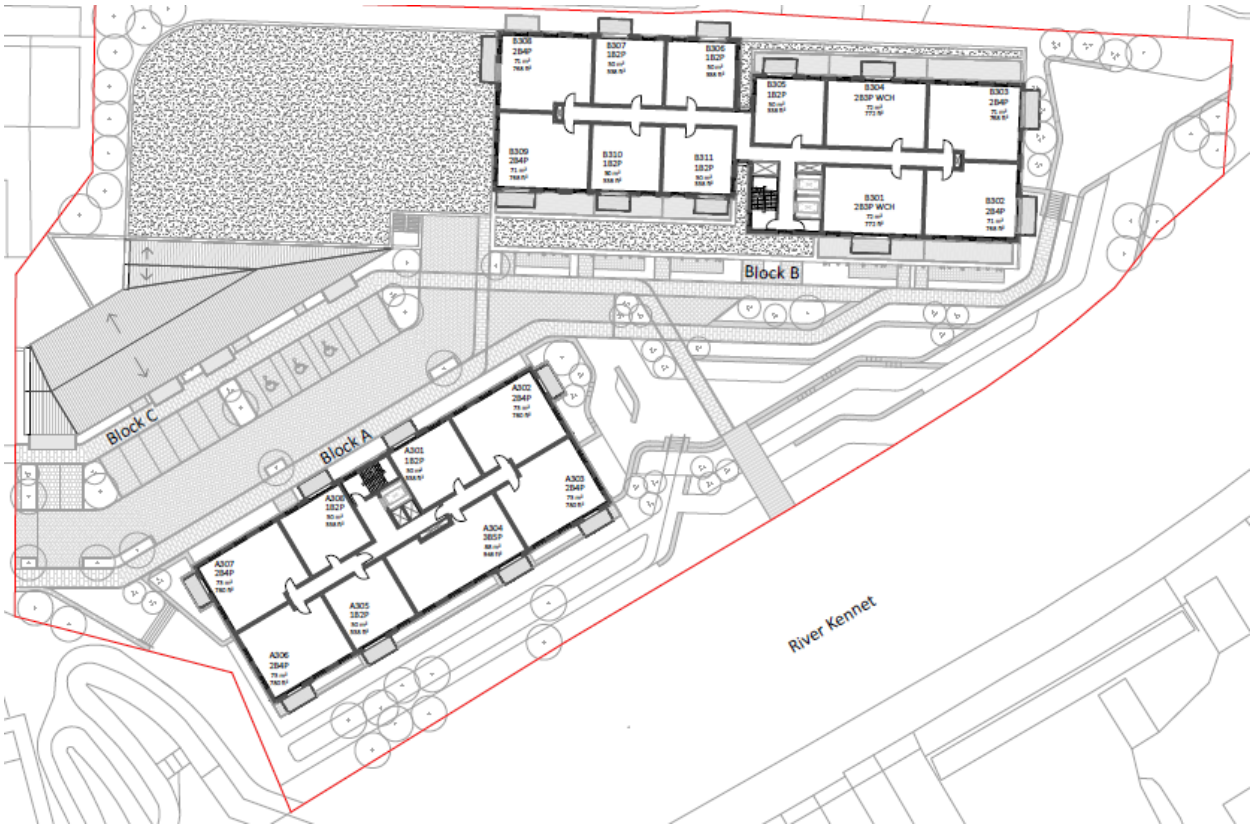

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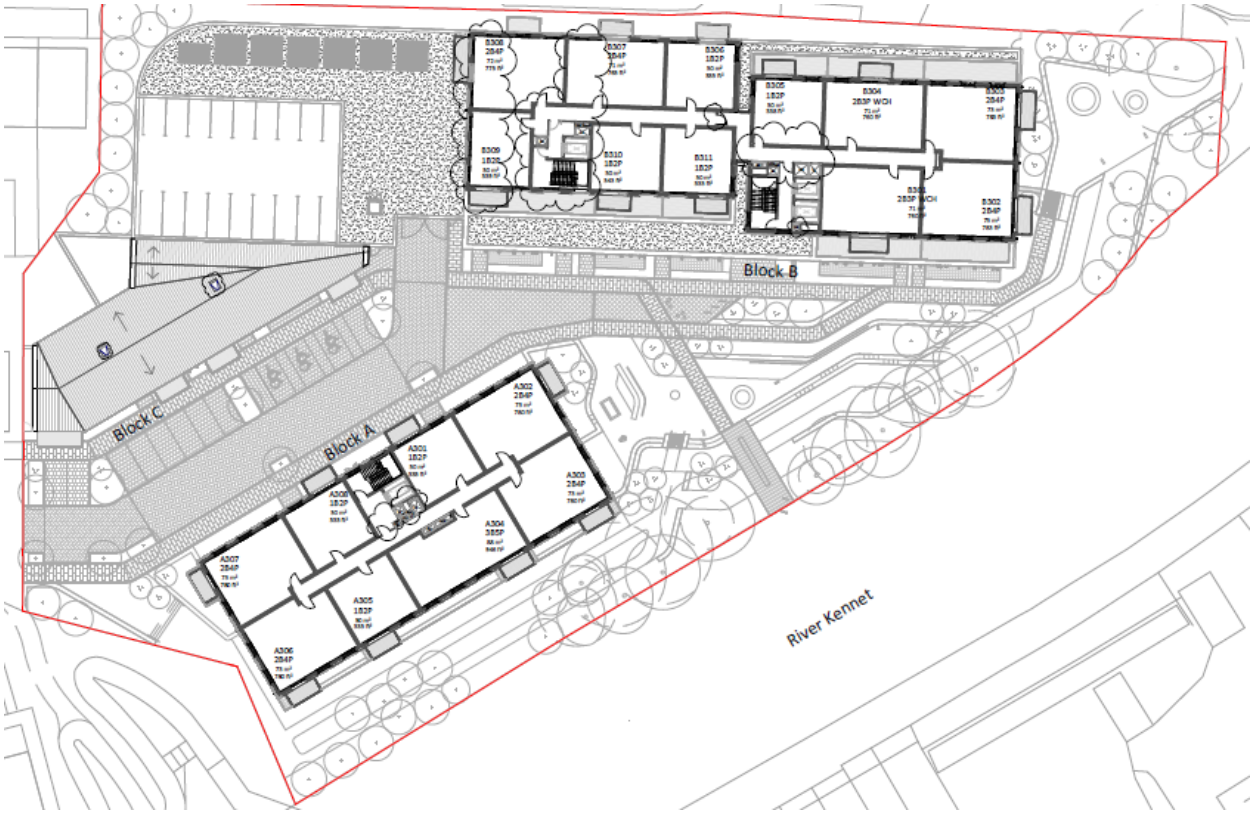

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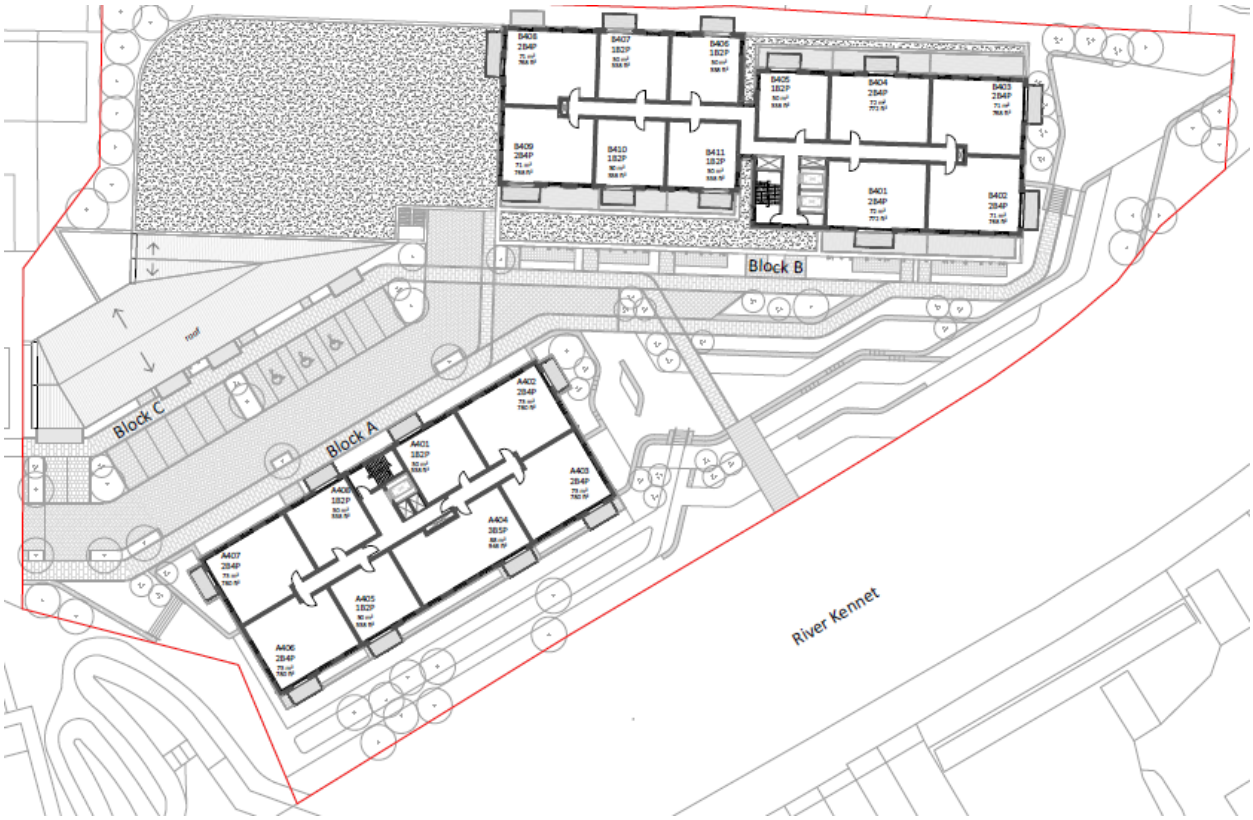

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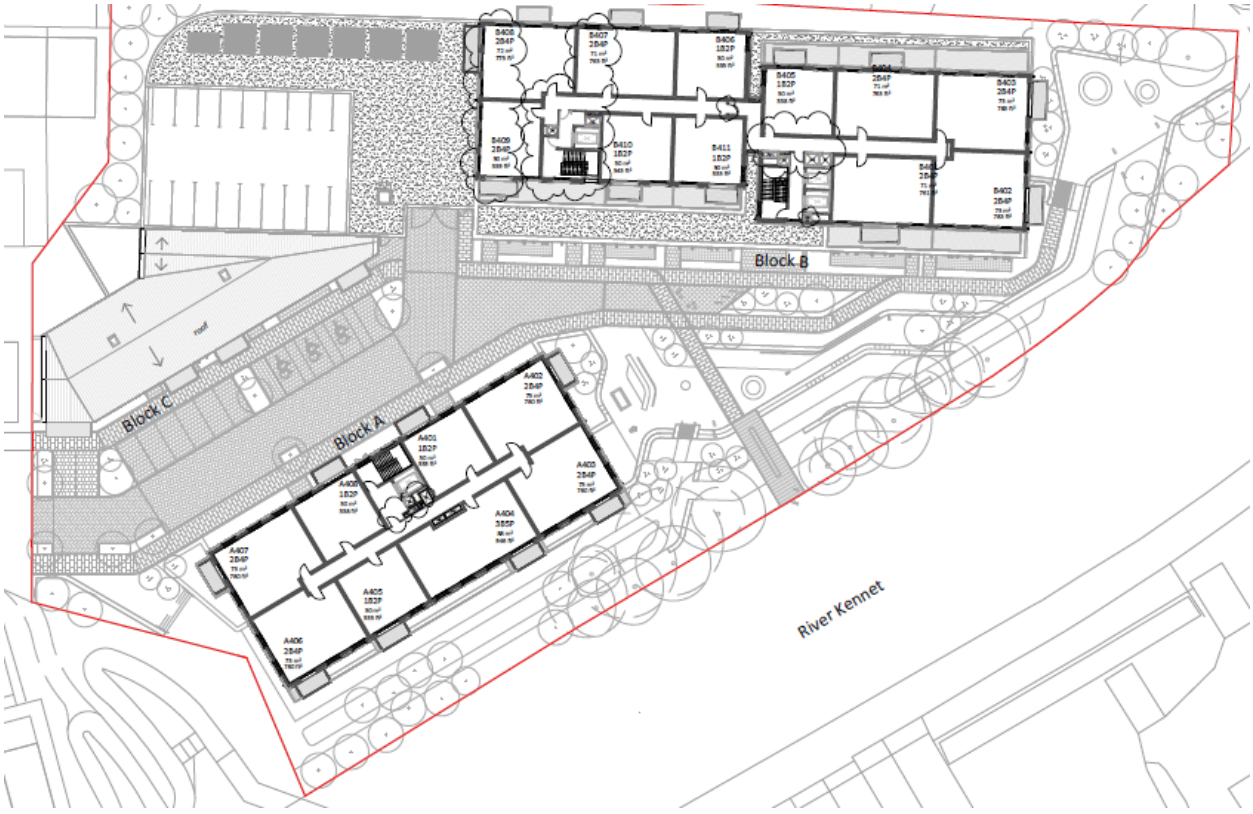

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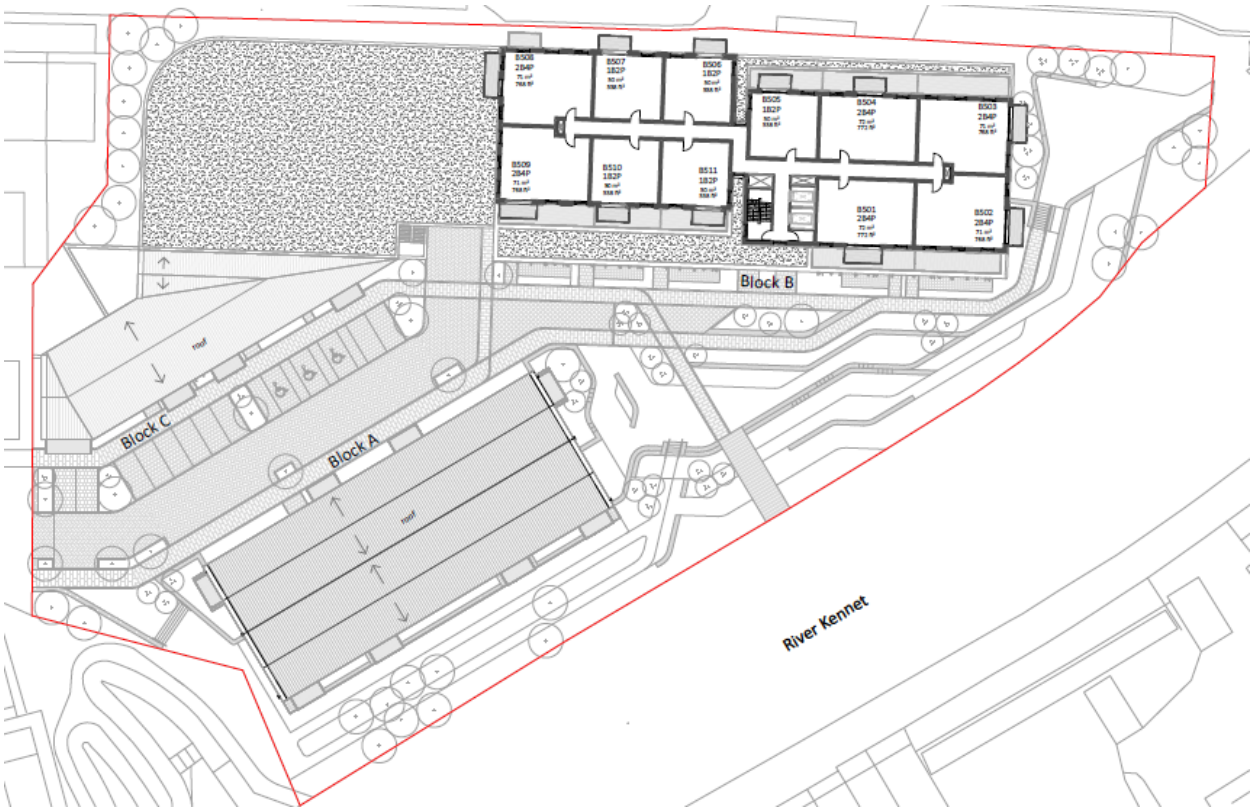

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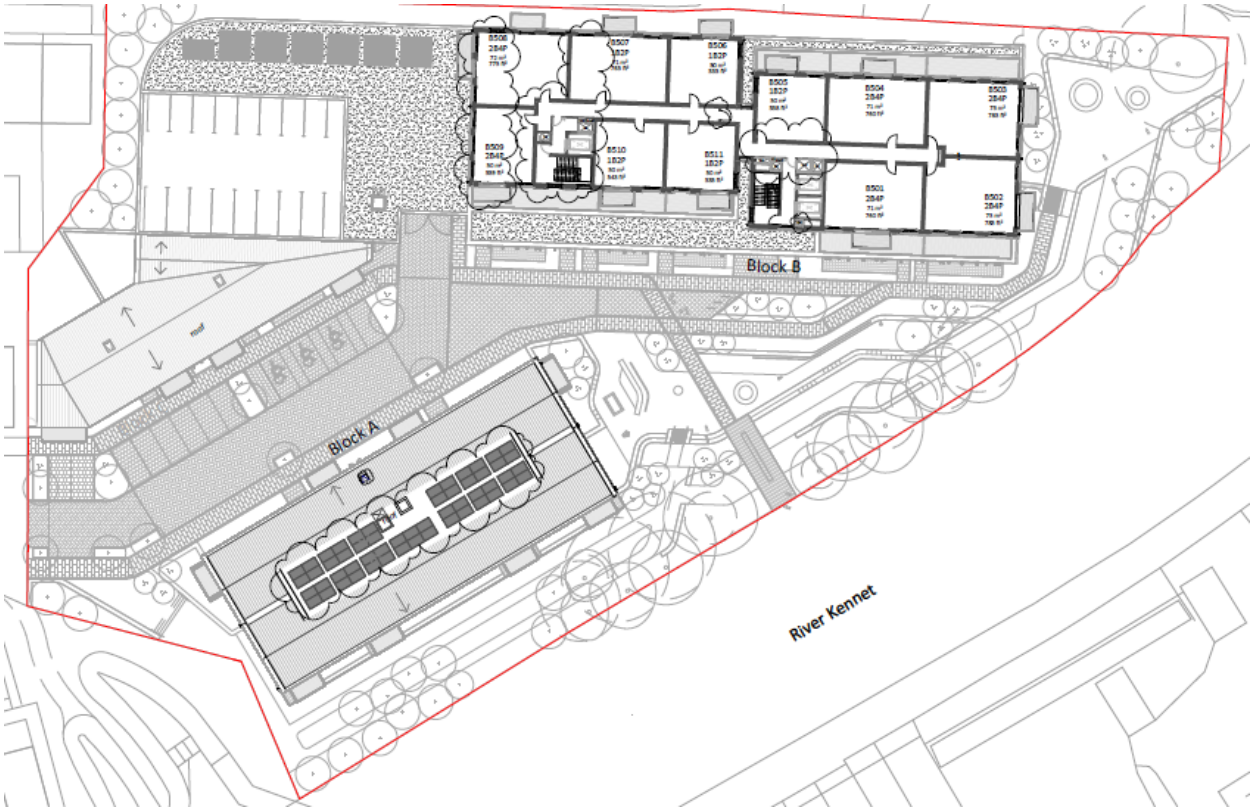

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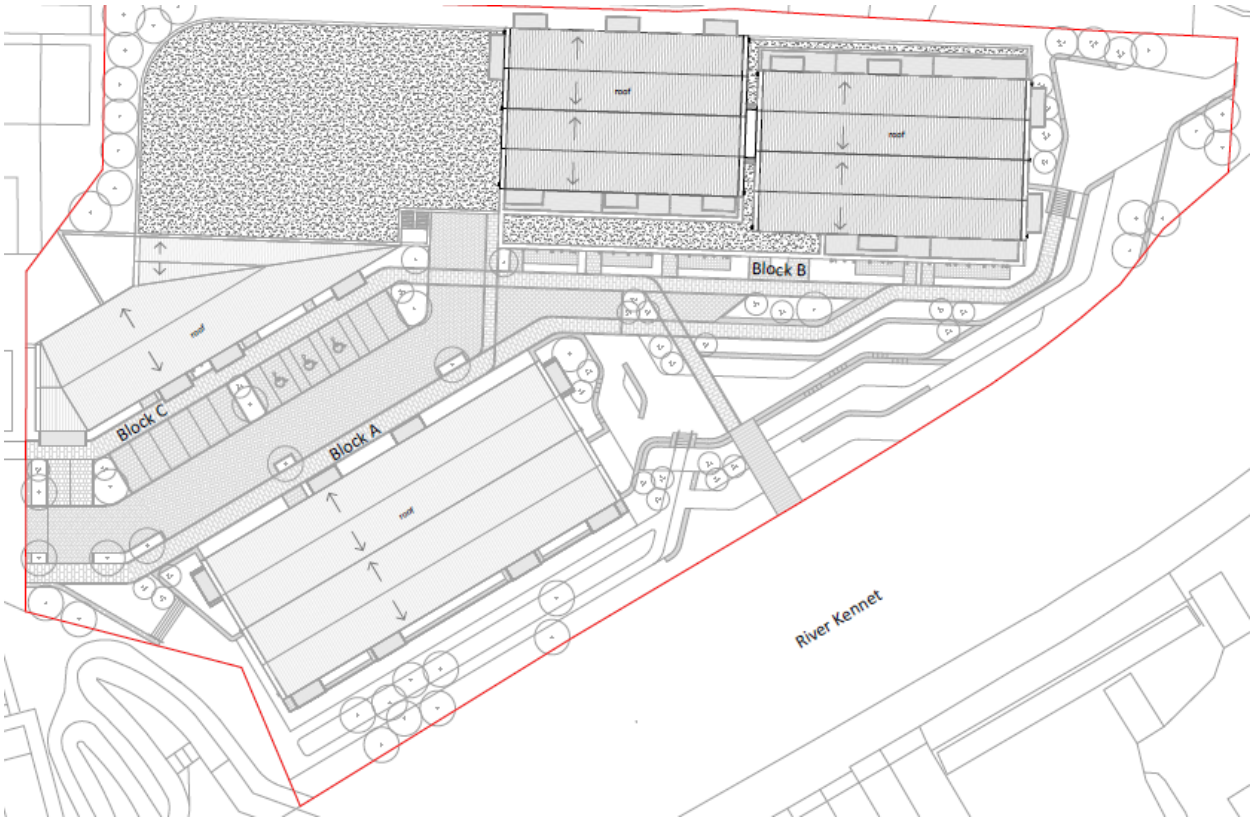

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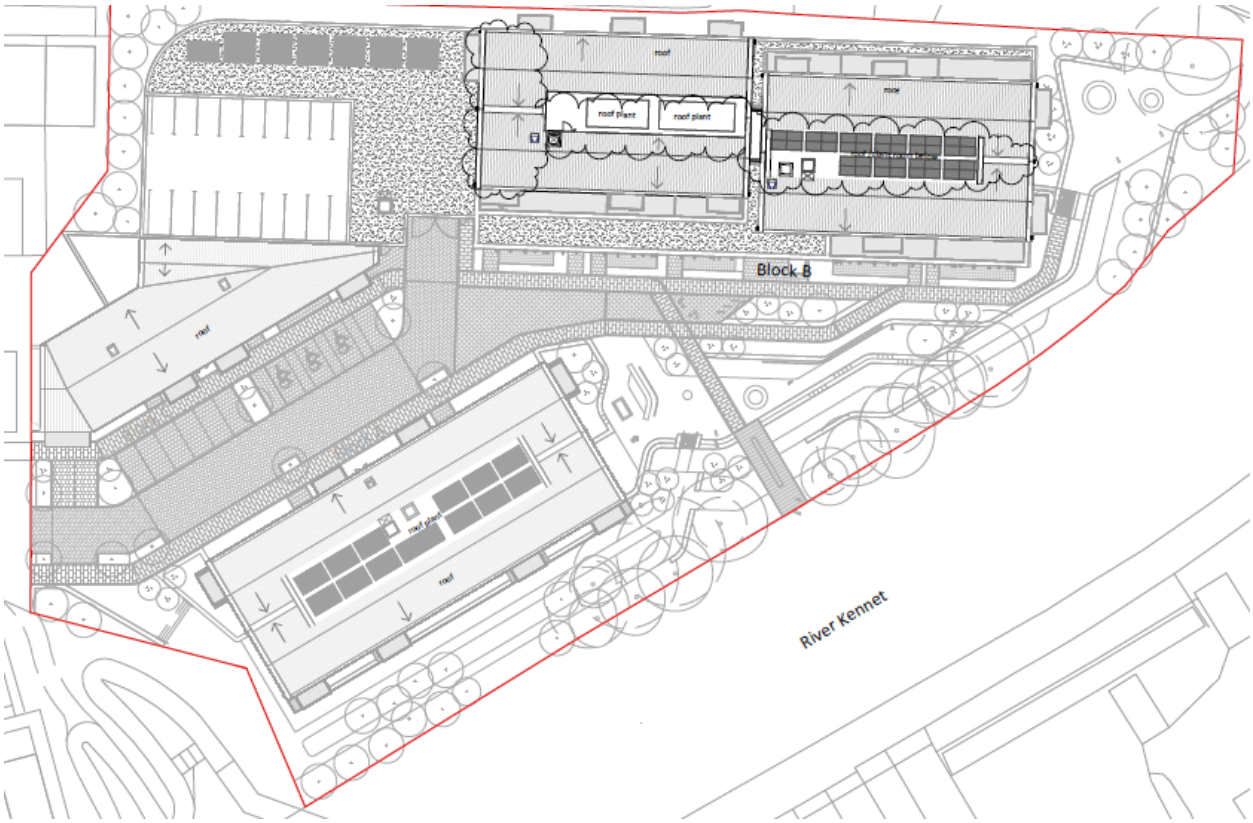

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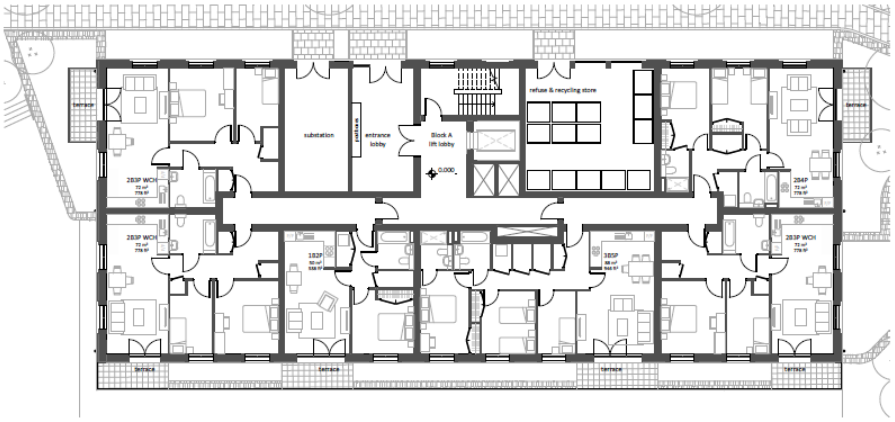
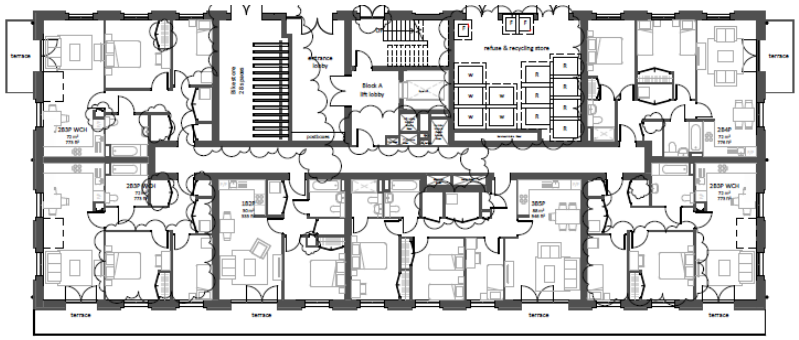


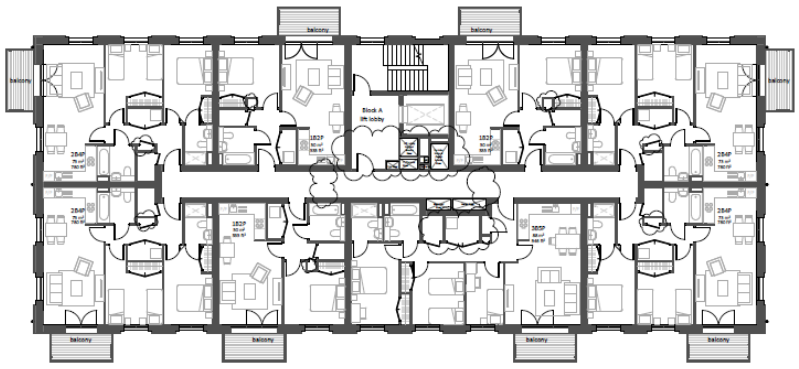
1 Ground Floor Plan
1 : 100

2 First to Fourth Floor Plan
1 : 100

Building A Approved Floor Plans



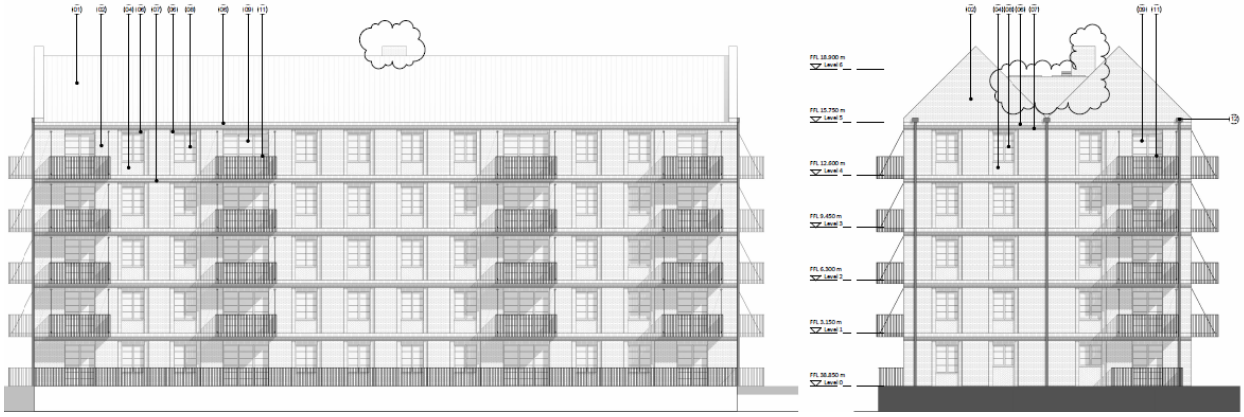
1 Ground Floor Plan
1 : 100



2 First to Fourth Floor Plan
1 : 100

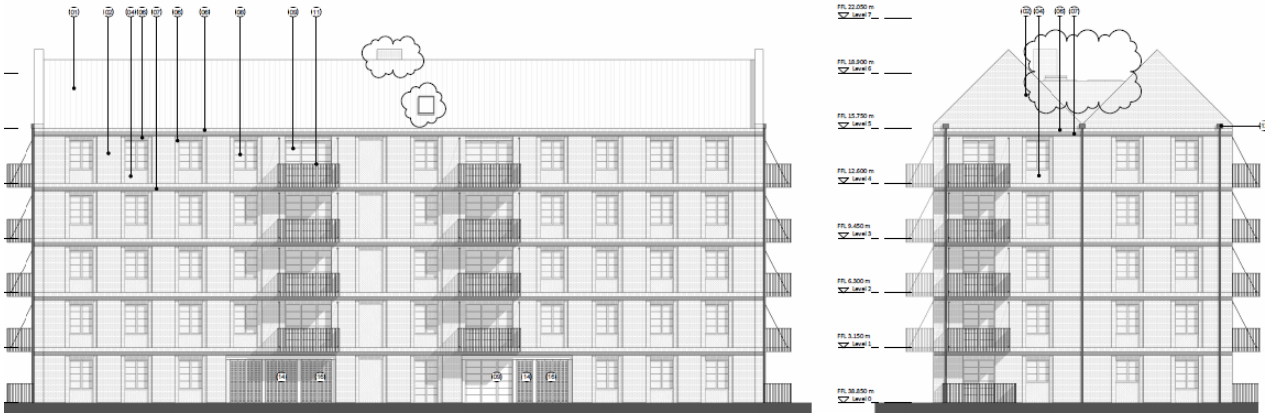
Building A Proposed Floor Plans

Building A Approved South and East Elevations



Building A Proposed South and East Elevations

Building A Approved North and West Elevations



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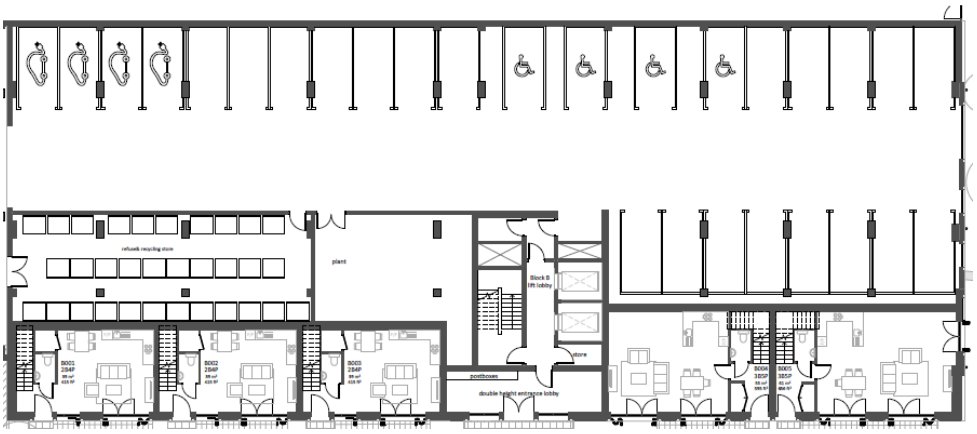
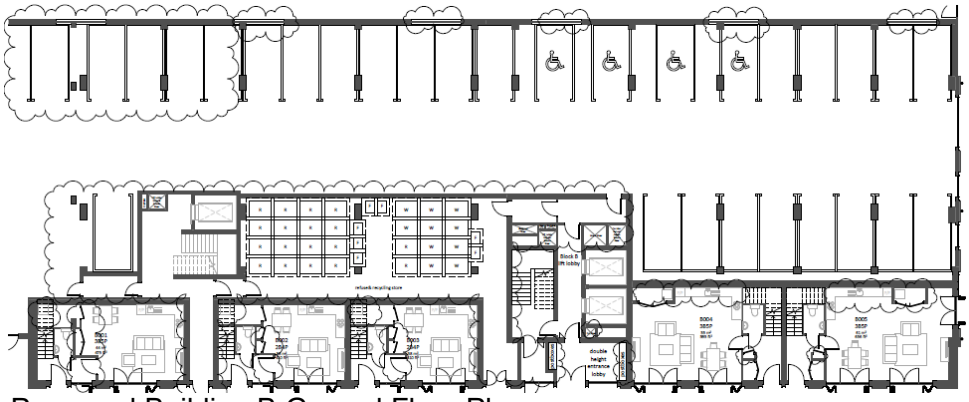
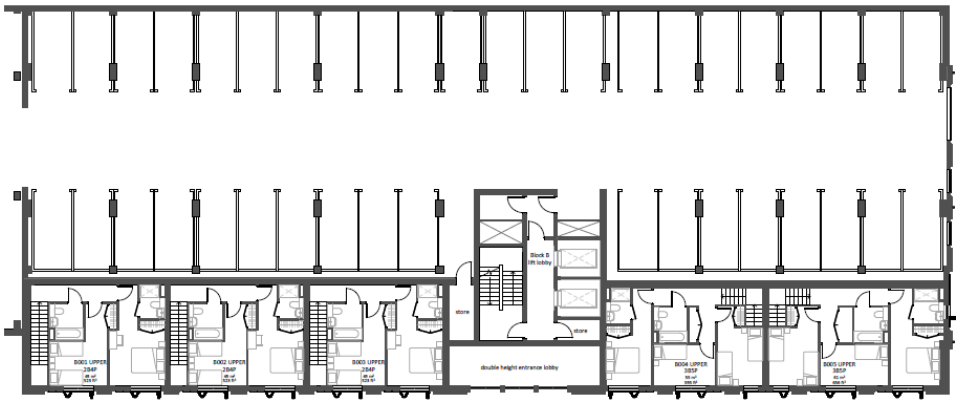


Approved Building B Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Building B Ground Floor Plan



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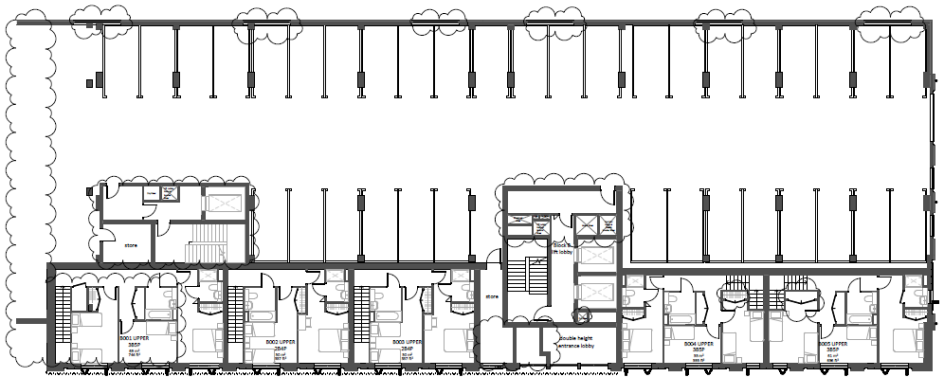

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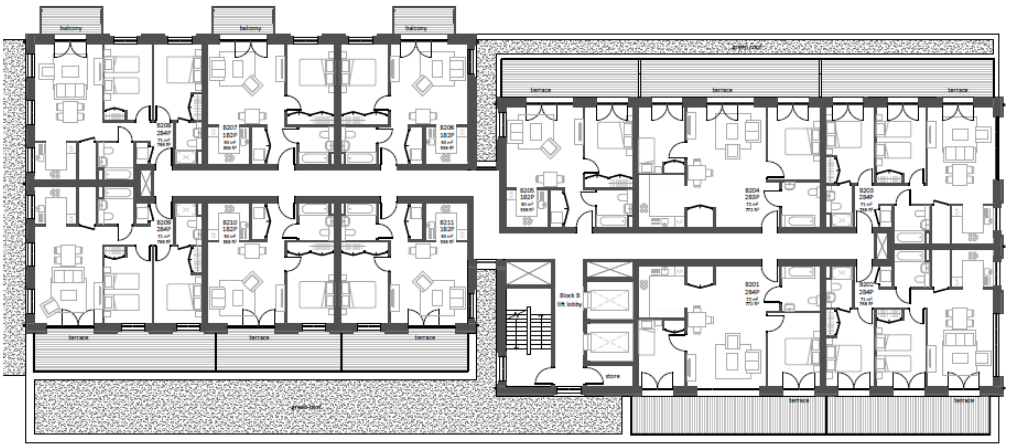

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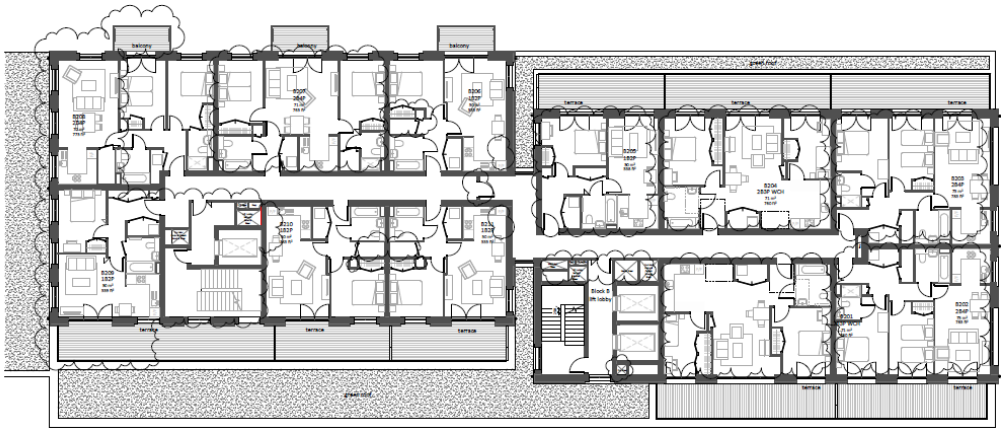

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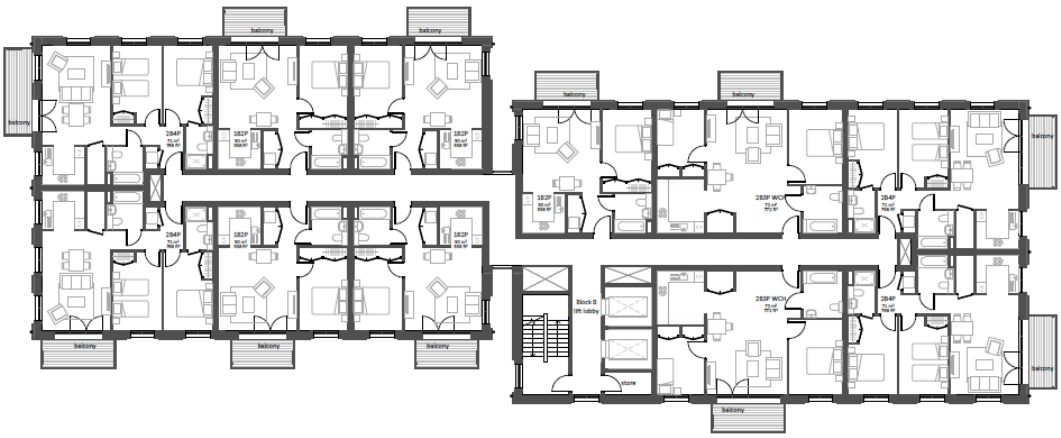

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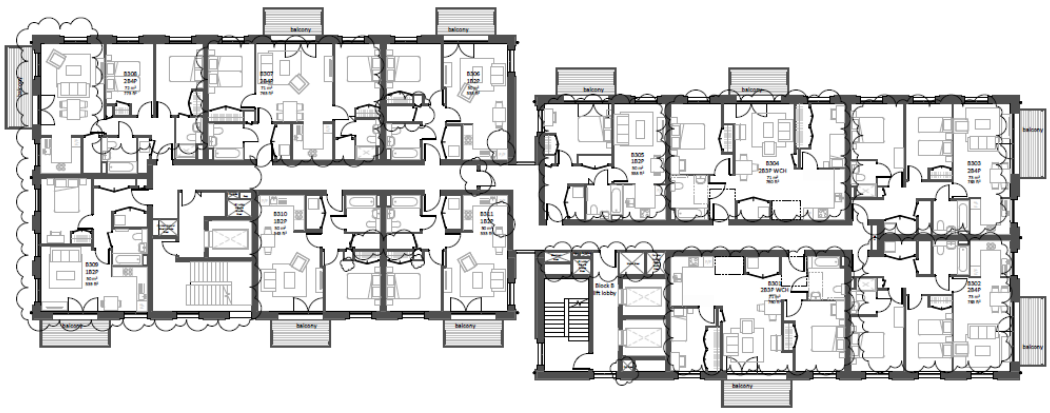
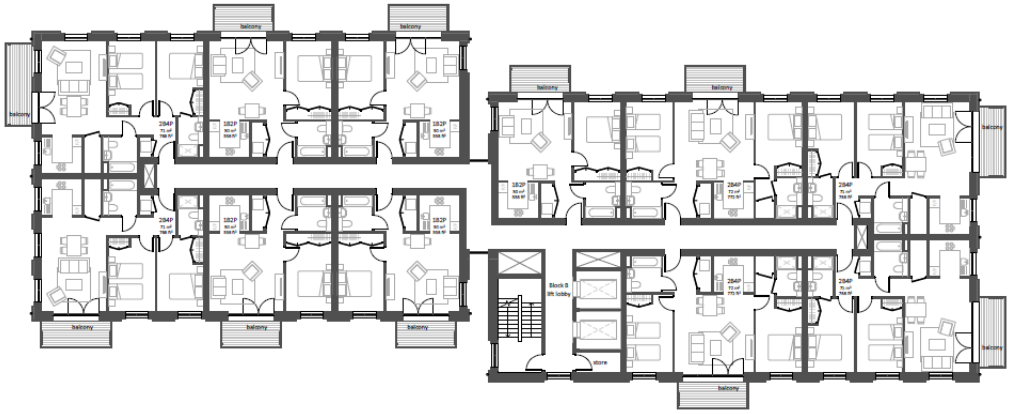


Proposed Building B Third Floor Plan



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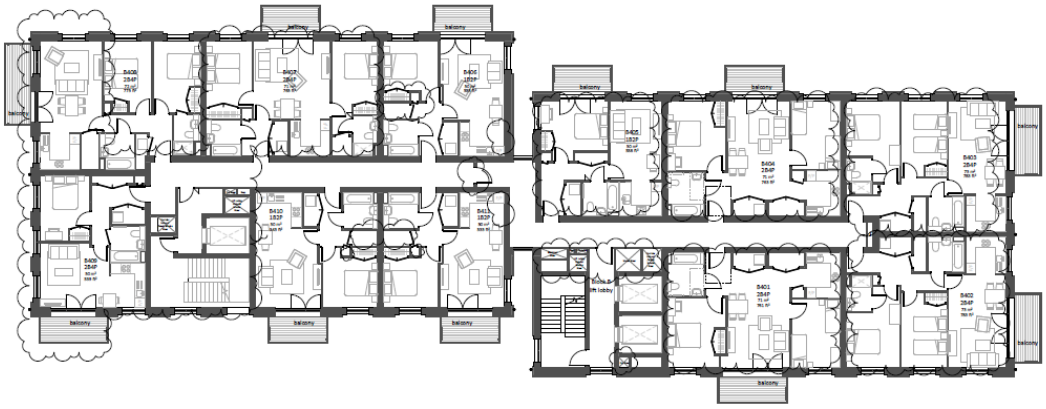
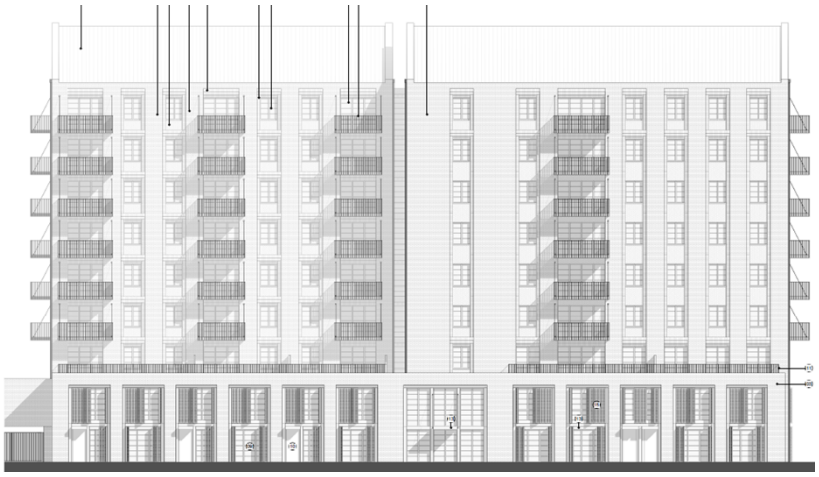


Proposed Building B Fourth to Eighth Floor Plans



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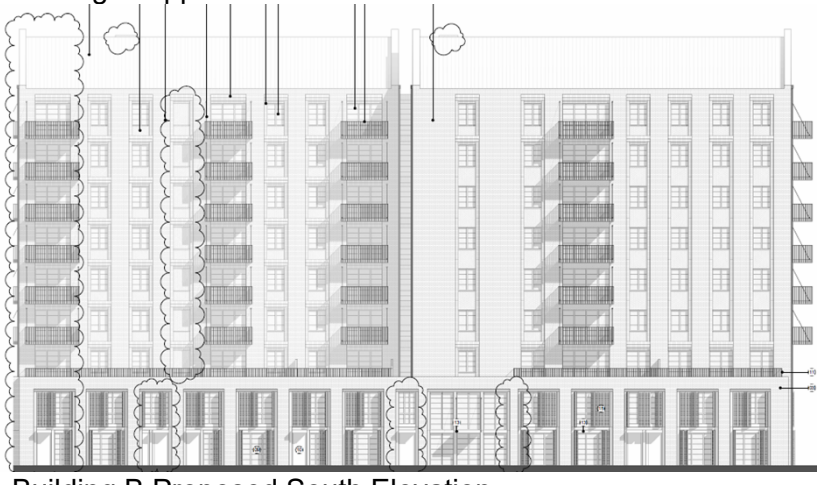
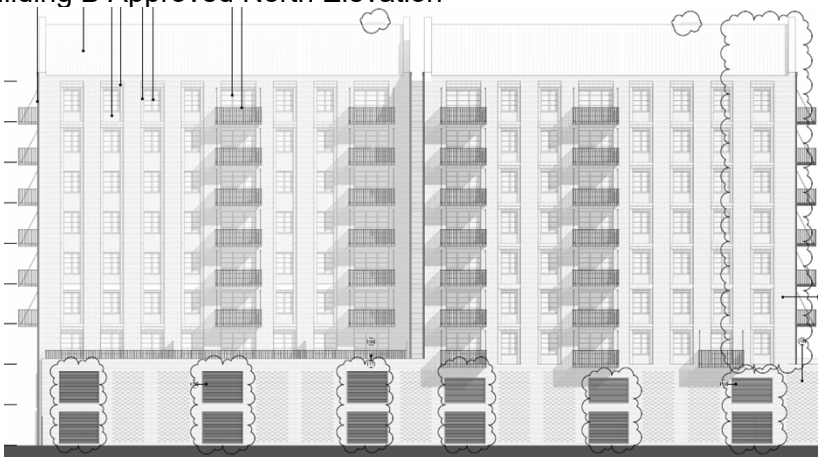
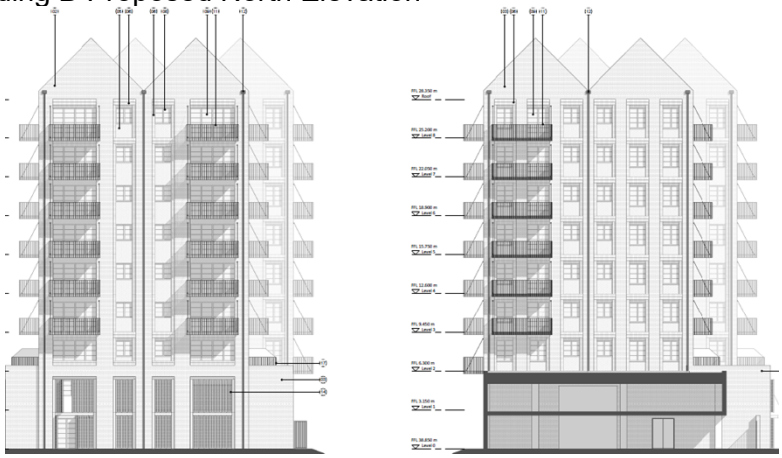


Building B Proposed South Elevation

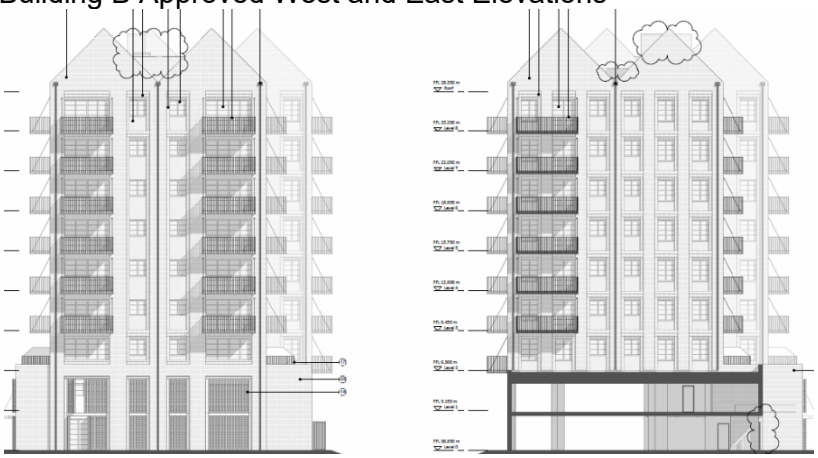
Building B Approved North Elevation



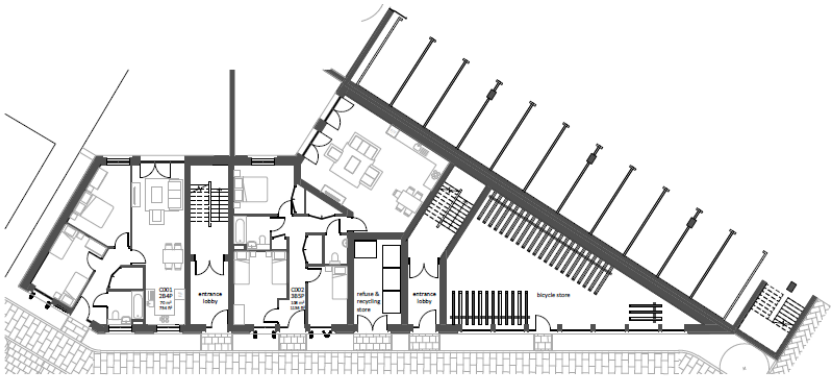
Building B Proposed North Elevation



Building B Approved West and East Elevations



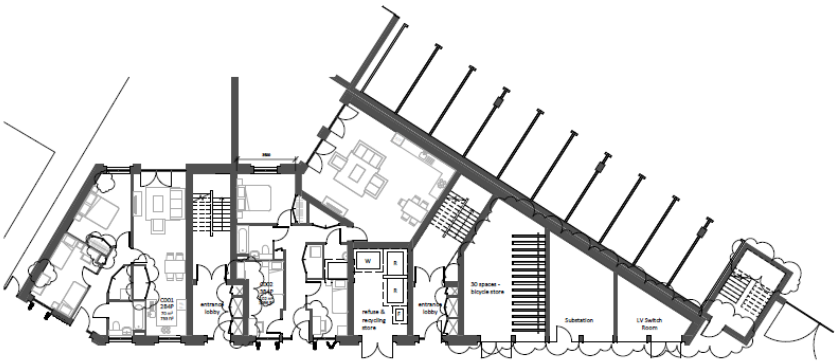
Building B Proposed West and East Elevations



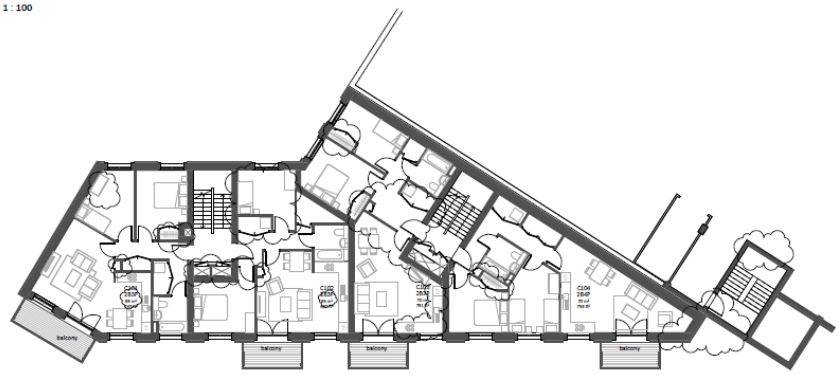
Ground Floor Plan
1 : 100

First to Second Floor Plan

Building C Approved Floor Plans



1 Ground Floor Plan
1 : 100



2 First to Second Floor Plan

Building C Proposed Floor Plans

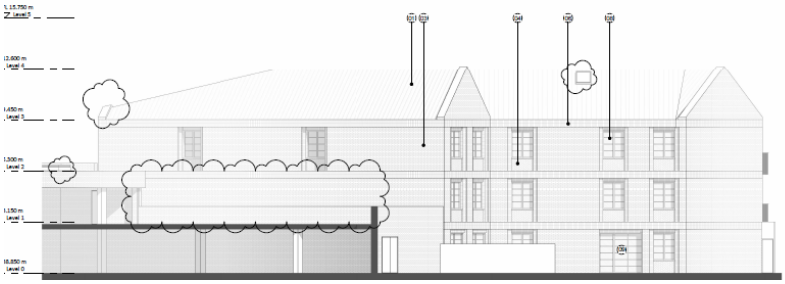
1 Proposed South Elevation
1 : 100

2 Proposed West Elevation
1 : 100

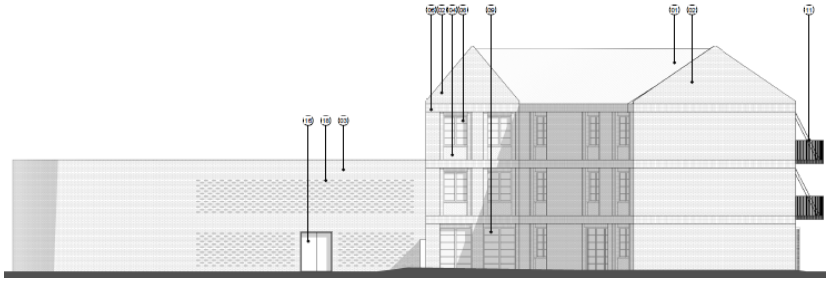
Building C Approved South North and West Elevations

1 Proposed South Elevation
1 : 100

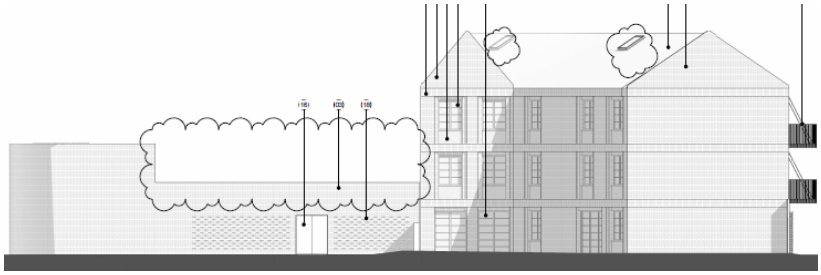
2 Proposed West Elevation
1 : 100



Building C Approved South North and West Elevations



Building C Approved East Elevation



Building C Proposed East Elevation

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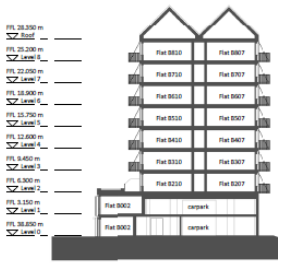
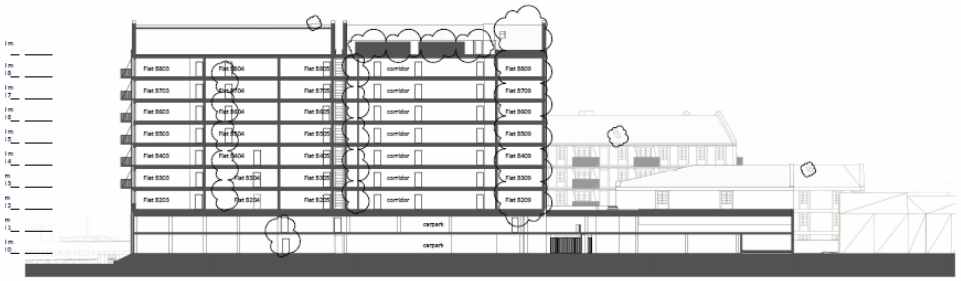
1 : 250



2 Proposed section
1 : 250

Approved Section Plans



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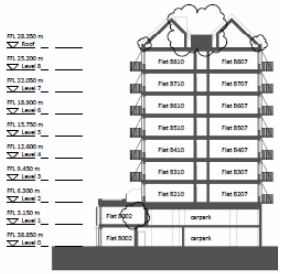
1 : 250



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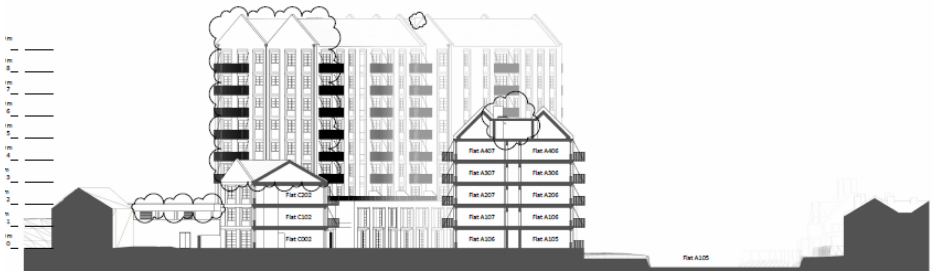
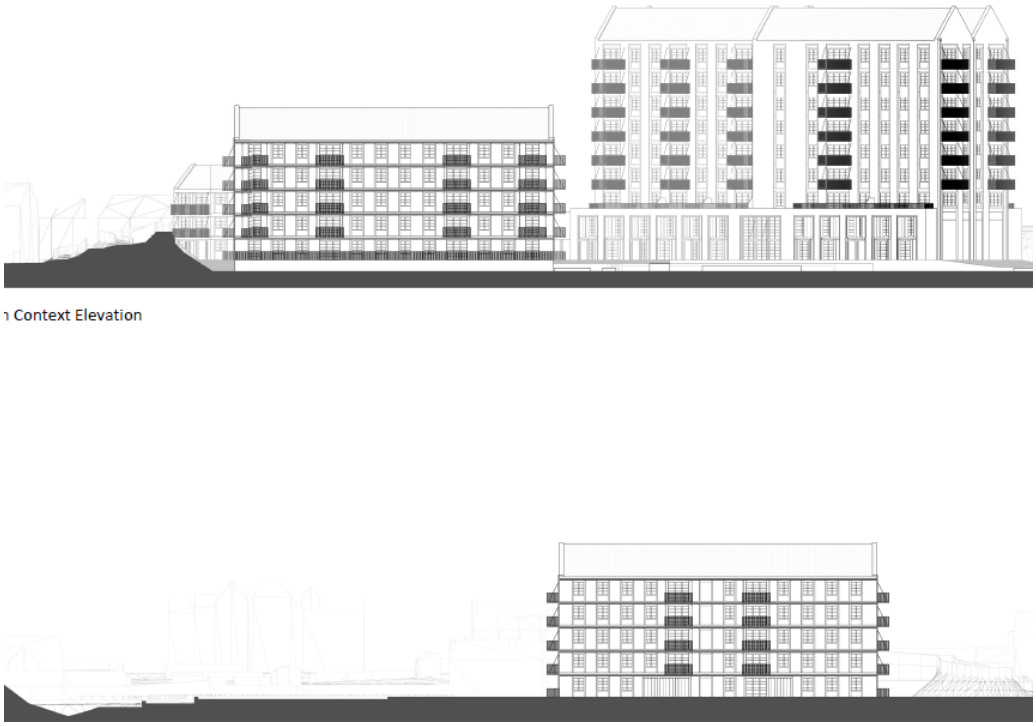
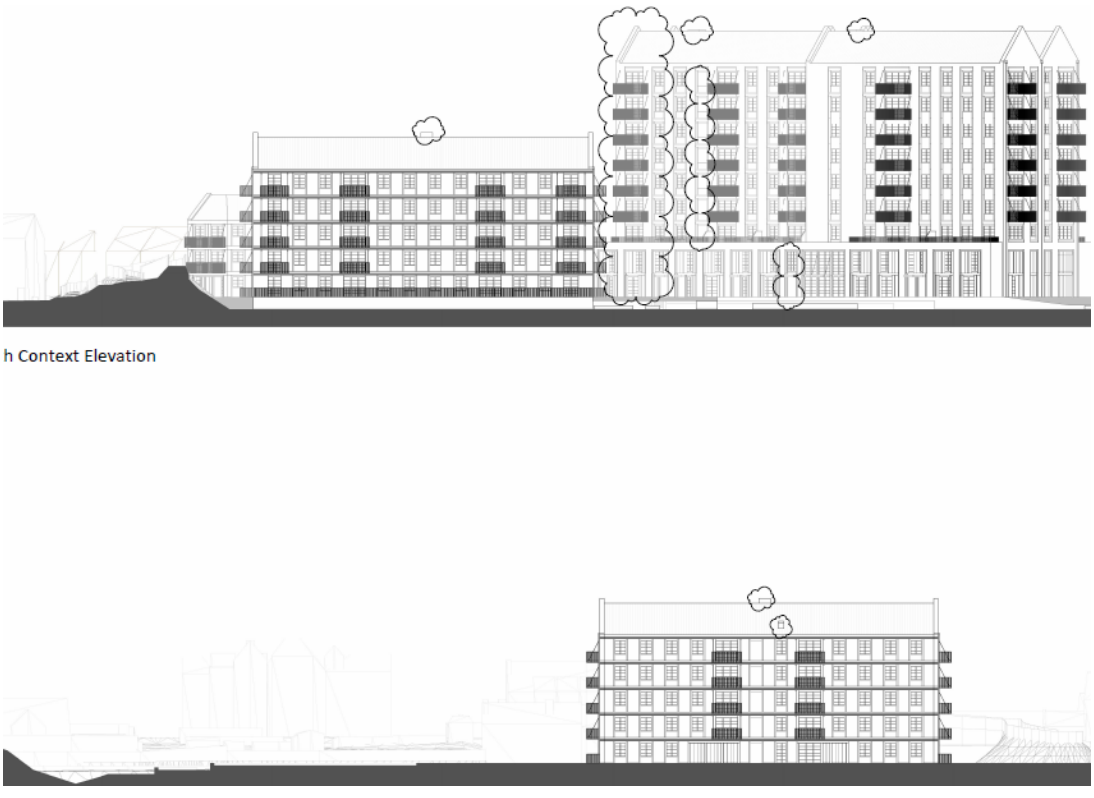
1 : 250



Proposed Section Plans



Approved Development Context Elevations Building A and B



Approved Development Context Elevations Buildings A and B

1 Proposed East Context Elevation
1 : 250

Approved Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

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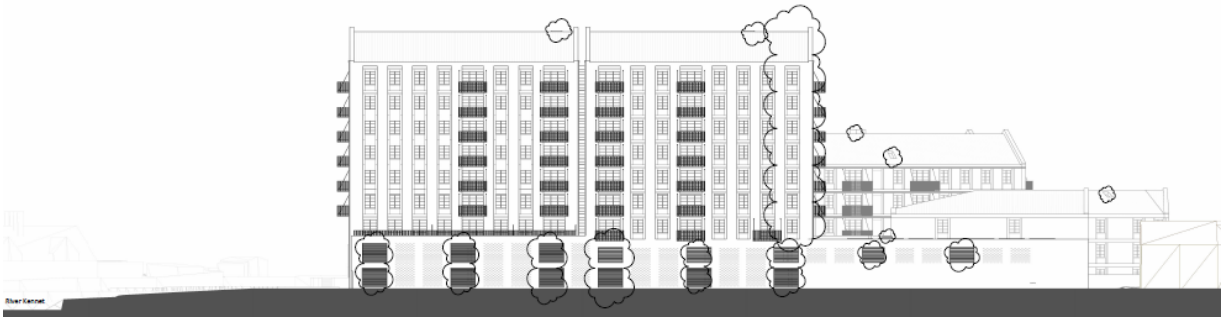
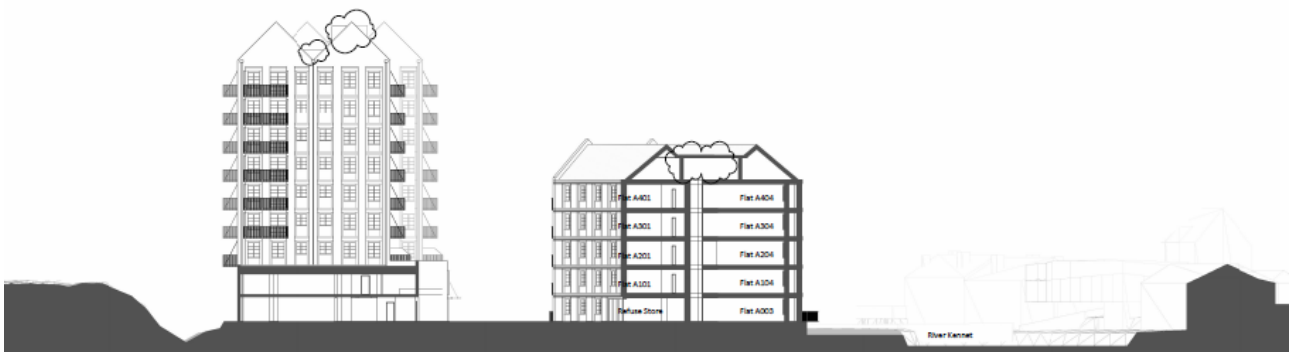


Proposed Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

Context Elevation

Approved Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

Context Elevation



Proposed Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

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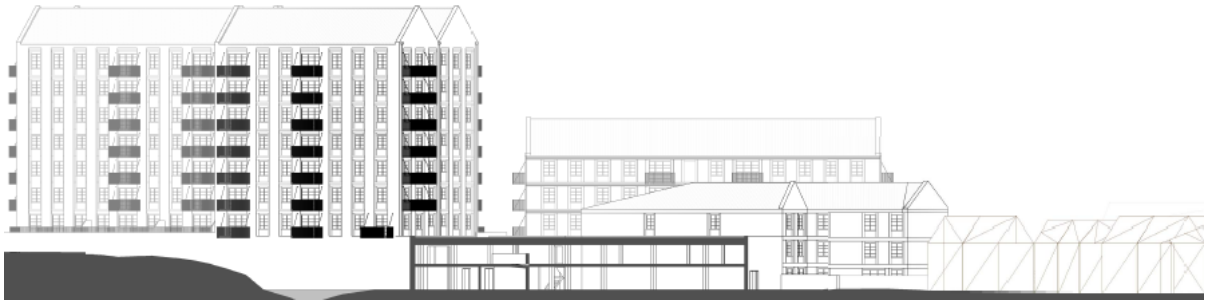

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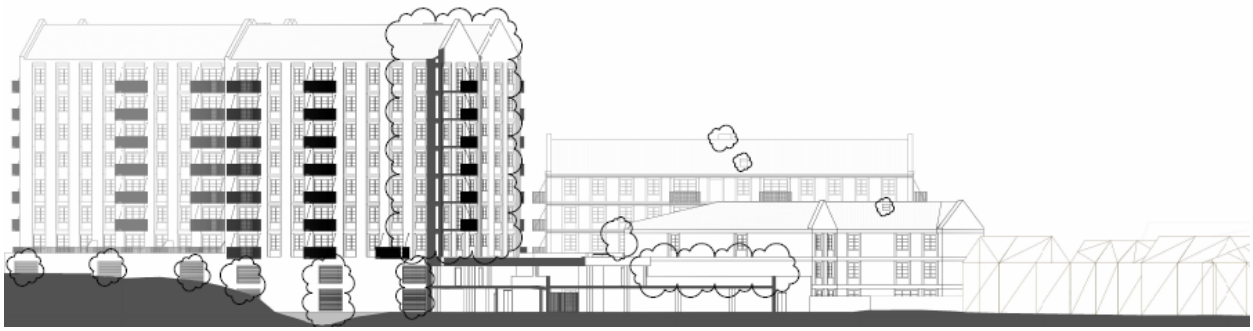


Proposed Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

Approved Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

Proposed Development Context Elevations Buildings A, B and C

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL **ITEM NO.**
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13h November 2019

Ward: Abbey
Application No.: 190627/FUL
Address: Gas Holder Site Alexander Turner Close
Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space
Date valid: 28th May 2019
Application target decision date: 27th August 2019
Extension of time date: 4th December 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to :

1. Confirmation from the Council's Ecologist that the final ecological surveys have been carried out to an appropriate standard and that the proposed ecological mitigation/enhancement measures are acceptable, and;

Delegate to the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services (HPDRS) to i) **GRANT** full planning permission, subject to the satisfactory completion of the Section 106 agreement and subject to outstanding sustainability (carbon off-setting) matters being satisfactory resolved with these matters being delegated to Officers to further assess and determine or ii) Refuse full planning permission if the S106 agreement is not completed and sustainability matters resolved by 4th December 2019 **(**unless officers on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agree to a later date for completion of the legal agreement)

The S106 to include the following heads of terms:

- Provision of 15 on-site residential units as affordable housing. 10 x shared ownership units (3 x 3 bedroom units and 7 x 2 bedroom units) and 5 x affordable rented units (5 x 2 bedroom units) and a deferred payment mechanism (the principles of which will be subject to an update report)
- A financial contribution of £200,000 towards bus service improvements
- A financial contribution of £200,000 towards leisure and recreation improvements
- Section 278 Highways agreement to provide the works to connect the access road and footpath to Alexander Turner Close
- Section 278 Highways agreement to provide the works for the new link to the pedestrian footbridge over the River Kennet
- Provision of on-street parking controls.
- Car club (2 spaces – the 1st provided prior to occupation then the 2nd should demand arise)
- A construction phases Employment Skills and Training Plan or equivalent financial

contribution

Conditions:

1. Time limit – standard three years for implementation
2. In accordance with the approved Plans
3. Pre-commencement (barring demolition) submission and approval of materials
4. Pre-commencement submission and approval of Construction and Demolition Management Plan (consult National Rail)
5. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a parking layout plant, pre-occupation provision of parking spaces and retention of the spaces thereafter free from obstruction
6. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a cycle parking layout plan, pre-occupation provision of spaces and retention of the spaces thereafter free from obstruction.
7. Pre-occupation provision of approved vehicular access
8. Pre-occupation provision of the approved bin stores
9. Within 5 months of first occupation submission and approved of a travel plan
10. Annual travel plan review
11. Pre-commencement submission and approval - Contaminated Land 1: site characterisation report
12. Contaminated Land 2: remediation scheme
13. Contaminated Land 3: implementation of remediation scheme
14. Contaminated Land 4: reporting any unexpected contamination
15. Contaminated Land 5: verification report of completed works
16. No piling works other than with the written consent of the LPA (consult EA and Network Rail)
17. No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted other than with the written consent of the LPA (consult EA)
18. Pre-commencement submission and approval - Land Gas 1: site investigation report
19. Land Gas 2: remediation scheme
20. Land Gas 3: implementation of remediation scheme
21. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a scheme for provision and management of a minimum 10m wide buffer zone to the banks of the Kennet (consult EA)
22. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a landscape and ecological maintenance plan (consult EA).
23. In accordance with the approved flood risk assessment
24. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a SuDs scheme including implementation and maintenance details (consult EA)
25. Pre-occupation implementation of SuDs
26. Pre-occupation lighting scheme details to be submitted/approved/maintained as such thereafter (including consultation with the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer at Network Rail and RBC Ecology Consultant)
27. Pre-commencement (barring demolition) glint and glare study (consult Network Rail at the time of submission)
28. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a security strategy. Pre-occupation implementation of the strategy and its retention thereafter.
29. Pre-commencement submission and approval of hard and soft landscaping scheme

30. Implementation of approved landscaping details.
31. Landscaping maintenance
32. Landscaping: planting specification including native species and maintenance
33. Pre-commencement submission and approval of a final arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan
34. Pre-commencement submission and approval of boundary treatments (consult Network Rail)
35. Pre-occupation pay facilities to be submitted and approved. Pre-occupation implementation and retention thereafter.
36. No use of flat roof to car park building as a roof garden, terrace or balcony.
37. No fixing or installing of miscellaneous item to the external faces or roof of any building without the prior approval from the LPA
38. Provision of 7 wheelchair user units as per the approved plans
39. Pre-occupation implementation and retention thereafter of the specifications within the approved noise mitigation scheme
40. Pre-occupation implementation of the ventilation specifications within the air quality mitigation scheme.
41. Hours of construction: 8am-6pm (Mon-Fri); 9am-1pm (Sat); no Sundays/holidays
42. No bonfires during construction
43. Pre-commencement pest site clearance
44. Pre-occupation submission and approval of details of measures to prevent pests accessing the bin store
45. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of entrance signage/graphics
46. Pre-occupation evidence of dwellings achieving zero carbon homes standards
47. Pre-occupation provision and retention of lifts to Blocks A and B
48. Pre-occupation provision of approved electric vehicle charging spaces.
49. Pre-commencement submission and approval of proposed site and floor levels

Informatives:

1. Positive and proactive requirement
2. S.106 applies
3. CIL-liable
4. Terms and conditions
5. Pre-commencement conditions
6. Works affecting the Highway
7. Fee for conditions discharge
8. Building Regulations – noise between residential units
9. Thames Water requirements
10. Environment Agency requirements
11. Part Wall Requirements – Network Rail
12. No encroachment – Network Rail
13. No foundation work to penetrate Network Rail land
14. Scaffolding – Network Rail

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The application site measures 0.71 hectares and is broadly triangular in shape. It is bounded by the River Kennet to the south and the east, railway lines to the north, which sits on a 3.5 meter high embankment, and residential development to the west. This includes the Kennet Walk development and the more recent development along Robert Parker Road and Alexander Turner Close.

1.2 The site itself is occupied by the existing 33 metre high Gas Holder, some ancillary buildings, a water tower and an area of hardstanding. The north and south boundaries of the site benefit from existing vegetation, predominately in the form of trees, although the majority of these are situated beyond the application boundary for the site.

1.3 The site formerly comprised one small part of the wider Reading gasworks which previously extended to the west of the site and was first established in 1880. The site has considerable ground contamination due to its historical use. The remaining Gas Holder on the site, known as GH4, was built in 1916 by C. & W. Walker Limited. It replaced an earlier Gas Holder that had been on the site since the late-19th century. The design of the Gas Holder comprises a narrow lattice box-section standard. It is identified as a 'Type 37' in the categories identified as part of the study of Gas Holders commissioned by English Heritage (now Historic England) in 2000, and it is a late example of its type.

1.4 In the mid-20th century the production of gas shifted towards intake from the North Sea and Gas Holders became increasingly obsolete. The investment and upgrading of infrastructure means that gas is now stored more efficiently in underground pipework. The majority of the holders at the Reading gasworks were dismantled and GH4 was decommissioned in March 2008. The hazardous substances consent for the Gas Holder was revoked at the end of 2012.

1.5 The site is currently owned and operated by Southern Gas Network (SGN), however the Gas Holder has been taken out of service and so is no longer in use. The Gas Holder occupies the majority of the site and the existing buildings and hardstanding remain in use as a depot for SGN, where vehicles and materials are stored.

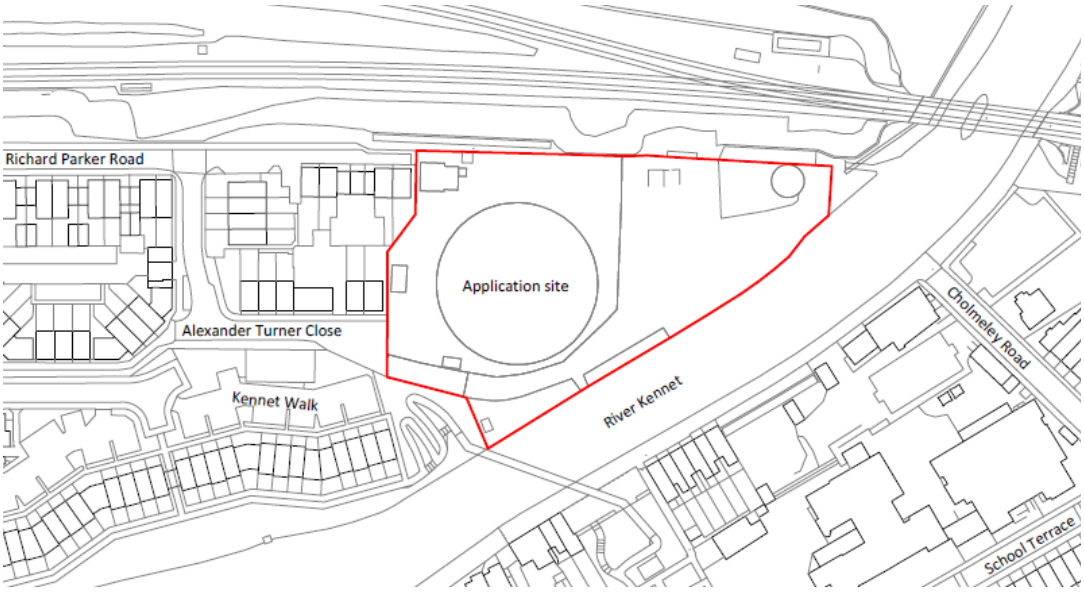
1.6 There is a pedestrian footbridge crossing the River Kennet adjacent to the site, which provides access to New Town.

1.7 As well as the Grade II Listed New Town Primary School building, which is situated to the south of the site on the opposite side of the river, the railway bridge to the north-east of the Site is also Grade II listed. These and other local heritage assets are given full consideration in the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) which accompanies this application. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area.

1.8 Part of the site falls within the Reading Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to its proximity to the railway line where it passes through the built-up area. The site also falls within Flood Zone 2.

1.9 The site also forms the far eastern corner of the East Side Major Opportunity Area (EMO) which has been allocated for development as a new community at the eastern fringes of the centre when the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) was adopted in 2009 (Policy RC3). The Gas Holder is the last phase of development to come forward and is still allocated within the New Reading Local Plan (2019) under Policy CR13d. Here it is identified as an area for residential development, which should enhance the character of the mouth of the Kennet and should maximise the potential of the site to be a river gateway to Reading.

1.10 In terms of vehicular access to the site, the only access is as used by SGN from sustainAlexander Turner Close, which connects to Robert Parker Road.



Location Plan

2. PLANNING HISTORY

Gas Holder Site

2.1 180392/Pre-Application Enquiry - Redevelopment of the existing gas holder site with a residential development of c. 120 no 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats with associated open space, landscaping, access and car parking – Advice given

2.2 181687/Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Opinion - Request for confirmation that a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 is not required – Confirmation given that EIA not required

42 Kenavon Drive

2.3 131280/Full Planning Permission - Erection of 192 dwellings with associated access, parking, landscaping and open space – Granted (with S106)

2.4 140782/Full Planning Permission - Construction of additional refuse storage and sub-station provision within the permitted residential scheme ref. 131280 at 42 Kenavon Drive – Granted

2.5 140786/Non Material Amendment – Non-material amendments to planning permission 131280 – Agreed

Former Homebase and Toys R Us Site

2.6 170509/Full Planning Permission - Demolition of the two existing retail (Homebase and former Toys R Us) structures and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 11 storeys in height, providing 765 (18 x studio, 302x1, 409x2 and 36x3- bed) residential units (Class C3), 5 commercial units (1x flexible Class A1-A4, B1 or D1-D2, 1x flexible D1 or D2, 1x flexible Class A1- A5, 1x flexible Class A3 or A4, 1x flexible A1-A5 or D1-D2 uses), various works to the public realm, including a new riverside square, landscaping, accesses, parking and associated works – Granted (with S106).

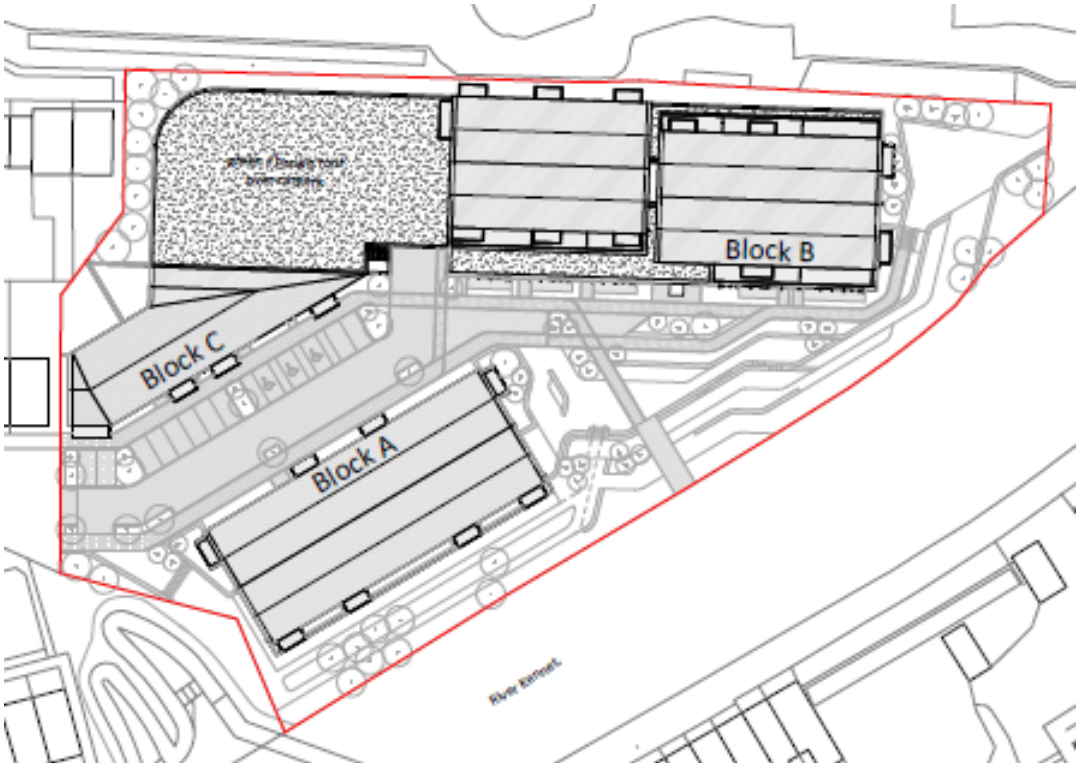
2 and 3 Forbury Place, Forbury Road

2.7 121826/Full Planning Permission - Demolition of existing building and construction of two new office buildings (Use Class B1) with associated access, car parking, servicing, landscaping and engineering works – Granted (with S106).

3. PROPOSALS

3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.

3.2 The proposed development is formed of 3 buildings; a 5 storey apartment building (Building A) parallel with but set back from the river edge, a taller 9 storey building on the northern boundary incorporating a covered 2 storey car park (Building B) and a 2 storey building (Building C) forming an extension to the existing homes along Alexander Turner Close. 127 car parking spaces are proposed.



Proposed Site Plan

3.3 A unit mix of 48 x 1 bedroom apartments (36.9%), 74 x 2 bedroom apartments (56.9%) and 8 x 3 bedroom apartments (6.2%) is proposed. Each proposed dwelling would have access to private amenity space. In blocks A and B this would be in the form of the balconies or terraces at ground floor whilst the ground floor units in block C would have private rear gardens.

3.4 Building A comprises 38 market apartments (including 3 wheelchair accessible homes) and is 5 storeys high and incorporates 13 x 1 bedroom apartments, 20 x 2 bedroom apartments and 5 x 3 bedroom apartments. The building incorporates a refuse store for residents of these apartments.

3.5 Building B comprises 82 units including 4 wheelchair accessible homes) and is 9 storeys high and incorporates 35 x 1 bedroom apartments, 45 x 2 bedroom apartments and 2 x 2 bedroom apartments. This includes 3 x 2 bedroom duplexes and 2 x 3 bedroom duplexes at ground floor level which form part of the affordable housing provision. The building is split into two staggered but connected parts. 114 car parking spaces are proposed within the two level covered car park including accessible and electric charging spaces. A refuse store will be located at the eastern entrance to the multi-story car park in Block B, as well as at both the northern and southern boundaries of the access road. Each refuse store will serve each of the three blocks.

3.6 Building C comprises 10 affordable housing units provided across 3 storeys. This includes 2 apartments (1 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom) at ground floor level, as well as the entrance to the cycle store for the development. Across the first and second floors there are 8 x 2 bedroom apartments. 13 car parking spaces (including disabled parking) are located to the front of the building adjacent to

the footway and the access road into the site from Alexander Turner Close. Secure cycle storage for the whole development is proposed on the ground floor of Building C to provide 74 cycle parking spaces.

3.7 The design for all three buildings proposes to use red brick, with detailing and accents in grey and white brick. Dark grey materials are used for window frames and other features such as metal balustrades and metal gable pitched roofs to each building. The design approach is influenced by the industrial character of the site and surrounding area. In terms of context within the site, building A relates to the river frontage and the access road, building B relates to the open space and the railway line and Building C relates to the access road and the existing development to the west of the site. The development has been designed to reduce in height to the west where the site abuts the existing terraced houses and to rise in height to the east to mark a 'gateway' into Reading.

3.8 Vehicular access into the site is from Alexander Turner Close and a network of pedestrian routes would run through the development site and include provision of a physical connection to the existing footbridge over the Kennet in the south west corner of the site.

3.9 The proposals include a 520m2 public community garden, located between Buildings A and B and the river frontage. This area includes 2 x 50m2 play areas (to Local Area for Play specifications) and space for informal play, native planting and sheltered seating by the river. A viewing platform is proposed that projects out into the river and provides informal seating areas. A nature corner is proposed as a sunken area to the east of Building B, which provides an ecologically diverse area of approximately 160m2.

Proposed Visual – View east into the site from entrance on Alexander Turner Close

Proposed Visual – View north-west into the site from River Kennet

3.10 This application is reported to planning applications committee because it is a major category application.

3.11 The applicant sought detailed pre-application advice in relation to the proposed development and also held 2 public consultation events during the pre-application stage. A statement of community involvement was submitted with the application and a further public consultation event has been held at application stage. The proposals were also reviewed by Design South East at pre-application stage and the Council's Design Review Panel at application stage.

3.12 Members also carried out an accompanied site visit on 11th July 2019.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Environment Agency

4.1 No objection subject to conditions to secure:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a contaminated land site characterisation report, remediation scheme, implementation of remediation and verification reports
- No piling works other than with the written consent of the LPA
- No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted other than with the written consent of the LPA
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a scheme for provision and management of a minimum 10m wide buffer zone to the banks of the Kennet
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a landscape and ecological maintenance plan
- In accordance with the approved flood risk assessment

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a SuDs scheme including implementation and maintenance details

National Rail

4.2 No objection subject to conditions to secure:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of Construction and Demolition Management Plan
- Pre-commencement details of SuDs
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of boundary treatments
- No piling works other than with the written consent of the LPA
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a lighting strategy and glint study.

A number of informatives are also proposed with regard to activities close to Network Rail land.

Thames Valley Police

4.3 No objection subject to a condition to secure pre-commencement submission and approval of a security strategy.

British Waterways Canal and River Trust

4.4 Does not wish to comment.

Berkshire Fire and Rescue

4.5 No comments received.

Southern Gas Networks

4.6 No comments received.

Health and Safety Executive

4.7 No objection.

Thames Water

4.8 No comments received.

Wokingham Borough Council

4.9 No objection.

South Oxfordshire Borough Council

4.10 No comments received.

Berkshire Archaeology

4.11 No objection.

RBC Natural Environment Trees

4.12 No objection, subject to condition to secure:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of hard and soft landscaping scheme
- Implementation of approved landscaping details.
- Landscaping maintenance
- Landscaping: planting specification including native species and maintenance
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a final arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan

RBC Transport

4.13 No objection, subject to conditions to secure:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of Construction and Demolition Management Plan
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a parking layout plant, pre-occupation provision of parking spaces and retention of the spaces thereafter free from obstruction
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a cycle parking layout plan, pre-occupation provision of spaces and retention of the spaces thereafter free from obstruction.
- Pre-occupation provision of approved vehicular access
- Pre-occupation provision of the approved bin stores
- Within 5 months of first occupation submission and approved of a travel plan
- Annual travel plan review

And a section 106 agreement to secure:

- A financial contribution of £200, 000 towards bus service improvements
- Section 278 Highways agreement to provide the works to connect the access road and footpath to Alexander Turner Close
- Section 278 Highways agreement to provide the works for the new link to the pedestrian footbridge over the River Kennet
- Provision of on-street parking controls.
- Car club (2 spaces – the 1st provided prior to occupation then the 2nd should demand arise)

RBC Environmental Protection

4.14 No objection subject to conditions to secure:

- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a contaminated land site characterisation report, remediation scheme and implementation of remediation
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of a land gas site characterisation report, remediation scheme and implementation of remediation
- Implementation of approved measures for control of construction noise and dust
- Pre-occupation implementation and retention thereafter of the specifications within the approved noise mitigation scheme
- Pre-occupation implementation of the ventilation specifications within the air quality mitigation scheme
- Control of hours of construction
- Pre-commencement site pest clearance
- Pre-commencement submission and approval of bin store strategy for control of pests.

RBC Ecological Consultant

4.15 Final comments awaited.

RBC Emergency Planning

4.17 No objection.

RBC Leisure

4.18 No objection subject to a section 106 agreement to secure:

- A financial contribution of £200, 000 for leisure and recreation improvements

RBC Sustainability

4.19 It is good that zero carbon homes standards are to be met and in particular the waste water heat recovery system. Disappointed that on site decentralised energy is not being provided.

Public Consultation

4.20 Neighbouring occupiers at no.s 1-21 Alexander Turner Close, the Jolly Anglers Public House, no.s 318-346 Kennet Side, no.s 216-232 Kennet Walk and no.s 45-53 Robert Parker Road were notified of the application by letter. 17 site notices were also displayed within the area surrounding the application site.

4.21 70 objections have been received raising the following issues:

Transport

- The single access route to the site through an existing house development will not work and is insufficient to serve both for both future and existing residents
- The single access through the existing housing development is a highway safety hazard
- Worsen traffic in the surrounding area from multiple ongoing developments
- Construction pollution impacts
- Who will be responsible for day to day clean up and repair to the single access road during construction
- Electric vehicle charging points should be included within the proposed development
- Large amount of parking proposed will encourage car use
- Increased car emissions
- How will refuse collection and access be managed
- Cycle storage should be provided
- A new bus service will be required
- Will there be an any cycle paths to connect to the existing network
- Concern about fly tipping
- Not enough car parking is proposed to be provided

Amenity

- Scale of the proposals will block light from New Town Primary School and will overlook the playground
- Loss of light and overlooking and privacy impact upon existing houses on School Terrace and other surrounding streets in New Town, Kingsmead and Kennetside
- The proposals would be overbearing to the surrounding area
- The existing gas holder structure lets light pass through unlike the proposed development
- New Town is already overcrowded and his proposed will worsen drug and litter issues
- Concern regarding the sites contaminated nature and carrying out of construction works so close to a primary school and housing
- A play area should be provided as part of the proposed development
- The daylight sunlight assessment regarding impact on surrounding properties has not been carried out accurately or to an appropriate standard
- Increased light pollution from street lights, flats and cars
- The proposal would result in a cramped form of development with limited personal space and freedom and can result in higher levels of crime and violence

Character/Design/Appearance

- The existing gas holder structure is an iconic local landmark and non-designated heritage asset that creates a sense of place and history to this part of the town. The structure is part of Reading's industrial heritage and marks the gateway to reading via the train line. The replacement of this structure with a generic block of flats would erode this sense of place.
- The proposed development would be an eyesore on the riverside
- The proposals are much larger than Council's local plan has allocated for
- The scale of the proposal is out of keeping with the surrounding area

- The historic waterway setting should be development more sensitively
- The proposals would appear overbearing to this part of the River Kennet
- The style of the proposed building is out of keeping with surrounding architecture
- The gas holder structure should be re-used as part of the proposed development similar to Kings Cross in London
- The proposed design and architecture fails to respect Reading's industrial heritage in terms of scale or design
- The height of the proposals should only match that of buildings in the surrounding area
- The existing gas holder is not a solid structure and should not set a precedent for solid buildings of the same scale on the site

Natural Environment

- Harm to wildlife in the area
- Peregrine falcons utilise the gas holder structure and their habitat should be preserved
- Harm to bat, otter, kingfisher, swan and geese habitats
- The Council has declared a climate emergency yet the proposed buildings are not in any way sustainable nor does the proposed landscaping mitigate the harm to wildlife
- Ecology survey has now been carried out to an appropriate standard
- Insufficient wildlife mitigation is proposed
- The proposed landscaping works to the bank of the river would be harmful to the existing wildlife
- Loss of healthy tree grounds and replacement with other trees increases risk of disease and environmental threat

Other

- There is a lack of infrastructure (schools, doctors surgeries, nurseries, shops etc) to support the proposed new homes
- The proposed 10% on-site provision of affordable housing falls well below the 30% policy requirement
- The site would be better developed as a youth centre, community garden or playground
- No sustainable drainage system proposed
- No renewable energy proposals are incorporated within the development
- Insufficient public engagement as part of the application
- The proposals will not help mitigate against climate change
- The proposal will reduce property values for existing surrounding houses
- Why is the Council selling so much public land to private investors *(Officer comment: the site is not owned by the council)*
- The majority of flats will be bought by investors to rent out
- Increased flood risk
- No environmental assessment for the weight of such a tall building on contaminated land

Kingsmead Residents Association Comments:

- Insufficient local infrastructure and amenities
- Timings for deliveries and waste vehicles should be used to reduce impact on commuters and local residents
- The HGV access plan does not take account of the parking bays on Robert Parker Road
- The construction method statement refers to holding areas for HGV's - these should not be within the Kingsmead estate
- How will parking control be enforced
- The construction environmental management plan refers to water suppression and wheel washing to reduce risk of contaminants – more measures are required
- Reassurance over who is responsible for maintenance of the access road required
- What child safety measures are proposed
- Anti-social behaviour and vandalism concerns for the construction site
- There is significant existing pressure on local roads – the number of proposed parking spaces should be reduced, more cycle spaces should be provided, public transport and public rights of way links should be improved and an on-site car club considered
- Inadequate ecological surveys – bat survey completed outside of breeding season, presence of red kites not considered, no assessment of peregrine falcon nest within the gas holder structure
- The proposals are for many more units than the Council's local plan has allocated for
- Insufficient local engagement by the Developer

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

5.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making.

5.3 Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

5.4 Reading Local Plan 2019

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC4: DECENTRALISED ENERGY

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT
EN7: LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE
EN9: PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE
EN10: ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE
EN11: WATERSPACES
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES
EN18: FLOODING AND DRAINAGE
H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING
H2: DENSITY AND MIX
H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
H11: DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE RESIDENTIAL GARDENS
H12: STUDENT ACCOMMODATION
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR4: CYCLE ROUTES AND FACILITIES
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
CR1: DEFINITION OF CENTRAL READING
CR2: DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING
CR3: PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING
CR6: LIVING IN CENTRAL READING
CR13: EAST SIDE MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

Supplementary Planning Document: Affordable Housing (July 2013)
Supplementary Planning Document: S106 Planning Obligations (March 2014)
Supplementary Planning Document: Parking Standards and Design (October 2011)
Supplementary Planning Document: Employment Skills and Training (April 2013)
Supplementary Planning Document: Sustainable Design and Construction (July 2011)

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues raised by this planning application are as follows:

- Principle
- Development Density, Unit Mix and Affordable Housing

- Layout, access, height and massing, appearance, design and impact on heritage assets
- Open Space/Public Realm, Recreation and Leisure, Trees, Landscaping and Ecology
- Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers
- Standard of Residential Accommodation
- Transport
- Flooding
- Sustainability
- Archaeology

Principle

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The accessibility of the site, located within the Reading Central Area as defined by the Reading Local Plan (2019), is considered acceptable for the proposed development in accordance with Policy CC6 (Accessibility and Intensity of Development) whilst the provision of new housing would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1 (Provision of Housing) in assisting in meeting the annual housing targets.

6.2 The site forms part of the East Side Major Opportunity Area (MOA) which is allocated for residential development in the Reading Local Plan (2019) under policy CR13 (Development in the East Side Major Opportunity Area). The vision for the East Side MOA, which includes the entirety of Kenavon Drive and Kennet Walk to the east and Forbury Road to the west (incorporating Reading Prison and the recently developed Forbury Place office buildings) is for the area to *"be a new community at the eastern fringes of the centre, lending a more urban character to the area, and helping to frame the historic east of the central core"*.

6.3 Policy CR13 continues by stating that development in the east side MOA will:

i) Provide a more defined urban environment than currently exists, of a medium to high density;
ii) Contribute towards the provision of a new residential community at the eastern fringes of the central area;
iii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, in particular east-west links through the area and links between development areas and the station, including improved crossings of the IDR and railway;
iv) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;
v) Preserve the historic features in the area and enhance their setting where possible;
vi) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, particularly in the centre of the new community;
vii) Maintain, improve and create new access along the River Kennet.

6.4 It is considered that the proposed development meets all of these overarching objectives, as will be demonstrated in more detail throughout this report.

6.5 More specifically the application site forms part of the eastern Gas Holder Site sub-area under Policy CR13d which states that '*This area will be used for residential development. Development should enhance the character of the mouth of the Kennet and should maximise the potential of the site to be a river gateway to Reading. Public access along the river will be sought. Development should be set back at least ten metres from the top of the bank of the river and allow for a wildlife corridor along the river. Development should take account of potential contamination on the site.'*

6.6 Again, it is considered that the proposed development meets the objectives of this policy, as will be demonstrated in more detail in this report.

6.7 In addition, the Council's adopted Kenavon Drive: Urban Design Concept Statement (UDCS) (2004) recognises the potential for regeneration in this area. The UDCS recognises that the Kenavon Drive area has the potential to provide a mixed use townscape and envisages the application site will '*continue as a blend of residential and commercial uses or transfer to a wholly residential development'*. The principles of the Kenavon Drive UDCS are incorporated within Policy CR13 of the Local Plan (2019).

6.8 The broad principle of the proposal for residential development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with CC6, H1 and CR13. The details of the proposed development are now considered within the rest of this report.

Development Density, Unit Mix and Affordable Housing Provision

6.9 The application proposes a development density of 183 dwellings per hectare (130 dwellings/ 0.71 hectare site). Although a high density development, it is noted that there is no prescribed local policy density upper limit for town centre sites, with Policy CR13 (i) specifying development within the East Side MOA will be of a medium to high density. In addition, Policy H2 (Density and Mix) outlines an indicative density of above 70 per hectare in town centre locations, with factors such as site characteristics, accessibility and need to achieve high quality design and minimise environmental impacts informing the appropriate density. The sustainable location of the site, together with the quality of the design on brownfield land have encouraged officers to conclude that the density of development proposed is appropriate. It is also relevant to note that at pre-application stage Design South East considered the density to be generally appropriate.

6.10 Whilst the site allocation within emerging Policy CR13d gives an indicative potential of 46-70 dwellings per hectare, paragraph 5.4.23 of supporting text to this policy clarifies that the number of dwellings are, to an even greater extent than other areas, an indication only.

6.11 In terms of unit mix Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) seeks that residential developments within the town centre area should incorporate a maximum of 40% of 1 bedroom units and a minimum of 5% of 3 bedroom units. The application proposes 48 x 1 bedroom units (37%), 74 x 2 bedroom units (57%) and 8 x 3 bedroom units (6%) and is therefore policy compliant in this respect. In particular the proposal would contribute to the provision of a new residential community within the wider East Side Major Opportunity Area as per Policy CR13 (ii).

6.12 In terms of affordable housing Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) seeks that development proposals of more than 15 dwellings should provide a 30% on-site provision of affordable housing. The application proposes to provide 15 on-site affordable units which equates to 12%. Given this falls below the policy complaint level of provision the applicant has submitted a viability appraisal with the application documents to justify this. This appraisal document has been reviewed on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by BPS Chartered Surveyors who consider that this offer maximises affordable housing delivery on the site. This is largely down to the former use of the site as a gas works and the associated major remediation and decontamination works necessary to bring the land forward for residential use. Discussions are ongoing between the applicant and the Council's Principal Valuation Officer on this matter and final details of the affordable housing offer will be provided in the form of an update report.

6.13 In terms of the 15 on-site affordable dwellings proposed 10 of these would be located within block C which is all of the units in this block and 5 would form duplex units across the ground and first floors of Block B. The affordable dwellings would comprise of 10 shared ownership units (3 x 3 bedroom units and 7 x 2 bedroom units) and 5 x affordable rented units (5 x 2 bedroom units)

6.14 The proposals would be liable for CIL and the liability is projected to be £1.9m. Albeit this may decrease slightly in practice as the applicant could apply for relief on the affordable housing units.

Demolition and effect on heritage assets

6.15 Policy CC7 aims to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located. Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) seeks to protect and enhance Reading's waterspaces, so that they can continue to contribute to local and regional biodiversity and ecology, flood mitigation, local character, heritage and visual amenity, the provision of accessible leisure and recreational opportunities and, where appropriate, navigation. Policy CR2's (Design in the Centre) purpose is to secure appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and frontages within the centre of Reading. Policy CR3 requires proposals to make a positive contribution towards the quality of public realm in the central area of Reading. Finally, Policy EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) seeks to preserve or enhance the historic character and setting of heritage assets. These policies are in addition to the wider policy aims of the East Side MOA outlined above are relevant to consideration of the appearance and impact of this proposal on the area.

6.16 At 33m in height the existing gas holder structure to be demolished is a prominent and distinctive local landmark which is visible both from short and long range views within the surrounding area. The structure known as gas holder no. 4 dates from 1916 and is the last of 4 gas holders built on the wider gas works site which once extended as far to the west as to Kenavon Drive. Gas holder no. 4 was decommissioned in March 2008 and is now redundant. The design of Gas Holder no. 4 is described as of narrow lattice box-section standard and is a frame guided has holder with 18 lattice columns and four lifts. It is known as a 'Type 37' gas holder, the earliest example of this type was in Manchester at Miles Platting from 1892 which is still standing, albeit there is an extant consent for its demolition, and is considerably larger than Gas Holder no.4 in Reading.

Gas Holder No. 4

6.17 As part of the applicants Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (HTVIA) the applicant has provided a review of the heritage and townscape value of the structure. This document notes that gas storage in England was researched by Historic England as part of the Monument Protection Plan's (MPP) survey and comprehensive review of the gas industry completed between 1997 and 200. Reports produced as a result of this survey identified 150 sites of historic or architectural interest related to the gas industry but Gas Holder no. 4 in Reading was not identified as being of national significance as part of the review.

6.18 Whilst not a designated heritage asset, owing to its age and local value, the applicants HTVIA identifies the Gas Holder Structure as a non-designated heritage asset due to its local heritage interest as the remaining identifiable feature of the gasworks. The report identifies that whilst the structure has some historical interest from its age representing the period of industrial development in this part of Reading this industrial context has now been largely lost as a result of the demolition of the wider gas works site with the structure now isolated within a residential setting. The structure is also identified as being a late example of its type noting that some 'Type 37' gas holders incorporated rolled sections to the frontage to give a neater appearance but that this is not the case for Gas Holder

no. 4 which is more utilitarian and functional in appearance. The structure is noted as being of limited engineering or architectural interest and not a technologically innovative example of its type, whilst also not exhibiting the decorative detail associated with listed examples of gas holders (designated heritage assets) such those seen at Bromley by Bow and Kings Cross in London.

6.19 The HTVIA concludes, in respect of the existing gas holder structure, that it is of limited heritage significance. The Council's Heritage Consultant concurs with the findings of the applicants HTVIA and similarly officers are satisfied that this assessment has been carried out to a high standard.

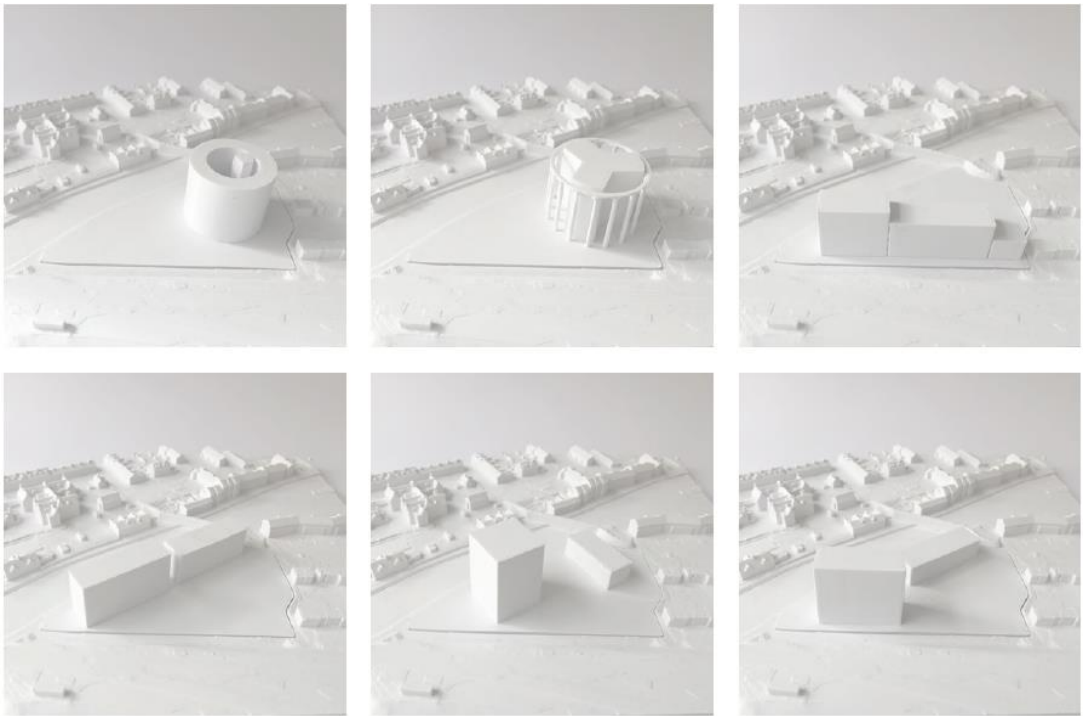
6.20 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF (2019) states that, 'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'. Given the proposal is to demolish gas holder no.4 this balanced judgement approach must be followed in the assessment of this application. However, it should also be noted that as a non-designated heritage asset the structure is not subject to statutory protection and could be subject to demolition under Part 11 Class B (demolition of buildings) of the General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended) without the need for planning permission.

6.21 Notwithstanding the above, during pre-application discussions with officers in relation to the proposed development the applicant, as set out within the supporting information submitted with the planning application, has reviewed and considered alternative options to demolition of the gas holder structure including its re-use as part of any redevelopment. This review identified that:

- If the existing structure was to be re-used and incorporated into the new development in its original form and location, then the structure would need to be dismantled, removed, cleaned, and then re assembled and strengthened with additional structure in order that it can support new building.
- If the existing structure was to be left untouched, it would require repair and upkeep as mentioned above, but would also prejudice the redevelopment of the rest of the site. Notwithstanding the design implications, the remaining land would be too small to accommodate the development necessary to afford to regenerate the land in what is already a very constrained site. The site would as a result also remain classified as a depot.
- Engineering advice sets out that the loading of any new building sitting within the footprint of the gas holder site needs to be limited to 4 storeys. This is because any greater height in combination with the ground conditions (the ground within the footprint of the gas holders is largely made ground and contaminated ground) would require piled foundation solution, which in turn would breach the clay layer and potentially allow contamination to reach the water course. If a building on the footprint of the existing structure is limited to four storeys, a different foundation design is possible that avoids this.

- There is also a financial aspect to associated costs for retention/redevelopment of the existing structure. The limitations on the scale of any redevelopment on the gas holder site are a key constraint on value as only 4 floors of accommodation is possible within the footprint of the existing structure which limits the viability of an redevelopment taking into account required contributions toward the infrastructure serving the site, affordable housing, and notably the engineering and remediation costs associated with redeveloping a former gas site. The applicant's assessment notes that probably the most famous example of re-use of a gas holder structure is Kings Cross London however; there is a very significant difference in the value profile of the finished developments for the current application site and that of a site within Central London.

6.22 As part of the review of the existing structure a number of design concepts were considered for either re-use or provision of a new building within the footprint of the existing gas holder.



Design concepts for re-use or re-provision of a new building on the footprint of the existing gas holder

6.23 The review concluded that the option of a new building in the same location and of the same scale would result in an overbearing form of development upon its neighbours, in particular the directly adjacent properties to the west in Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road and would also create a difficult balance within the site in terms of location of a solid building of this scale (as opposed to the open structure of the existing gas holder). The 'Kings Cross' style approach and retention/adaptation of the existing building was also explored but results in the same problems in terms of relationship with neighbouring buildings and balance of the site.

6.24 It is considered that the Applicant has satisfactorily explored options for retention, re-use or adaptation of the existing gas holder structure. Officers conclude that the bulk of an 'infilled' gas holder or of a new building of similar scale in this location would result in significant and unacceptable overbearing and loss of light impacts upon existing adjacent occupiers at Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road to the west. The massing of such a solid structure or new building would also form a significant jump in massing and present an awkward relationship with the small 2-3 storey buildings within these adjacent streets in design and street-scene terms. The engineering and remediation challenges referred to by the Applicant and set out earlier in this report are also acknowledged.

6.25 Therefore, Officers accept that re-use or adaptation of the existing gas holder structure is very unlikely to be feasible as part of an overall redevelopment of the site for residential purposes and that whilst considered to have value as a non-designated heritage asset the existing structure is of limited heritage significance. Nonetheless, in consideration of this application, demolition of the structure can only be considered appropriate subject to the proposed replacement buildings being suitable in design and related terms as discussed below (as well as the wider public benefits of the scheme discussed elsewhere in the report).

Layout, access, height and massing, appearance, design and impact on heritage assets

6.26 The proposed layout is considered to respond positively to its surroundings. The layout is heavily influenced by the site's constrained location with the railway line directly to the north of the site and the River Kennet directly to the south. The river also wraps north around the eastern end of the site as it joins the Thames such that the side is enclosed by both natural and man-made features to three sides.

6.27 The Gas Holder site is also located on the very eastern edge of the East Side MOA which spreads westwards towards the Abbey Ruins and Forbury Gardens. Importantly the adjacent site, formerly known as 42 Kenavon Drive, which shares the entire western boundary of the Gas Holder site, has already been redeveloped for 192 dwellings under planning permission ref. 131280. Vehicular access to the application site can only be obtained via this adjacent development at a single point of access from Alexander Turner Close. Therefore, the location of this access point is already fixed. When the adjacent 42 Kenavon Drive site was developed this access point and connecting roads were designed to accommodate additional traffic flow to the Gas Holder Site for a future residential development.

6.28 The proposals would extend Alexander Turner Close just under half way into the site and provide the primary access points to the three proposed buildings, including vehicular access to the proposed car park.

6.29 In terms of the general layout of the three proposed buildings, Block C is located at the entrance to the site and at three storeys is the smallest block within the development. This block is designed as a transitional block between the two storey terraces which sit on the boundary of the adjacent Bellway Homes site on Alexander Turner Close and is intended as a visual continuation of this form of development into the site and a link to Blocks A and B which are larger in scale. Block B is the largest building in the development at 9 storeys and is located in the north east corner of the site to the south of the railway line and is intended as the marker building as part of the site's gateway status. The proposed two storey covered car park would connect blocks B and C and its position to the rear of block C is such that its location is largely hidden from view.

6.30 Block A forms the frontage block onto the River Kennet and would be 5 storey's in height. This block would sit on the south side of the new central street opposite block C and would be set back 10m from the river bank in accordance with Environment Agency buffer requirements intended to protect and encourage riverside biodiversity. In general terms it is considered that the proposed layout relates well to the site's context whilst the general massing approach, which sees heights increase across the site from east to west, facilitates the integration of the development with and transition from the adjacent Bellway Homes scheme but also the policy aspiration of the development forming a gateway site.

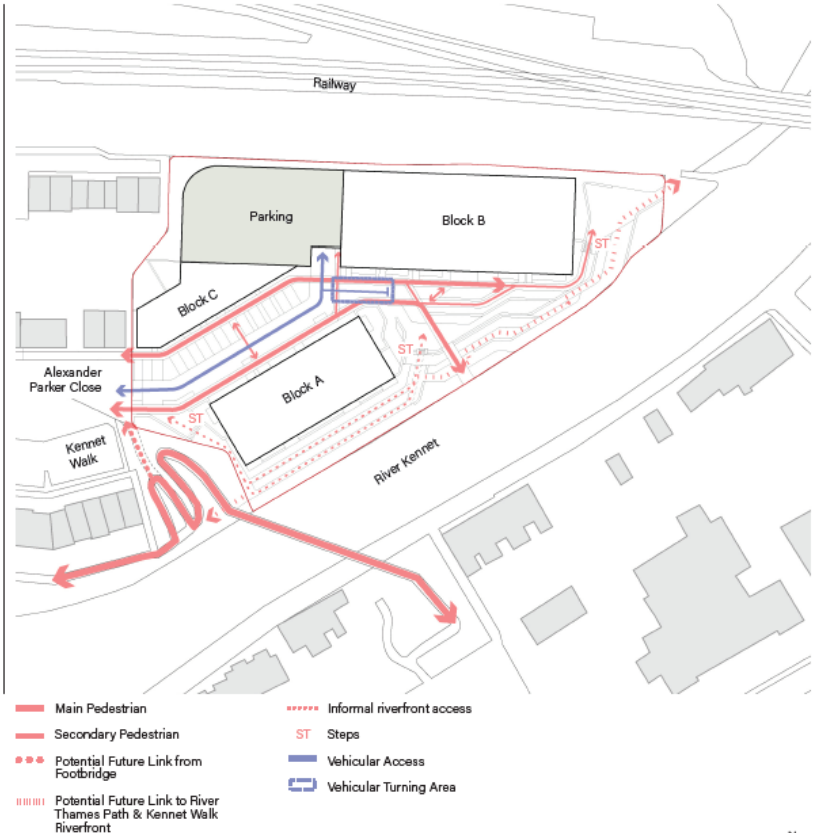
6.31 Pedestrian routes would also connect to Alexander Turner Close along both sides of the new central street and the cycle route would be extended along the northern side of the new road. The two pedestrian routes would then continue across the site merging into one in the far eastern corner. It is here that the pedestrian route would terminate but with potential to continue further east, onto land currently outside the Applicant or RBC's control, in the future should the opportunity arise.

6.32 A significant benefit of the proposed development is the provision of a new pedestrian footpath link to the existing footbridge over the Kennet to the south of the site. On the north side of the river the footbridge is currently only accessible from the river towpath to the south of the Kennet Walk which is poorly located for access to the Gas Holder Site and also for residents of the existing Bellway Homes development, known as 42 Kenavon Drive, to the west of the site. It is proposed to reconfigure the existing winding and ramped access to the footbridge to provide a direct pedestrian link from the new central street which would adjoin Alexander Turner Close.

6.33 In terms of river front access at a central point within the site the pedestrian route would also lead down to the river front providing access to a central viewing platform and informal public access routes across the entirety of the river frontage. These routes across the river frontage would not be laid out as formal pathways due to requirements from the EA to maintain a 10m buffer to the riverbank frontage for biodiversity mitigation/enhancement and maintenance access. However, public access would be available across the frontage indicated by mown areas within the soft landscaping.

6.34 During pre-application discussions Officers highlighted the aspiration and importance of providing a continuous access along the river frontage to connect to the existing pathway to the rear of the Kennet Walk properties to the east of the site. The transport statement submitted by the Applicant sets out that this has been considered in some detail but that there is insufficient room to provide a footpath along the abutment of the bridge at the water's edge to connect the site to the existing Kennet Walk route. Therefore to facilitate this, given the convoluted ramped access up to the bridge, this would require the entire bridge to be replaced which would be hugely significant in terms of costs and undertaking. The applicant also sets out that the Environment Agency , as a statutory consultee) have also indicated that they would also not support this connection in terms of their requirement for a buffer zone beside the river. Policy EN11 (Waterspaces) also seeks retention of a 10m buffer zone to waterway frontages in line with the EA aspiration for biodiversity enhancement to Readings waterways. Therefore, the proposals include a potential future exit point to the side at the western end of the informal route but a direct link across the river frontage to the Kennet Walk path is not proposed. Whilst this is disappointing officers acknowledge the applicants reasoning as to why this cannot be provided.

6.35 The proposed new connection to the footbridge from Alexander Turner Close would provide a slightly more direct route for pedestrians to continue their journey along this side of the river bank. The proposed plans indicate that one of the two informal routes across the front of block A towards the eastern boundary of the site would turn north allowing access up past the east flank elevation of block A which would lead up to the new central street and new footway access to the footbridge. The ramped access to the footbridge could then be followed down to join the river pathway to the rear of the Kennet Walk properties.



Vehicle and Pedestrian Routes

6.36 As discussed above it is already considered that the site links well with the surrounding area and at street-level it is considered that the proposed layout contributes positively towards creating a sense of place and community within the site as well. All blocks are accessed from and include ground floor units facing onto the new central street or in the case of Block B on to the pedestrian routes which extend off the new street creating active frontages on to the street. Landscaping also plays a key role in the development and all three blocks would have direct access to a large area of public space in the centre of the site and in particular blocks A and B would have units fronting onto this space. The opens space would include informal play equipment set in planted areas and public art, whilst a series of stepped gabion walls would lead down to the riverfront and proposed central viewing platforms. The riverfront buffer area would include informal pedestrian routes across the river frontage and consist of natural and biodiverse wildlife friendly riverfront planting. In the north east corner of the site would be a nature corner with biodiverse further biodiverse planting and wildlife mitigation.

6.37 In terms of detailed design the application sets out that the approach was to provide high quality modern buildings to mark the aspirations for the site to be a gateway to Reading but also to reflect and celebrate the industrial heritage of the site. The form and architecture of the proposed buildings is considered to be reflective of a warehouse style with elements also relating to former factories and mills. The buildings all follow similar key principles to form a cohesive group of buildings, with red brick elevations, strong horizontal and vertical emphasis to fenestration and steep metal gable pitched roofs reflecting an industrial character. Projecting balconies are also a theme and are a common feature of warehouse conversion developments together with dark grey window and door frames. However, each building also displays a distinct character though subtle variations in brickwork detail and different architectural elements.

6.38 Block A is the middle building both in terms of location and height and fronts the river. In terms of architectural detail the building includes grey and white horizontal brick works bands between each of the floors, inspired by the Huntley and Palmers Factory, to contrast with the red brick core of the building and vertical emphasis of the window positions. Recessed window reveals, use of light mortar, as well as sections of red Herringbone brick detailing below each of the windows assist in providing a good degree of details and variation to the design. Block B is the tallest building in the development and largest in terms of footprint and has been designed to be the marker building on the site in line with the aspirations for a gateway development. At 9 storeys in height the building is not considered a ‘tall building’ in planning policy terms with the threshold being 12 storeys and above for residential schemes (Policy CR10). Due to its general scale the building has been designed as a split block with one footprint of the building off-set from the other, although still one building with access available internally between the two sections. Due to its height the ground and first floors are expressed differently to the rest of the building providing a modestly projecting base to the duplex apartments located in this part of the building which assist in presenting a more human scale façade to activate street level

frontages of the building. This treatment wraps around the east side elevation of the building. The upper elements of the building again incorporate small variations compared to the other blocks, in this instance light mortar is proposed to the core redbrick work areas in one half of the split block and dark mortar to the other, whilst the Herringbone brick detail below each of the recessed window reveals is shown in a grey rather than red brick.

6.39 Block C as the smallest block within the development takes it cues from the other two blocks but in a simplified form given its smaller scale. The main difference to this block is the roof form which whilst presenting a gable to the west flank towards the boundary with the adjacent development the east edge of the roof tapers into a narrow hip where the building changes orientation as it adjoins the car park and block B, which run parallel with the rear boundary of the site with the railway line. The proposed car park building is largely hidden from view within the site with only the vehicle entrance visible from the new central street. This two storey building would also be red brick in design and incorporates hit and miss detailing and incorporates a green roof.

6.39 It is considered that the proposed design of the buildings demonstrates a high quality approach which effectively presents a development that is representative of the site and surrounding areas industrial past but is also contemporary in manner. The proposals indicate use of locally distinctive and high quality materials and (detailed samples of which are to be secured by way of condition) and successfully utilise subtle variations in detailing to present a cohesive form of development but with buildings that are distinctive in their own right.

Views

6.40 Moving on to consider massing and the integration of proposals within the character of the surrounding area, the applicant has submitted a detailed Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment. For the reasons set out earlier in this report, officers have no objection to removal of the existing gas holder structure, subject to a high quality replacement development which contributes positively to the surrounding area. Whilst the gas holder structure itself is a well known local landmark, it, as well as the utilitarian character of the depot, in some respects, has become increasingly alien to the surrounding area as sites within the East Side MOA come forward for residential development.

6.41 As discussed above the general massing approaching of increasing heights from west to east is considered appropriate within the site in terms of the transition from the smaller scale buildings on the western boundary and facilitating provision of a marker building to the eastern part of the site to align with the aspiration for a gateway development with the East Side MOA.

6.42 In more detailed terms Block C most closely relates and impacts upon the existing adjacent Bellway Homes development to the west. It is considered that the three storey height of this block and subtle step up in massing would integrate well with the existing adjacent terrace of houses to Alexander Turner Close. The similar materials palette and siting of the buildings which continue

the street form of Alexander Turner Close into the site also assist in providing a visual link and sense of interconnectedness between the two developments. Whilst not visible from street along Alexander Turner Close the proposed two storey flat roof car park building would be visible from the rear of the closest dwellings along this road as well the rear of the closest dwellings to Robert Parker Close further to the north. The 6m high west flank elevation of the two storey flat roof car park building would set 3.5m from the flank boundary of the site with the Robert Parker Road properties. At 6m the height of the car park building would be below that of the adjacent properties, screen planting is proposed along this boundary and together with the proposed green roof and separation to the boundary is considered to satisfactorily soften the transition to the adjacent dwellings in visual terms.

6.43 Block A fronts onto the River and most directly impacts upon townscape views towards the site along the towpath on the south side of the Kennet. Buildings on along the towpath are generally modest two storey red brick Victorian terraced properties and the red brick New Town Primary School site also abuts the tow path. At five storeys in height it is clear that Block A would be of greater massing than the existing buildings on the opposite side of the Kennet. However, existing views up and down the river from the tow path provide a relatively wide vista and sense of openness. The tow path on the south side of the river itself is relatively wide at 4m whilst Block A would also be set back 10m from the bank of the river such that there would be around a 37m separation between the front of Block A and residential buildings on the opposite site of the river. A number of visuals of the proposed development have been provided by the Applicant looking both east and west along the tow path and Officers are of the opinion that the massing of Block A would sit comfortably in this context. In addition to the significant separation distance across the river extensive landscape planting is proposed to the 10m river front buffer area to the front of Block A which would further screen an soften views of the development.

6.44 Views across the river towards Block A would also include the adjacent three storey terraced properties to Kennet Walk which also front the river. The footbridge over the Kennet and its convoluted access sit between the two sites such that there would be a separation distance of around 25m. Given this separation the step up from three to five storeys is considered a subtle transition to views along the river.

6.45 Block B due to its greater scale at nine storeys would also be prominent to views from the Kennet tow path. Due to its orientation, which runs parallel to the railway line to the north of the site, the siting of this block is off-set relative to the river. As such, the far eastern end of the building, at its closest point, would share the same 37m separation to the buildings on the opposite side of the river as block A. However, this separation increases gradually to the west of the building towards the centre of the site to over 75m. Officers acknowledge that the eastern end of the building due to it scale is somewhat of a pinch point relative to views along the river. In particular to views looking west along the towpath the east side end gable of Block B would appear prominent set only 10m back from the river bank. However, this is a narrow end gable views with the

main width of the building set gradually further away from the river bank. Whilst acknowledging that the solid form of block B is a more prominent feature than the open and structural nature of the gas holder it is considered that the a red brick building, particularly one this is of a high quality design, fits more comfortably in the views of the surrounding residential landscape as opposed to utilitarian gas holder structure. To views east along the tow path Block B appears as the backdrop to the smaller Block B. The split block design approach to block B is considered to assist in breaking up its massing whilst the different orientation of Block A in the foreground adds variation to the view and allow the gradual step in heights across the site from the adjacent Kennet Walk development to be seen. Direct views of Block B would also be possible from Robert Parker Road to the east of the site within the Bellway Homes development. Block B, set at the eastern end of the site be positioned further away from this this road than the existing gas holder and as such appears less prominent and is considered to fit comfortably in views east from this location.

6.46 Due to their siting and scale both Blocks A and B can be seen from a number of longer range views from the surrounding area. Over 20 different views of the development have been provided as art of the HTVIA. In terms of total height the gas holder and ridge height of Block B are similar at around 33m, but both represent a very different townscape view. Proposed block B is also set to the east part of the site whilst the gas holder is positioned to the west such that their context within longer range views is also different. In many ways it is considered that the red brick form of block B fits more comfortably in the views of the surrounding residential landscape as opposed to existing utilitarian gas holder structure. The proposed detailed design and high quality materials are also considered to assist in providing a landmark building that enhances the visual interest of the townscape views of the site. Officers feel this is particularly evident in longer range views of blocks A and B from New Town to the south of the site where the existing gas holder structure is prominent as a central and contrasting feature against the predominant red brick Victorian architecture when looking north and west along Cumberland Road and Liverpool Road. Furthermore, when looking in the same direction from Chomeley Road the gas holder stands as a back drop to New Town Primary School. The siting of Block B is such that it would sit more to the east of the school and reduce interference with views of the historic roof of the grade II listed school.

6.47 With regards to longer range views of the development from the west of the site, from the Forbury Road and Kenavon Drive roundabout junction the existing blocks of flats at the western end of the Bellway Homes adjacent to the application site (known as 42 Kenavon Drive) would largely obscure views of the proposed development. Similarly views from the area of open space to the rear of Canal Way off Orts Road demonstrate that the proposals would only appear very slightly above the modest residential houses to Canal Way and would appear much less prominent that the existing gas holder structure.

6.48 In terms of longer range views from the north the site the HTVIA demonstrates that the proposals would not be visible from Kings Meadow, there would be views of the proposals form the Thames and Kennet Marina but these would largely be

screened by the dense tree coverage in this area and the proposals would appear less prominent that the existing gas holder structure. Similarly longer range view from the bank of the Thames to the East would be obscured by vegetation along the river and railway line as well as existing railway infrastructure. Block B would be prominent to views form the train line to the north east of the site to people arriving and leaving Reading by train similar to the existing gas holder. It is considered that the merits of the design discussed above would present a suitable land mark feature to such views and would enhance the general townscape vista.

Whilst the proposal is not a tall building the applicant has also undertaken an assessment of a number of the distant views referenced as being of importance within the Council's Tall Buildings Strategy (2008). This includes viewpoints from Castle Hill, London Road (towards Woodley), Balmore Park View, Wokingham Road and the University Sports Pitches on Queens Drive amongst others. These have been reviewed by officers and it has been found that the buildings would integrate well and comfortably within the townscape and in many case do not impact upon distant views at all.

6.49 The HTVIA also assess the impact of the proposed development on nearby heritage assets. The Council's Conservation Consultant has reviewed the proposals and HTVIA and identifies that the setting of the grade II listed New Town Primary School to the south of the site on the opposite side of the Kennet and the grade II listed railway bridge to the east of the site as the features with most potential to be impacted upon by the proposals. The Conservation Consultant considers that the proposed scheme forms a hierarchy of new residential buildings which achieve an appropriate relationship with the surrounding historic townscape. It is considered that the siting and separation of the proposals across the Kennet together with the good quality design are proposed high quality materials are such that the proposals would preserve the setting of the New Town Primary School listed building whilst the use of industrial references for the proposed buildings is considered sympathetic to the character of the location between the riverside and railway and to adequately preserve the setting of the listed railway bridge.

6.50 In overall terms it is relevant to note that the application proposals have been reviewed by the Council's Design Review Panel who, in general terms, were supportive of the proposals, commenting that 'the general principles of the approach are sound Blocks A & B address the two main edges of the site whilst also creating a generous landscaped space fronting the Kennet, which in time could offer a well utilised south facing space to be shared with the public travelling along the water's edge. The landscape design is interesting and engaging'. Furthermore, an, albeit early stage, pre-application review by Design South East (DSE) raised no concern with the scale of the proposals whilst a number of the DSE'S suggestions such as siting the car park adjacent to the railway line hidden from view and the importance of providing a connection to the existing footbridge over the Kennet have been incorporated within the proposals.

6.51 In short, Officers consider that the proposals present a high quality scheme in terms of layout and design which would integrate positively with the character of the surrounding area. In terms of the balance of weighing the benefits of the proposed development against the loss of the existing gas holder structure as a non-designated heritage (albeit one considered to be of limited heritage significance as referenced in paragraph 6.18) it is considered that the high quality design approach are key tangible planning benefit of the proposals.

Open Space/Public Realm, Recreation and Leisure, Trees, Landscaping and Ecology

6.52 Policy EN9 (Provision of open space) requires all new development to make provision for the open space needs of the development through appropriate on or off-site provision, or through contributions towards the provision or improvement of leisure or recreational facilities. In areas with relatively poor access to open space facilities, Policy EN10 (Access to Open Space) stipulates that new development should make provision for, or contribute to, improvements to access to green space.

6.53 The site abuts the River Kennet, which is also an identified green network. Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks to protect Reading's existing Green Network, and for the enhancement and extension of that network and requires development to retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity or geological interest found within the application site into their schemes. Policy EN14 (Trees Hedges and Woodlands) states that individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal, and the Borough's vegetation cover will be extended with new development to make provision for tree planting within the application site, or off-site in appropriate situations.

Open Space/Public Realm

6.54 Intrinsically linked to design matters are the open space/public realm, trees, landscaping and ecology elements of the proposals. The scheme comprises a number of elements in this respect which have largely been outlined above.

6.55 The main element is the provision of a 520m2 area of public open space in the central and eastern part of the site. This area would open up views of the river and consist of informal play equipment set in planted areas, lawn areas, stepped gabion walls with sheltered riverside seating areas and would incorporate the various formal and informal routes across the site discussed earlier in this report. Subtle changes in the hard landscaping palette for pathways and surfacing and soft landscaping will help inform the public/private hierarchy across the site with respect to the private terrace areas to the ground floor units to blocks A and B.

6.56 The proposed public open space would lead down to the riverfront area which forms the 10m buffer provided along the river bank as required by the Environment Agency for biodiversity mitigation/enhancements and maintenance access. This area would consist of biodiverse and ecologically rich landscaping

and provide access to a viewing platform onto the river bank and informal routes along the river bank. In the north eastern corner of the site would be a nature corner where biodiversity mitigation/enhancement measures would be focused.

6.57 In addition the above pedestrian priority landscaping, including street trees would be set out within the new central street, breaking up the visual dominance of on-street parking to the front of block C and creating a focal route towards the public open space in the centre of the site. For the narrow stretch of land to the rear of Block B along the boundary with the railway a wildlife corridor is proposed whilst a green roof is proposed to the flat roof of the covered car park (both not accessible to the public). It is also proposed to provide a green entrance to the site with feature gabion walls and signage. Details of the signage would be secured by condition.

Leisure and Recreation

6.58 Reading Open Space Strategy recommends that at least some open space for children to play, whether publicly or privately owned, be available within 100-200m of every home. This will primarily affect very high density developments, like flats, as almost all other houses have some form of garden'.

6.59 RBC Leisure have confirmed that, in accordance with Fields in Trust (FIT) guidelines, as a scheme for 130 dwellings the proposals should provide play facilities equivalent to a Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) which should be a minimum of 400m2 in size. The proposal include provision of areas for play but rather than a dedicated facility incorporates informal play equipment set amongst the proposed area of public open space. The areas for play proposed equate to around 100m2 and therefore would be below the recommended guidelines and would be equivalent to a smaller Local Area for Play (LAP). However, given the fairly high density nature of development and constraints of the site (size and shape) it is accepted that a LEAP would not be achievable in this space. To make up for this shortfall of provision against the Policy requirement (Policy EN9) a financial contribution of £200,000 is to be secured by way of a section 106 legal agreement. RBC leisure have identified that this would be put towards maintenance and improvement of existing play facilities and either Christchurch Meadows or Palmer Park to cater for potential increased demand for these facilities generated by occupiers of the proposed development.

Trees, Landscaping and Ecology

6.60 The current depot site is sparse with limited existing soft landscaping, albeit there are trees located to the sites edge. A tree survey and arboricultural method statement has been submitted which identifies four groups of trees of low quality to be removed from the site to accommodate the proposed buildings and replacement higher quality landscaping. Tree protection measures are also included for tree groups to be retained which are mainly located along the river frontage. The tree officer raises no objection to the trees identified for removal and retention subject to conditions to secure the proposed tree protection measures during construction.

6.61 In terms of the proposed soft landscaping works proposals seeks to provide a green and biodiverse landscape across the site. Planting within the public open space is proposed to be a mix of wildlife friendly soft grasses and shrubs and trees that provide seasonal interest and highlights. The planting will be evergreen and provide structure to protect ground floor windows. It will also ensure a green outlook for residents. All private terraces will be set in generous planting blocks to give the feeling of being part of the landscape. Tree planting is proposed along the 3.5m wide strip of land between the cark park building and dwellings to Robert Parker Road to provide screening. The proposed street trees will be set in evergreen groundcover to provide a green outlook to the street. The railway boundary buffer planting will include biodiverse hedgerow meadow mix to provide a species rich and ecological buffer. Meadow style areas would extend across the community gardens and along the riverfront. The riverfront planting will be mainly native with a mix of meadow, grasses and shrubs.

6.62 The tree officer advises that the soft and hard landscaping works principles and species proposed are acceptable with both native and non-native trees, wildlife friendly trees and native trees on the river frontage being included. Conditions are recommended to secure submission and approval of final planting specification details and maintenance details.

Ecology

6.63 Ecological surveys have been submitted as part of the application. This identifies bat activity close to the site along the river corridor to the south and railway corridor to the north and presence of nesting birds including peregrine falcons. No other protected species were identified on the site. Ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed across the site. This includes sensitive wildlife friendly planting, lighting and a range of built wildlife interventions and a green roof to the car park.

6.64 A range of nesting/refuge aids for wildlife are proposed including, gabion walls throughout the site, insect hotels, swift and bat boxes in the building elevations/roofs, hedgehog houses among hedgerow and shrub planting. A peregrine ledge and nestbox is proposed to Block B as well as installation of temporary landing tower during construction phase. Loggeries are also proposed to be populated by moss, lichens, fungi and many kinds of insects. The northern railway corridor and southern riverbank are important green links and habitats for bats, birds, invertebrates, insects and mammals, providing opportunities for foraging, nesting, roosting, and commuting. The proposed landscape design protects and rejuvenates these corridors through the wildlife buffer planting to the northern boundary and river bank buffer to the south by adding to existing planting with an ecologically sensitive of trees, shrubs, mixed native hedgerow, meadow and riparian planting species.

6.65 The Environment Agency advises that development that encroaches on watercourses can have a potentially severe impact on their ecological value. In this instance the taller buildings will be set back away from the river to reduce

shading of the river and the proposed 10m undeveloped buffer zone along the river bank is required to undeveloped buffer zone alongside the river will help wildlife adapt to climate change and will help restore the river to a more natural state as required by the Thames River Basin Management Plan. The EA consider that the ecological enhancements that have been proposed are acceptable but will require a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to be in place. This will ensure the newly created habitats are managed in a sensitive manner to retain their biodiversity interest over the long-term and that the landscape provides a maximum benefit to people and the environment. Provision of the ecological enhancements and a management plan will be secured by way of condition.

6.66 A detailed lighting strategy has also been submitted to demonstrate that this would not adversely impact on bat activity around the site. This and the final ecological surveys and mitigation/enhancement measures are being reviewed by the Council's Ecological Consultant. The officer recommendation is therefore subject to confirmation from the Ecologist that these matters are acceptable and comments in this respect will be provided in the form of an update report.

Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers

6.67 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and CR6 (Living in Central Reading) seeks to protect the amenity of existing surrounding occupiers. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect surrounding occupiers form the impact of pollution.

6.68 Considering first privacy and overlooking matters, the site's only immediate neighbour is the residential properties to Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road. Block C, the smallest building, is located closet to these properties and due to its angled orientation has limited windows which look directly towards these adjacent dwellings. However, there are two windows at first and second floor level to two units which would look towards the side garden boundary of no.21 Alexander Turner Close. This would be at a distance 12m which as a side on relationship is considered sufficient to prevent any adverse overlooking. Block A would be positioned over 25m from these properties at the closest point and Block B over 45m away such that any overlooking is unlikely to be significant from this element of the proposed development.

6.69 Block A is positioned closest to the properties to Kennet Walk to the west but at over 25m away there is not considered to be any potential for undue loss of privacy. There is a separation of 35m from Block A the properties on the opposite side of the river to south along Kennet Side and over 50m separation from Block B. These distances are again considered significant and sufficient to prevent any undue overlooking or loss or privacy. The playground of New Town Primary School also abuts the Kennet Side river pathway but given the separation distances described above there is not considered to be any undue overlooking impact in this respect either.

6.70 With regard to daylight/sunlight impacts on neighbouring properties the applicant submitted a detailed assessment as part of the application. This has

been reviewed on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by BRE, who are producers of the good practice guidance on these matters. Properties to Alexander Turner Close, Kennet Side (including New Town Primary School) and Kennet Walk were identified as having the most potential to be impacted upon by the proposed development. However, BRE do not raise concerns with any loss of daylight and sunlight to these properties which would be within their recommended guidelines. There would be a minor to moderate adverse impact on daylight distribution to rooms at 336 to 346 Kennet Side which face the site. However, BRE advise some flexibility in consideration of these results given that the gas holder would have obstructed a lot more light to these premises when it was operational and full and suggest that mitigation is not required.

6.71 BRE have also reviewed loss of sunlight to the gardens of no.s 18, 21 Alexander Tuner Close and 51 and 53 Robert Parker Road to the west of the site which have potential to be impacted upon by Block C and also the two storey car park building. Any loss of sunlight to three of the gardens would be within BRE guidelines and not considered to be of concern. Loss sunlight to the garden of no. 21 is identified as being of moderate adverse impact albeit noting that the resultant level of sunlight received would be similar to the existing situation for many of the surrounding properties within this existing adjacent development and BRE suggest that this result should be considered with some flexibility.

6.72 In terms of impact with regard to visual dominance and overbearing it is considered that, as touched on earlier in this report in the townscape section, that the separation of distance of Blocks A and B to the Kennet Side properties on the opposite side of the river and Kennet Walk to the West is sufficient to present any undue impacts. The position of the west flank two storey car park wall relative to the adjacent properties to Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road was also touched on in the townscape section with this 6m high wall set 3.5 from the closest garden boundaries. Given the proposed landscaping buffer planting between the gardens and the wall, green roof to the car park and findings of the daylight/sunlight review above officers consider that the car park would not result in any significant detrimental overbearing impact to neighbour properties.

6.73 With regard to further impacts on surrounding occupiers a condition is recommended to prevent use of the green roof to the car park being used as a terrace area to prevent any unacceptable overlooking impacts to adjacent dwellings. An air quality assessment has been submitted as part of the application. This has been reviewed by Environmental Protection Offices who are satisfied that the proposals would not result in a significant negative impact on air quality. Environmental Protection Officers also advise that the construction method statement submitted as part of the application is acceptable in terms of measures to control noise and dust impact on surrounding properties during construction and carrying out of the development in accordance with this document should be secured by condition. A Condition to control construction hours to reasonable times (as standard) is also proposed.

6.74 With respect to the impact of the proposed development on the nearby rail line, Network Rail has requested a number of conditions. Officers consider that some elements of the suggested conditions should be secured as recommended; others do not pass all the required tests of a condition, while others can be included as informatives rather than conditions. More specifically, with regard to lighting, it is considered reasonable for the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer to be consulted on the detailed lighting proposals, but it is not considered reasonable for the applicant to fund alterations/mitigation for any conflict Network Rail subsequently identifies once the approved lighting scheme has been implemented (as officers consider that Network Rail should be expected to fully consider this when the details are submitted). It is considered necessary and reasonable to secure a pre-occupation (barring demolition) glint and glare study, to protect the amenity of train drivers and the wider public too. However, it is not considered reasonable for this to then be subject to future change should Network Rail complain to the Council within 12 months of the completion of the development about the details previously agreed within the glint and glare study (as officers consider that Network Rail should be expected to fully consider this when the details are submitted). This is consistent with the approach to lighting and the railway line taken when planning permission was granted for the residential led development on the former Homebase and Toys R Us site on Kenavon Drive in 2017 (ref. 170509).

6.75 In overall terms the proposals are not considered to cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties or wider users of the area.

Standard of Accommodation for Future Occupiers

6.76 Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new build housing is built to high standards. In particular new housing should adhere to national prescribed space standards, water efficiency standards above building regulations, zero carbon homes standards (for major schemes) provide at least 5% of dwellings as wheelchair user units. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect future occupiers from the impacts of pollution. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that residential developments are provided with adequate private or communal outdoor amenity space.

6.78 The internal layout of the proposed residential units are arranged so as to create a high standard of living accommodation for all future occupiers. All units would adhere to national overall and individual room space standards and are considered to provide good opportunities for suitable outlook and natural ventilation. Large units are located to the corners of the building to provide dual aspect outlook and daylighting.

6.79 The 6 ground floor units to block A are all served by small private front garden terrace areas and have a direct relationship with the surrounding open space. Block B includes 5 duplex units (to be affordable dwellings) to the ground floor of the south elevation only also served by small private front garden terrace areas. The remainder of the ground and first floor of block B forms part of the

undercover car park such that there are no units which have outlooks at these levels to the rear of the site towards the railway line which would be limited. Access to the covered car park is available from the central street or internally from block B. Off-street parking for block C is located along the central street to the front of the building. Each block is served by its own internal ground floor bin store whilst the internal cycle store for the development is located off the new central street adjacent to the car park entrance between blocks C and B. Block C contains some of the larger units which would all be affordable dwellings. also contain the affordable units within the development. The two ground floor units (3 bed unit and a 2 bed unit) would also be served by their own private rear gardens. Upper floor units to blocks A, B and C are served by generous private balconies and combined with the direct access to the public open space and riverside nature areas within the site officers are satisfied with the level of private and communal amenity space provision within the development.

6.80 The design and layout of the proposals as a whole ensures that there is a minimum 18m distance between a window and the edge of a facing balcony to prevent any undue overlooking within the development itself.

6.81 Policy H5f sets out that developments of 20 or more new build dwellings provide at least 5% of dwellings as wheelchair user units in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. The proposal adheres to this target with 7 of the units (5.4%) being wheelchair accessible. There are 3 wheelchair units proposed to the ground floor of block A and four to the second and third floors of block B accessible by lift with level access to the building available from the street. Block A is also served by a lift and level access. In practice it is considered reasonable to secure provision of the wheelchair user units by way of condition.

6.82 In terms of daylight and sunlight matters for future occupiers a daylight sunlight assessment in this respect was submitted by the applicant. This has been independently reviewed by BRE who advise that the all rooms within the development would receive levels of daylight within their recommended guidelines apart from 1 living room which would only very marginally below this standard. The proposed large balconies have been taken into account in this assessment and do not materially impact upon the day light levels. BRE also advise that the amenity areas within the development would be served by ample daylight and sunlight.

6.83 A noise assessment and mitigation scheme for all the new residential units has been submitted. Environmental Protection Officers have reviewed this and are satisfied that glazing and ventilation specification proposed would ensure internal noise levels standards are met whilst internal noise transmission between units would be covered under building regulations. Environmental Protection Officers also advise that the assessment submitted in respect of air quality demonstrates that the proposed ventilation scheme would ensure suitable air quality standards within the units. Implementation of both noise and air quality measures detailed are recommended to be secured by conditions.

6.84 The development lies on the site of former gas works and also within the buffer zone of a former landfill site which has the potential to have caused contaminated land and the presence of land gas. Contaminants could be mobilised during construction to pollute controlled waters. The Environment Agency advises that controlled waters are particularly sensitive in this location because the proposed development site is within a source protection zone 3 and located upon a principal aquifer. The EA and the Council's Environmental Protection Officers have reviewed the Geo-environmental site assessment submitted as part of the application and are satisfied that this demonstrates that it will be possible to manage the risks posed to controlled waters by the development. The EA and Council's Environmental Protection Officers recommended a range of conditions to secure detailed investigation reports and remediation schemes for both land contamination and land gas that are to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

6.85 Conditions to ensure any pest or vermin issues on site are dealt with prior to constriction/demolition are also recommended along with a condition to require details demonstrating how the proposed bin stores will be designed in terms of pest control.

6.86 With regard to crime and safety issues the proposals have been reviewed by the Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Disorder Advisor who made a number of recommendations which have been taken on board by the applicant in the proposed plans. This includes the addition of gates to prevent access to the railway buffer strip to the rear of block B which lacks surveillance and addition of gates to the car park. Provision of postal boxes for each of the units within the lobby areas to each of the blocks has also been introduced to the proposed plans. A condition is also recommended to secure pre-commencement submission and approval of a security strategy to cover issues such as CCTV and security fob access.

6.87 Although fire safety is not a material planning consideration, the application includes details of the fire strategy for the development. This sets out that the proposals would accord with the fire safety requirements (Part B) of the Building Regulations 2010. Also of note is block B, owing to its height, would be fitted with a sprinkler system.

6.88 In overall terms it is considered that the proposals would provide a high standard of amenity for future occupiers.

Transport

6.89 Policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway related matters), TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

Accessibility – Walking and Cycling

6.90 The site is a former gas storage facility and depot. While the gas holder itself is now out of use the site it still used as a depot. To the west of the site is the recent residential development on Alexander Turner Close, built by Bellway Homes. Alexander Turner Close provides access to Robert Parker Road, the principal route through the recent development providing vehicle access to the site. Further west beyond Alexander Turner Close retail units and disused industrial units can be found.

6.91 The local area is supported by a good pedestrian and cycle network. This facilitates safe and convenient movement on foot and cycle between the site and the surrounding area. Furthermore, recent and planned developments within the area will help to improve the quality of infrastructure and permeability of the area.

6.92 The adjacent Bellway Homes development included new pedestrian/cycle routes to Kenavon Drive and Napier Road. A new route runs parallel to Kennet Walk linking with Kenavon Drive. A passageway between Kennet Walk and the route has been provided. A new route also links the Bellway Homes development with Napier Road (via the railway underpass). This route runs parallel to the existing railway line.

6.93 Alternatively a 2m footway is also provided along Alexander Turner Close and Robert Parker Road. These footways are lit with dropped kerbing and uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points. The new pedestrian and cycle route via the railway underpass linking Napier Road and Kenavon Drive provides an improved connection to the Tesco Extra store, bus services on Napier Road and King's Meadow.

6.94 It is also possible to walk the footpath along the banks of the River Kennet. A pedestrian/cycle bridge immediately opposite the site and another just beyond the railway line provide a link across the river and to the Thames path.

6.95 Reading has a comprehensive cycle network with 7 colour coded routes from the town centre to the wider urban area of Reading and a circular route around the town centre. The cycle network connects all the town's major public facilities, employment and leisure areas.

6.96 'Manual for Streets' (MfS) describes "walkable neighbourhoods" as those which are "typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (around 800m) walking distance". Table 3.1 (taken from the TA) summarises the IHT guidelines for Journeys on Foot (IHT, 2000).

Table 3.1: IHT Guidelines for Journeys on Foot

	Town Centres	Commuting / School / Sight Seeing	Elsewhere
Desirable	200	500	400
Acceptable	400	1000	800
Preferred Maximum	800	2000	1200

6.97 The Transport Assessment submitted as part of the application sets out that the site is in an ideal location in close proximity to Reading Town Centre (approximately 800m). However, following a review it is evident that this is based on a straight line assessment and the 800m threshold falls short of the Town Centre area, the site is actually 1.3km from the site. This is however still within the recommended commuting distance of 2km and the site is therefore considered accessible relative to the town centre.

Bus Services

6.98 As part of the Bellway Homes site on Kenavon Drive, the 42/42a bus service was implemented to serve the surrounding roads. The route provides a link from the site to Reading town centre via the Reading Railway Station and Rivermead Leisure Centre on Richfield Avenue. Reading Buses route 42/42a eastern terminus is located 370m from the site at the roundabout to the Bellway Homes development. This stop is easily accessible on foot from the application site. This service provides 2 buses an hour Monday to Friday with 1-2 buses an hour on Saturdays. This route is developer funded with funds secured via the Bellway Homes development; therefore a contribution would need to be secured through this development given increased demand that would be generated by the proposals. A contribution of £200, 000 for this purpose is proposed to be secured as part of the section 106 legal agreement.

6.99 Other bus stops can be found on Kings Road, approximately 700m or less than a 9 minute walk from the site which are served by some 7 bus services. These buses serve the town centre and surrounding towns of Reading including; Bracknell, Maidenhead, Wokingham and Newbury. Bus route 17 runs 24 hours, 7 days a week. This connects the site to central Reading, Three Turns in the east and Tilehurst in the west. Therefore the site is well served in terms bus connectivity.

Train Services

6.100 The site is located 1.5km west of Reading train station, a major train interchange. The majority of services into Reading have an origin/destination of London Paddington. The station is served by three major train operating companies: Great Western Rail, Cross Country, and South West Trains. Services operate 7 days a week at a high frequency through the day and night.

Local Road Network

6.101 The A329 Caversham Road forms part of the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) which loops around Reading town centre. The A329 takes the form of a dual carriageway and is restricted to a 40mph speed limit. To the north the A329 connects with Vastern Road and the A4155. To the south the A329 continues to connect to the A33, which provides direct access to the M4 at junction 11. Alternative access to the M4 and for destinations east of Reading, can be sought via the A329 south of the site linking with the A4 Kings Road / London Road. To

head north of the development towards Caversham, traffic will use the A4155 over the river Thames.

6.102 Kenavon Drive is subject to a 30mph speed restriction, typical of a built-up area. There are on-street parking restrictions along with pay and display bays present along the road.

Access Arrangements

6.103 The proposed development will use an extension of Alexander Turner Close as a point of vehicle access. This access was considered within the allocation of the site and the connection built into the existing adjacent Bellway development scheme. This has always therefore been the intended access point for the site. Given that the Gas Holder Site is still operational this has not allowed for the Highway works to be completed at the eastern boundary of the site which would form the access into the site. As such the roads within the Bellway scheme have not been formally adopted by RBC and therefore the adjacent road network remains private.

6.104 The width of the proposed access road is 6.1m although some localized narrowing is proposed which accommodates planting. The retained width would still be 5m and this would be sufficient to accommodate two-way flows.

6.105 The proposed internal road layout not only allows suitable reversing space for the proposed parking spaces along the northern side of the road but allows sufficient width for a larger vehicle including an emergency vehicle to pass a car.

Connection to Alexander Turner Close

6.106 As part of the pre-application discussions Officers requested that consideration be given to the connection to the existing Alexander Turner Close and its current layout. As part of the adjacent Bellway scheme the design of Alexander Turner Close allowed for a connection through to the Gas Holder site, however as the Gas Holder site layout has developed the access alignment has moved further south of the anticipated connection point and more in line with the existing site access. Officers indicated that this alignment would leave an area of unused tarmac on Alexander Turner Close which the Council would prefer to see landscaped to provide a better overall road alignment connecting the two sites. The developer has confirmed that they will provide these works via a S278 agreement as this is work to the public highway and this requirement would form part of the section 106 legal agreement.

6.107 In addition to the above a footway was also to be provided at part of the Bellway scheme along the Southern boundary of Alexander Turner Close linking to the application site. However, given that the gas holder site is still operational and the footway would obstruct access this footway has not been provided. The path has been terminated 11m (approx.) to the west of the application site but would need to be provided to retain a connection into the site and to the bridge over the River Kennet. Given that the extension of this path has not been possible due

to the retained use on the site the extension of the path should be provided by the developer again by way of a S278 Agreement as part of the section 106 legal agreement.

6.108 A plan has now been submitted by the applicant illustrating the proposed layout of these elements (Drawing 5757.001) which is considered acceptable.

Connection to the footbridge over the Kennet

6.109 There is an existing footbridge to the south of the site which provides access over the River Kennet. As part of the pre-application discussions officers requested that the development consider possible connection from the site to the footbridge and possible improvements to allow a more central access ramp that accommodated the three key desire lines, from the existing pathway on the riverside, the central footway from Kennet Walk and the access from the application site/Alexander Turner Close.

6.110 The applicant has considered these requests, however the Transport Statement submitted with the application set out that there were a number of constraints relating to the possible reworking of the ramps and providing the connections suggested including land ownership and costs. However, following discussion with the applicant during the course of the application it has been established that the whole of the works required can be accommodated within the extent of the Public Highway and the applicant has agreed to provide for this new pedestrian link to the bridge as part of the S278 works to be secured through the S106. A plan indicating the proposed works has been submitted and is considered acceptable.

Servicing

6.111 The proposed site layout shows a refuse store at the eastern entrance to the multi-story car park and the southern boundary of the access road. A refuse vehicle would be able to get within 10m of the refuse store and therefore this is considered acceptable. A swept path analysis has been submitted which shows that a refuse vehicle can fully enter and exit the site and has is considered acceptable. The turning head to the east of the site allows the refuse vehicle to turn and reverse up to the refuse store at the entrance to the multi-story car park. Access to the other bin stores can also be achieved. Changes to the surface treatment of the turning facility have been included so as to reduce potential conflict between pedestrians and refuse/delivery vehicles and this is deemed acceptable.

Trip Generation and Impact – Trip Rates

6.112 The applicant has calculated the proposed trip generation from the development using the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS). TRICS is the national standard system of trip generation and analysis in the UK and Ireland, and is used as an integral and essential part of the Transport Assessment process. It is a database system, which allows its users to establish potential levels of trip

generation for a wide range of development and location scenarios, and is widely used as part of the planning application process by both developer consultants and local authorities and is accepted by Inspectors as a valid way to ascertain likely trip generation. The Transport Development Control Manager is therefore happy that the proposed methodology is acceptable and having reviewed the trip rates proposed is satisfied that the assessment undertaken is acceptable with all the sites used from TRICS comparable to the application site. The total number of trips by all modes within the peak periods that would be generated by the development can be found in the table below taken from the TA.

Table 5.1: Trip Rates from TRICS Database

	Trip Rates			Potential Trip Generation		
	Arrivals	Departures	Two Way	Arrivals	Departures	Two Way
AM Peak 08:00-09:00	0.045	0.118	0.163	6	15	21
PM Peak 17:00-18:00	0.116	0.077	0.193	15	10	25

6.113 To ascertain the number of trips per mode the applicant has utilized census data which is an acceptable method and the percentages per mode can be found in the table below. (It should be noted that the daily total is the amount of movement from the census data assessed and not the amount of movements the development would generate).

Table 5.3 – Trip Generation to work by mode

Mode of Travel	Daily	%
Car Driver	4033	33%
Car Share	397	3%
Cyclist	601	5%
Pedestrian	3657	29%
Bus/Tram	1518	12%
Train	2015	16%
Motorcyclist	55	1%
Other	98	1%
Total	**5394**	**100%**

Traffic Impact

6.114 As part of the scoping exercise it was agreed with RBC that the TA would look at the following key junctions:

- Forbury Road/ Vastern Roundabout;
- Forbury Road / Kenavon Drive Roundabout;
- Oscar Wild Road / Kenavon Drive / Kennet Walk;
- Watlington Street Gyratory.

6.115 To determine the baseline traffic situation near the proposed development site, Manual Classified Counts (MCC) and queue length counts were undertaken by Advanced Transport Research, in locations agreed with the local HA.

The following assessment scenarios have been undertaken for the AM peak and PM peak hours:

- 2018 Baseline
- 2024 Baseline + Committed Developments
- 2024 Baseline + Committed Developments + Proposed 130 unit Development

6.116 It has been agreed that following an initial assessment of the increased trips at the Oscar Wild Road / Kenavon Drive / Kennet Walk; that no formal assessment is required given the proposed increase in flows would not be a material increase.

6.117 The assessments undertaken identify that the junctions operate within capacity when assessed in isolation however the surveys do not take account of the queues that extend through the junction from subsequent junctions. The applicant has however clarified that including the queue lengths from further along the network does not assess the capacity of that actual junction and that any mitigation to that junction would not alter the queues that commence further along the network.

6.118 Given that the proposal will result in increases to these existing queues it has been agreed that the applicant provide an overall package of sustainable travel measures to support the development and promote non car modes in order to mitigate the development impact. These measures include the provision of suitable cycle parking, pedestrian facilities within the site and connections to the wider network including the adjacent footbridge, car club provision, a site Travel Plan and a contribution towards the local bus services.

Parking Provision – Car Parking

6.119 The proposed development will provide 127 unallocated parking spaces within the site. One of these spaces will be a dedicated car club space. This provides an overall car parking ratio of 0.97. As previously stated this provision is acceptable as it is a mix of between zones 1 and 2 of the Council's adopted parking standards.

6.120 It has been agreed that the car ownership ratio of 0.62 is representative of the car ownership levels of flats within the immediate local area. This is evidence based on local data and best represents the likely parking demand for the site. On this basis, a total of 81 spaces would be required to meet the actual parking demand for the development. This would leave a further 46 spaces being provided on site to accommodate any further parking demand likely such as visitor parking, equivalent to 13 spaces as set out in the Councils adopted parking standards. The 127 spaces proposed are therefore consistent with Local and National Policy requirements.

6.121 The proposed 13 visitor spaces should be specifically identified on a plan to ensure that they are retained and as such a condition is recommended to ensure such a plan is submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

6.122 The proposed development requires a provision of 2 car club spaces rather than the 1 currently proposed. The applicant contacted a number of potential operators prior to submission of the application to ensure that a car club could be operated from this site. Whist the car club operator acknowledged that RBC would want to see 2 cars operating; it was felt that this would not be required in this location and the operator considers that only 1 car space would be viable.

6.123 The Transport Development Control Manager has been agreed that the development could initially provide for a provision of 1 car club space but with the provision of a second should there be sufficient demand and this approach can be secured as part of the section 106 legal agreement.

6.124 Within the overall parking provision the developer has included the provision of 13 electric vehicle charging spaces and 7 disabled spaces. This complies with the requirements set out in the Councils Parking SPD and Policy TR5.

Cycle Parking

6.125 The Council's Parking and Design SPD notes 0.5 cycle spaces is required for 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings and 1 space is required for 3 or more bedroom dwellings. The proposed development is to provide 74 cycle parking spaces or 0.52 spaces per unit, providing some 5.5 spaces over the number required by the SPD.

6.126 Although it is not confirmed it is assumed that the type of cycle parking would be two tier josta cycle parking which would be acceptable. However this would need to be confirmed by way of an amended plan, but as there would be sufficient space to accommodate this level of cycle parking, the Transport Development Control Manager is happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

Travel Plan

6.127 A Framework Travel Plan has been submitted to encourage sustainable travel. This has also been reviewed by the Transport Development Control Manager and is considered acceptable subject to conditions to secure its implementation and regular review.

6.128 The proposals are considered to be acceptable in transport terms subject to the recommended condition and section 106 heads of terms.

Sustainability

6.129 Policies H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new building housing is built to high standards. In particular new housing should adheres to national prescribed space standards, water efficiency standards above building

regulations, zero carbon homes standards (for major schemes) provide at least 5% of dwellings as wheelchair user units. Policy CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction) and CC3 (Adaption to Climate Change) seeks that proposals should incorporate measures which take account of climate change. Policy CC4 (Decentralised Energy) seeks that developments of more than 20 dwellings should consider the inclusion of combined heat and power plant (CHP) or other form of decentralised energy provision.

6.130 The applicant has submitted a sustainability and energy report as part of the application which follows the relevant policies and Sustainable Design and Construction SPD guidance applying the recognised energy hierarchy of 'be lean', 'be clean' and 'be green'.

6.131 Policy H5 includes a number of specific requirements for new housing. The information submitted as part of the application demonstrates that the proposals would be compliant in this respect. Notably the proposals would achieve zero carbon homes standards in achieving a 35% improvement over 2013 Building Regulations Standards and in providing a carbon off-setting contribution equivalent to £1, 800 per tonne of carbon. The building regulations improvement would be secured via use of highly efficient building materials as well as a Waste Water Heat Recovery System. The applicant has agreed to the principle of providing the carbon off-setting contribution and has calculated this to be one hundred and thirty eight thousand seven hundred and thirty six pounds (£138,736.00) which would be secured as part of the section 106 legal agreement. Officers are currently seeking specialist review of the applicant's carbon off-setting calculations and as set out in the recommendation box at the beginning of the report officers seek that, should planning permission be granted, agreement of the final level of the carbon off-setting contribution is delegated to officers once the specialist review of the calculations has been completed.

6.132 The carbon off-setting contributions would be ring-fenced for energy-efficiency improvements or renewables projects within the Borough. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Visits from energy advice officers;
- Free energy-efficient lightbulbs;
- Subsidised loft and cavity wall insulation;
- Boiler cash-back scheme for replacement of inefficient boilers with higher rated boilers; and
- Draught proofing.

6.133 Projects funded through the offset fund cannot also be secured via CIL, as they are not 'infrastructure' in the sense that is covered by CIL. Projects funded by the offset fund should emphasise energy efficiency improvements and should maximise co-benefits, such as alleviating fuel poverty, reducing energy bills, improving air quality, providing heat for vulnerable residents, increasing the efficiency of public sector buildings and reducing operations costs.

6.134 In terms of decentralised energy provision the applicant has considered a number of measures with CHP being considered to be the most appropriate. However, due to cost inefficiencies from installation and running of CHP in development that is split into 3 separate buildings this has been discounted. The potential to connect the development to the existing district heating system at the adjacent Bellway Homes site has also been considered however, the district heating serves the flatted elements of the adjacent scheme only which are located at the far west of the site at the furthest point from the application site and therefore connection into this system would not be possible.

6.135 A sustainable drainage strategy (SuDs) has also been submitted as part of the application. This has been reviewed by the Local Flood Authority (RBC Transport) and is considered acceptable subject to conditions to secure a timetable for its implementation and details of management and maintenance of the scheme and it implementation in accordance with the approved details.

6.136 On balance, officers are satisfied that the proposals demonstrate a good standard of sustainability and in particular adhering to zero carbon homes standards is considered to be a positive benefit of the scheme.

Flooding

6.137 Policy EN18 (Flooding) seeks that development should not increase the risk of flooding and that major schemes should include provision of sustainable drainage systems (SuDs).

6.138 The proposals are located within Flood Zone 2. As allocated land, the local planning authority has already been through and passed the sequential test and an exception test is not required in this instance The land levels will be raised as part of the proposed development (by up to 1.6m) to remove the risk from flooding as part of the proposals. Safe access would be maintained for all rainfall events up to and including the 1 in 100 year + 35% climate change event and would not create an unacceptable increase in flood risk elsewhere.

6.139 Due to the depth of the made ground and the high water levels, infiltration methods of disposal of surface water run-off will not be feasible. Surface water run-off will therefore be discharged into the watercourse. The proposed development will lead to an overall decrease in impermeable area across the site, providing a betterment to the existing situation. Attenuation storage will be provided using porous paving, with geo-cellular crates underneath.

6.140 The Environment Agency raises not objection to the proposed development in terms of flood risk and the proposals are not considered to result in increased risk of flooding.

Archaeology

6.141 Policy EN2 (Areas of Archaeological Significance) seek that development, where appropriate, should preserve archaeological remains.

6.142 An 'Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment' has been submitted as part of the application. This highlights past developments on the site resulting from its former use as part of Reading Gas Works and cartographic sources and geotechnical data provide evidence for other former Gas Works structures within the site. The application area is not substantial in size (0.71ha) and it is clear that a large proportion of the site has suffered considerable impacts as part of its former use. On this basis, the areas of the site that retain an archaeological potential are, at best, modest.

6.143 Berkshire Archaeology have reviewed the submitted assessment and concur with the conclusions that the likelihood of buried archaeological remains within the site is, at best, low, and likely to be negligible. On this basis, they advise that further archaeological investigation of the site would not be proportionate and therefore no further action is required in this respect.

Other Matters

6.144 A construction phase Employment Skills and Training Plan would also be secured via the section 106 legal agreement as per the Councils Employment Skills and Training SPD. This could be in the form of a site specific plan or equivalent a financial contribution. As such, the s106 will secure this in a flexible manner covering both options.

6.145 Policies CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) and DM3 (Infrastructure Planning) allow for necessary contributions to be secured to ensure that the impacts of a scheme are properly mitigated. It is considered that each of the obligations referred to above would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in that it would be: i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, ii) directly related to the development and iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

6.146 Equality - In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

Matters Raised in Representations

6.147 All matters raised are considered to be covered within the appraisal section above.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The proposals are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above.

7.2 The proposals are considered to demonstrate a good level of adherence to the policy objectives within the East Side Major Opportunity Area and Kenavon Drive Urban Design Concept Statement. The lack of a continuous access from the site to the existing Kennet Walk riverside pathway to west of the site owing the location of the existing footbridge is considered to be a shortfall of the application however the proposals do not preclude such a link being provided in the future. There are considered to be a number other tangible planning benefits to the proposed development, in particular provision of a high quality riverside area of open space with significant landscape and biodiversity enhancements, provision of a new pedestrian link to the footbridge over the Kennet from Alexander Turner Close, high quality design approach and adherence to zero carbon homes standards. Therefore, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations, the benefits are considered to evidently outweigh the conflicts. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to the recommended conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement.

Drawings and Documents Submitted:

Site Location Plan P0-001 P
Existing Site Plan E0-010 P
Proposed Plan - Second Floor P0-102 P
Proposed Plan - Third Floor P0-103 P
Proposed Plan - Fourth Floor P0-104 P
Proposed Plan - Fifth to Eight Floor P0-105 P
Proposed Plan – Roof P0-109 P
Proposed Plan - Block B - Ground Floor P1-200 P
Proposed Plan - Block B - First Floor P1-201 P
Proposed Plan - Block B - Second to Third Floor P1-202 P
Proposed Plan - Block B - Fourth to Eighth Floor P1-204 P
Proposed Plan - Block C Plans P 1-300 P
Proposed Elevations - Block A - South and East P3-101 P
Proposed Elevations - Block A - North and West P3-102 P
Proposed Elevations - Block B – North P3-202 P
Proposed Elevations - Block C P3-301 P
Dated 01/04/2019

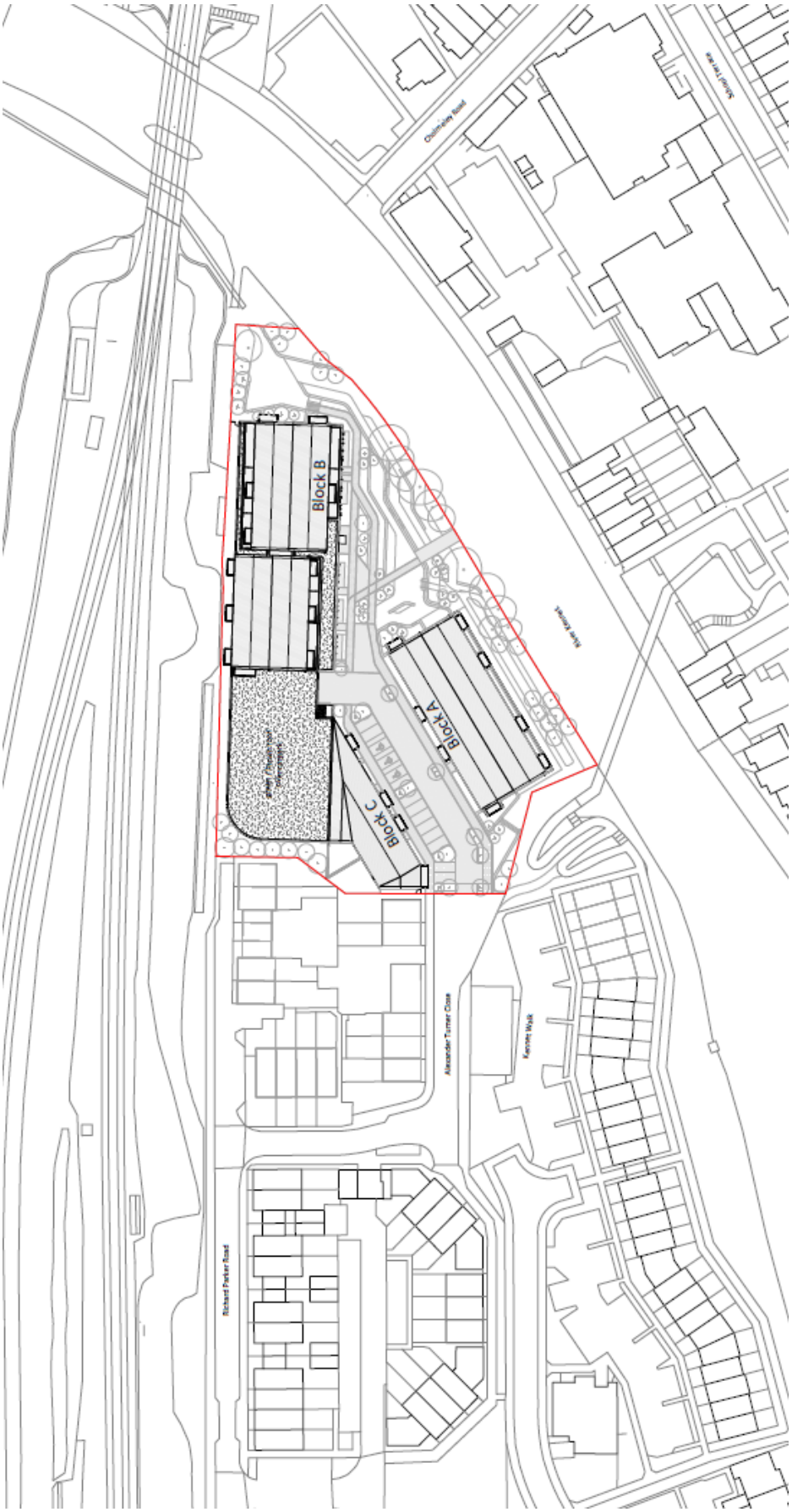
Proposed Sections P2-201 P1
Proposed Context Elevations - Block A (1) P3-011 P1
Proposed Context Elevations - Block A (2) P3-012 P1
Proposed Context Elevations - Block C P3-015 P1
Proposed Context Elevations - Block C (2) P3-016 P
Proposed Elevations - Block C – West P3-302 P
Dated 14/05/2019

Proposed Site Plan P0-010 P1

Proposed Plan - Ground Floor P0-100 P1
Proposed Plan - First Floor P0-101 P1
Proposed Plan - Block A - Ground Floor P1-100 P1
Proposed Plan - Block A - First to Fourth Floor P1-101 P1
Proposed Elevations - Block B – South P3-201 P1
Proposed Elevations - Block B - East and West P3-203 P1
Proposed Context Elevations - Block B (1) P3-013 P2
Proposed Context Elevations - Block B (2) P3-014 P2
Dated 23/09/2019

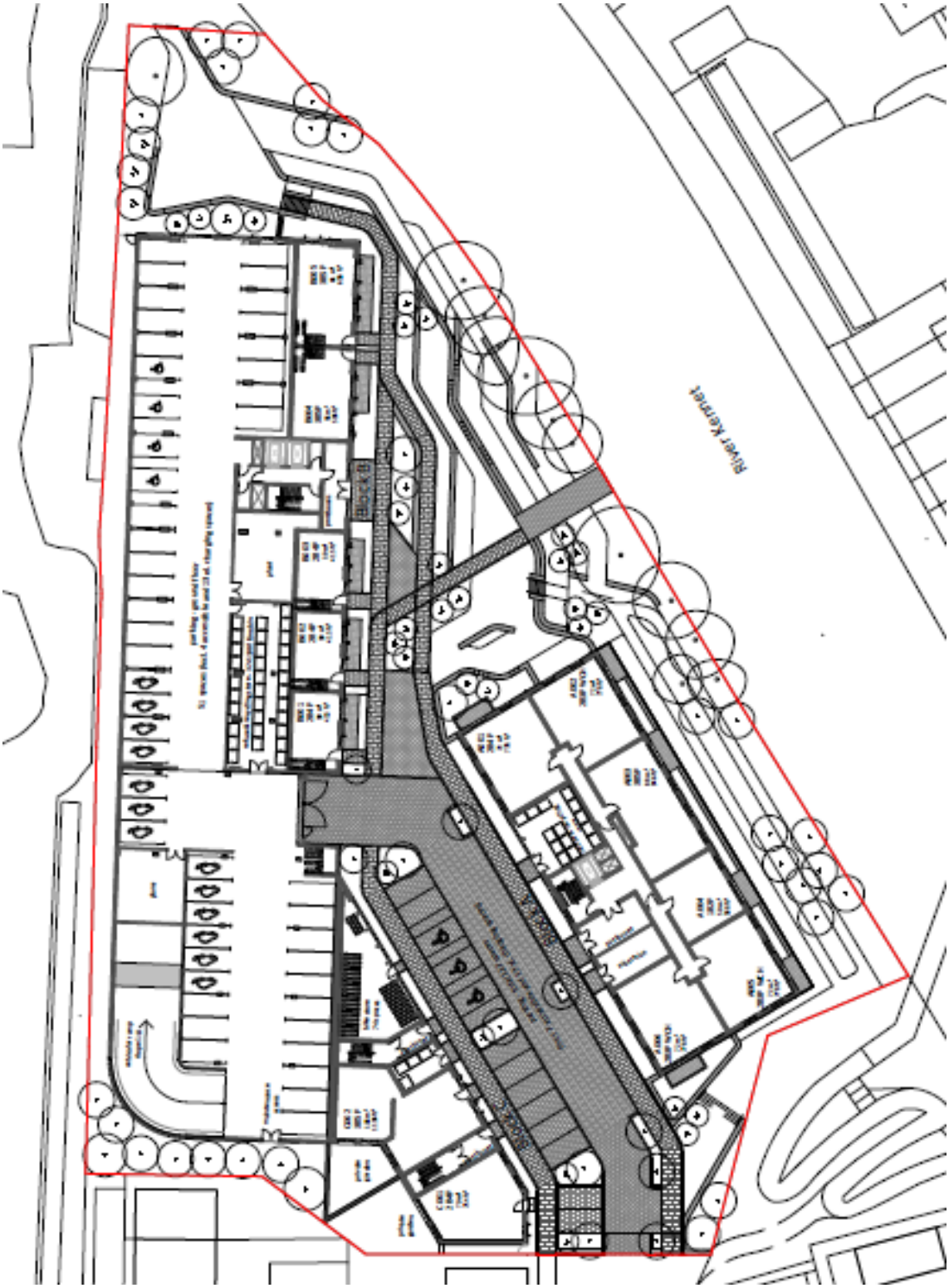
Landscape Softworks Strategy Plan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-401 P2
Landscape Hardworks Strategy Plan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-201 P2
Levels Strategy Plan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-301 P1
Topographical Survey 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-P000 P1
Dated February 2019

Anstey Home Daylight and Sunlight within the Proposed Dwellings
Atkins Geotechnical & Structural Engineering Planning Design Report
Boyer Planning Statement
Boyer Statement of Community Involvement
Briary Energy Energy Statement
Collado Collins Design and Access Statement
Farrer Huxley Landscape Statement
Greenspace Ecological Solutions Arboricultural Impact Assessment
Greenspace Ecological Solutions Bat Emergence Survey
Greenspace Ecological Solutions Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Montagu Evans Heritage, Townscape, Visual Impact Assessment
Stuart Michael Associates Limited Air Quality Assessment
Stuart Michael Associates Limited Construction Environmental Management Plan
Stuart Michael Associates Limited Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement
Stuart Michael Associates Limited Framework Travel Plan
Stuart Michaels Associates Limited Noise Assessment
Stuart Michaels Associates Limited Transport Assessment
Turner Morum LLP Affordable Housing Statement
Wessex Archaeology Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
WSP Geo-Environmental Site Assessment

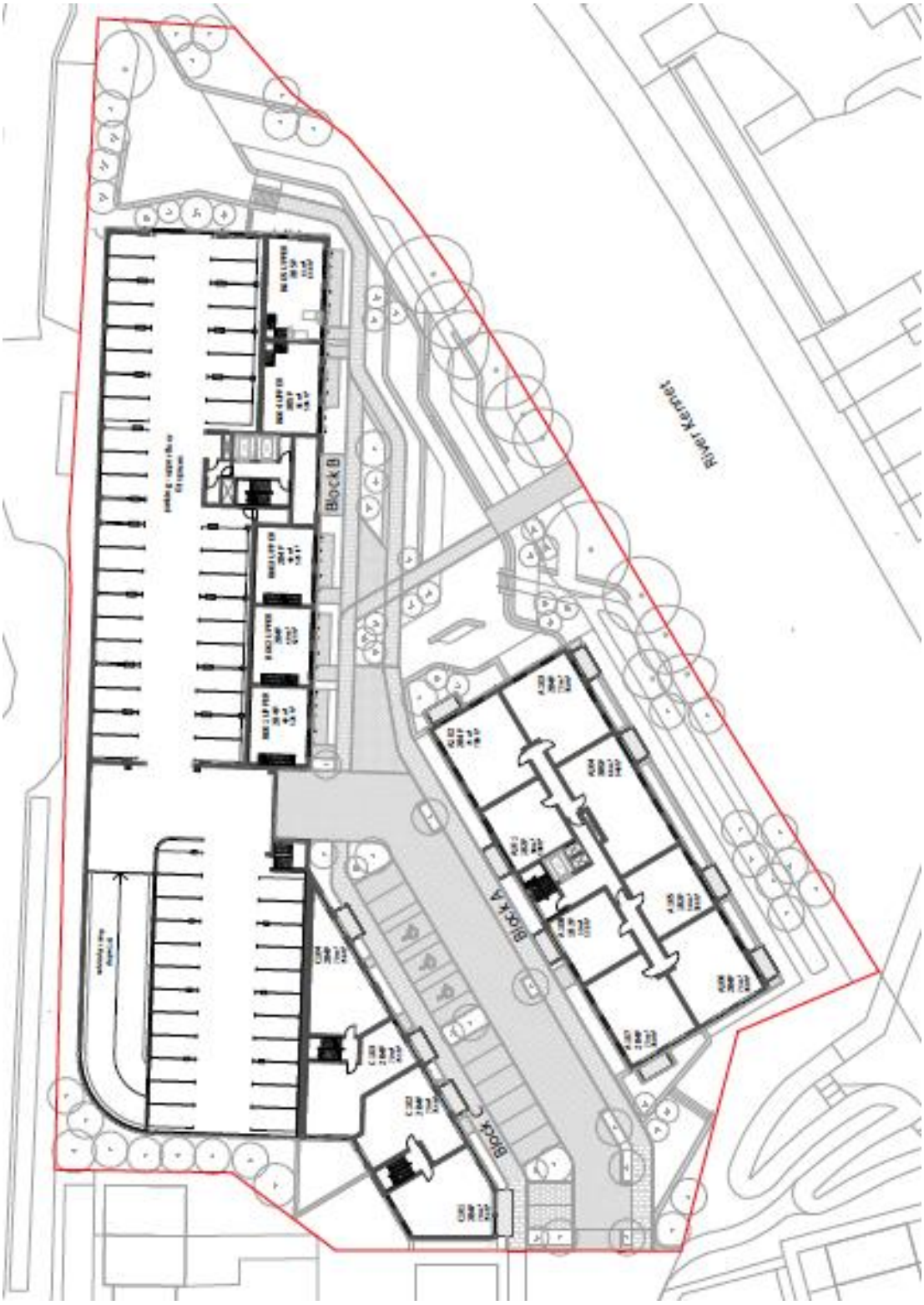


Proposed Site Plan

Propsoed Master Plan Site Layout

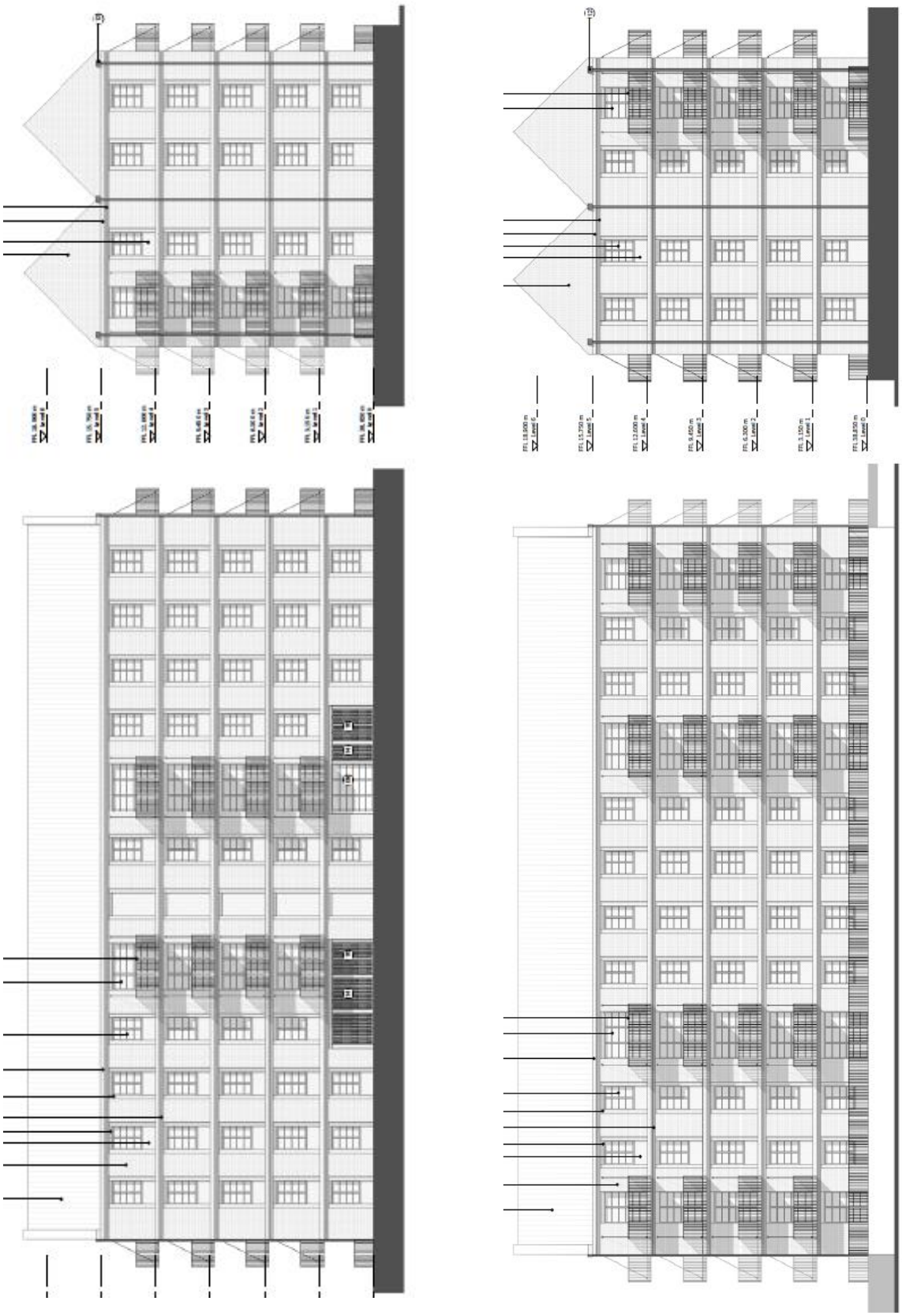


Proposed Ground Floor Layout

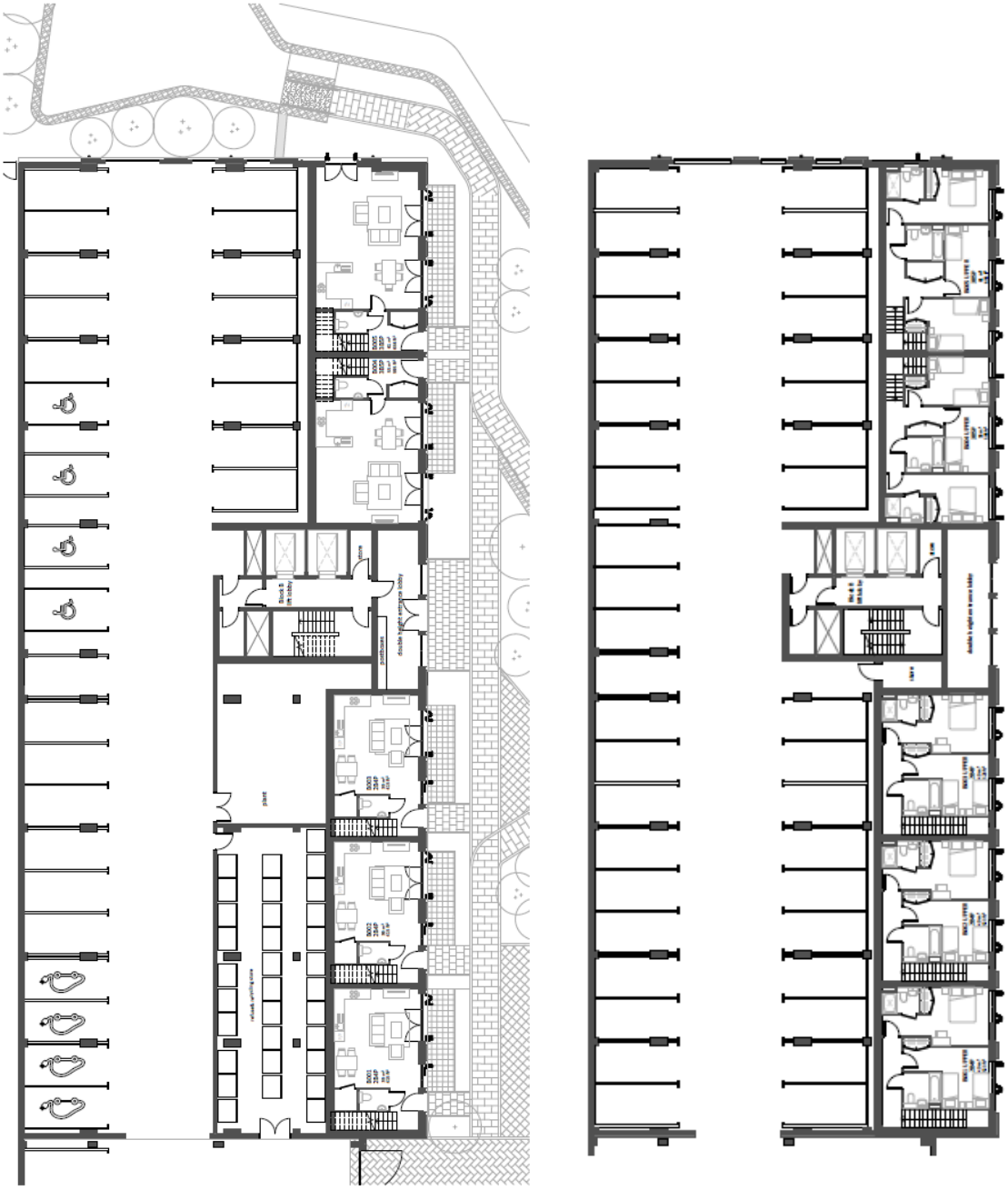


Proposed First Floor Layout

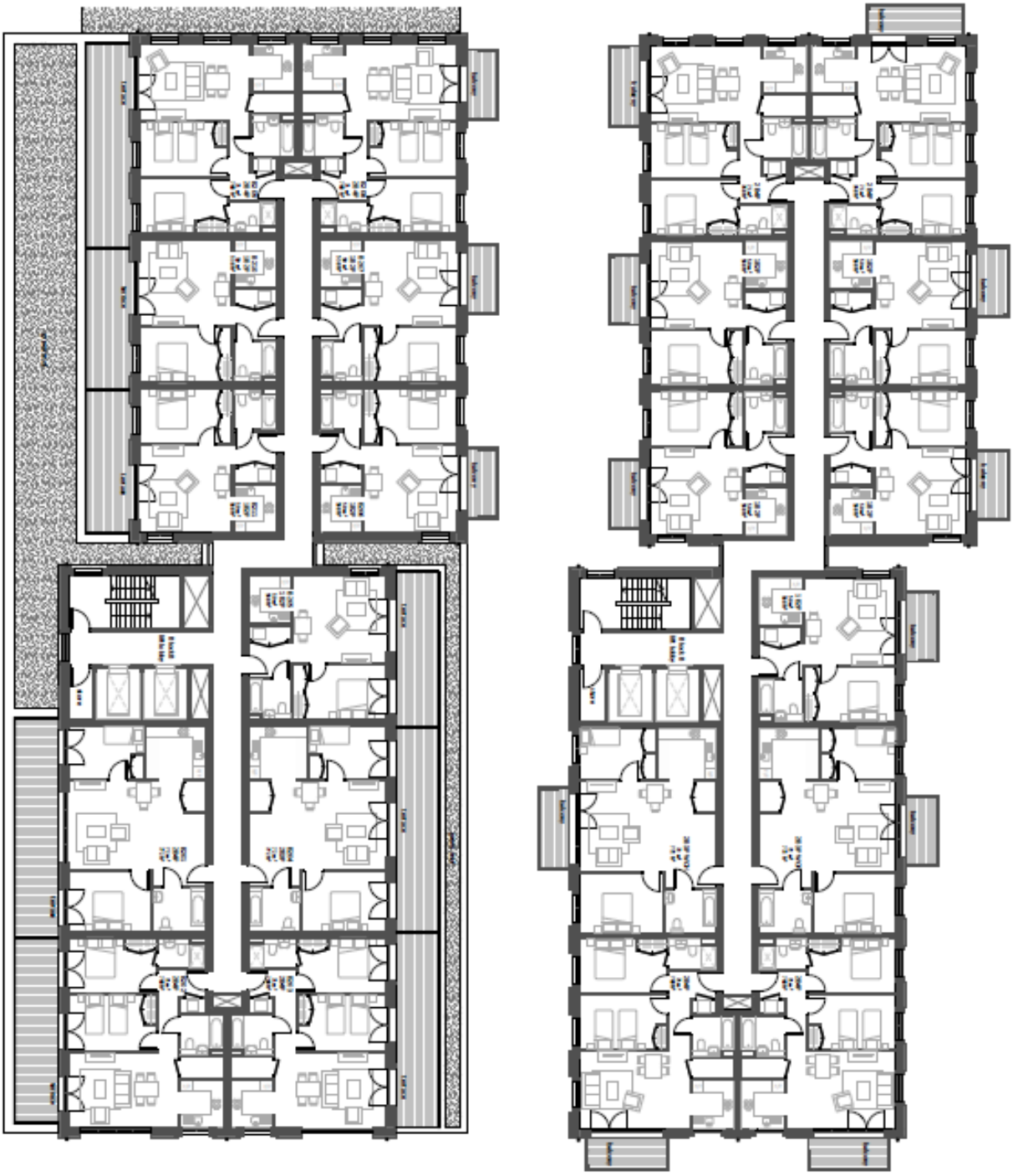
Block A – Proposed Floor Plans



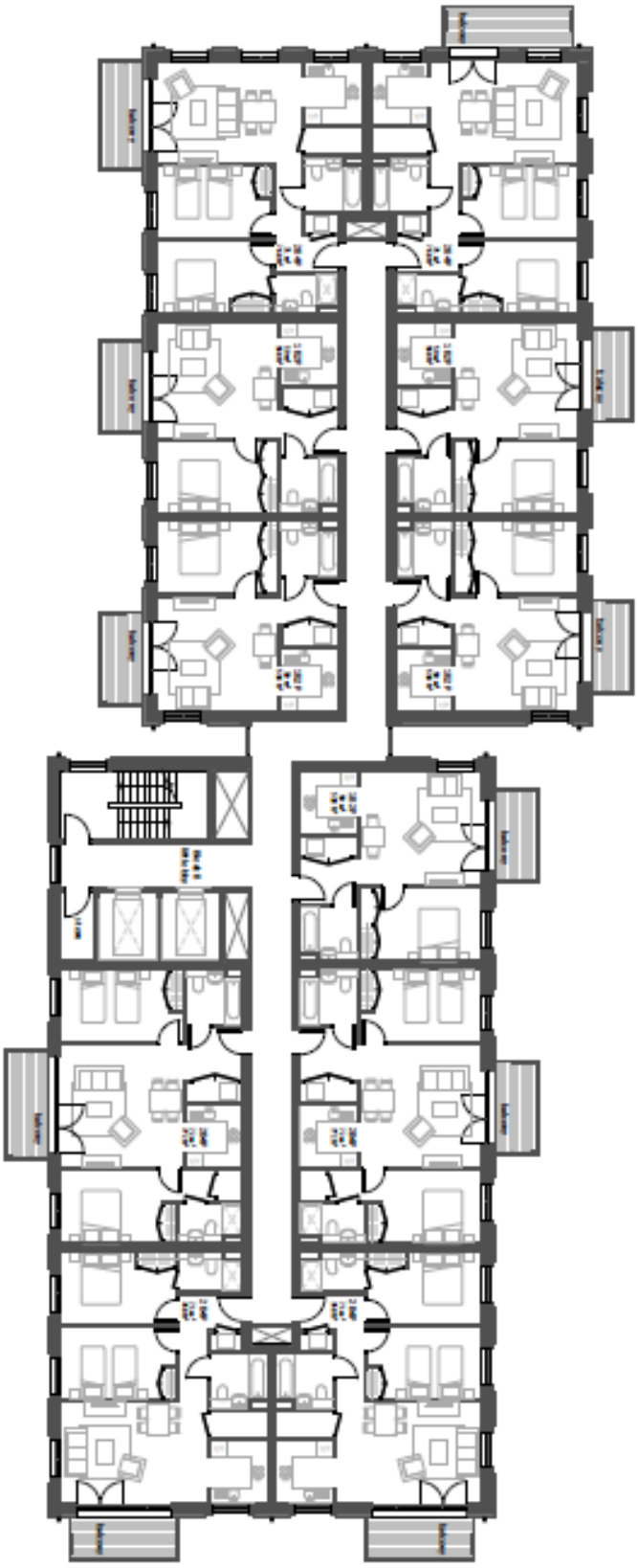
Block A Proposed Elevations



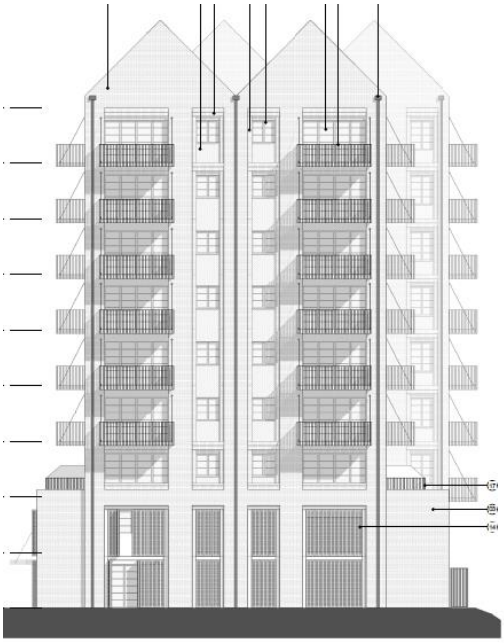
Block B – Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans

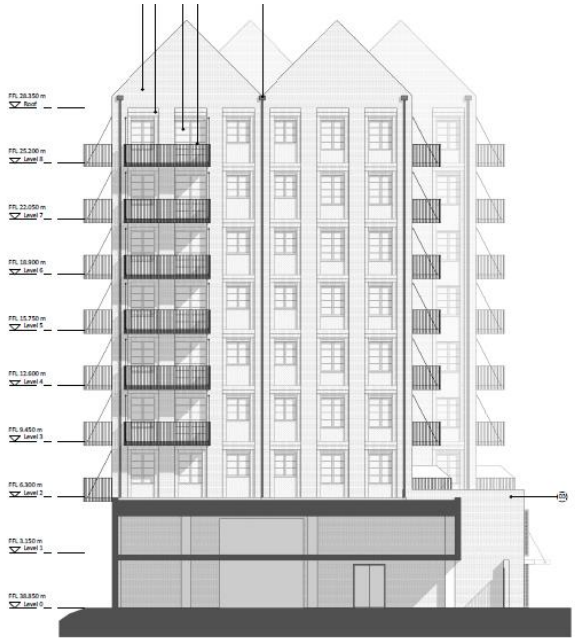


Block B - Proposed Second and Third Floor Plans



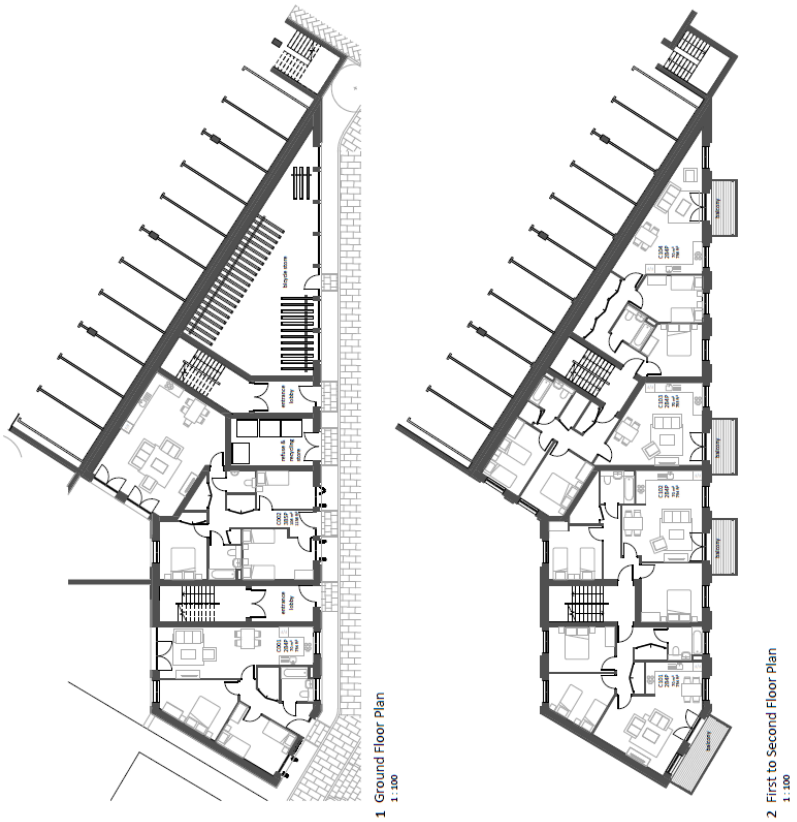
Block B – Proposed Fourth to Eighth Floor Plans





Block B - Proposed East, West and South Elevations

Block B – Proposed North Elevation



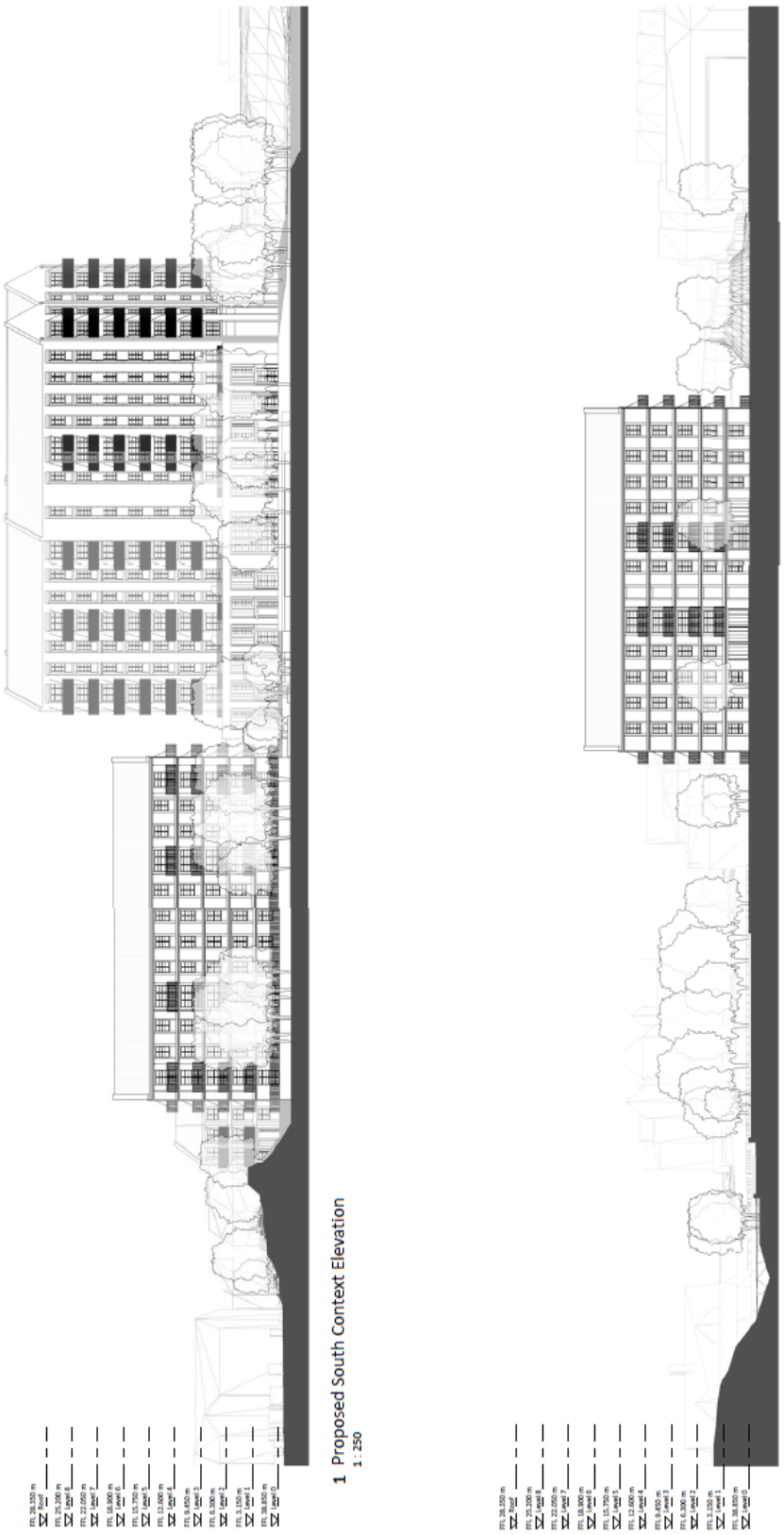
Block C – Proposed Floor Plans

1 Proposed South Elevation
1 : 100

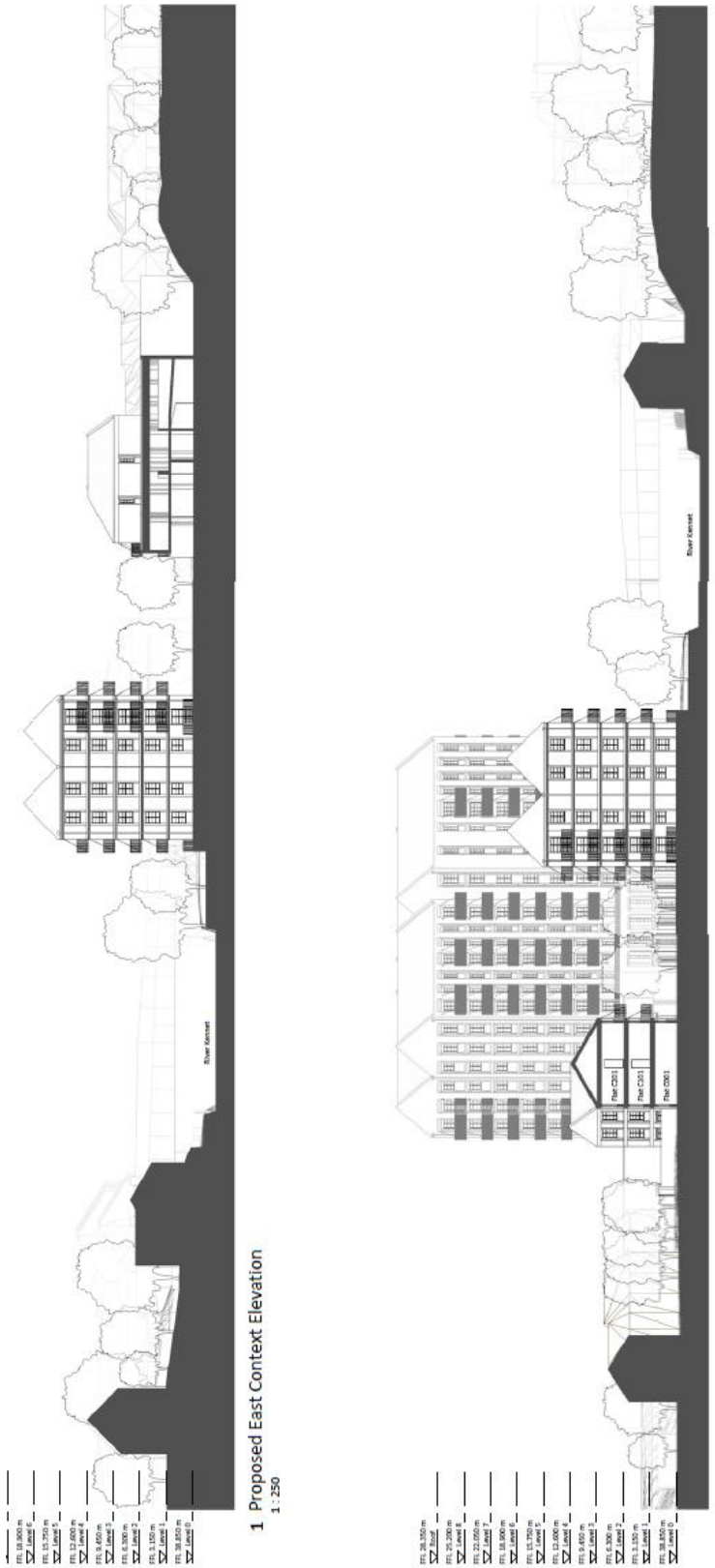
2 Proposed West Elevation
1 : 100

3 Proposed North Elevation
1 : 100

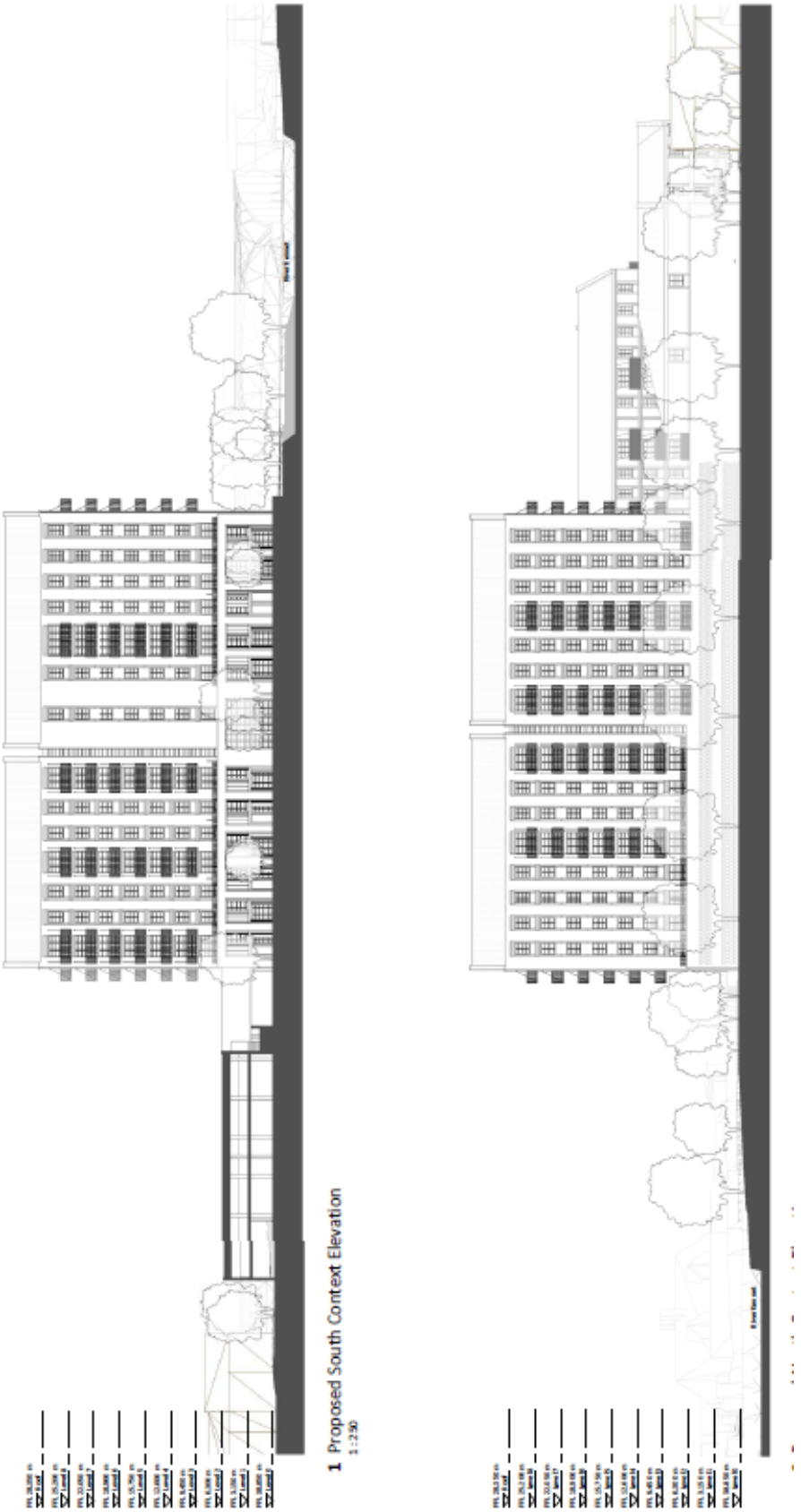
Block C – Proposed Elevations



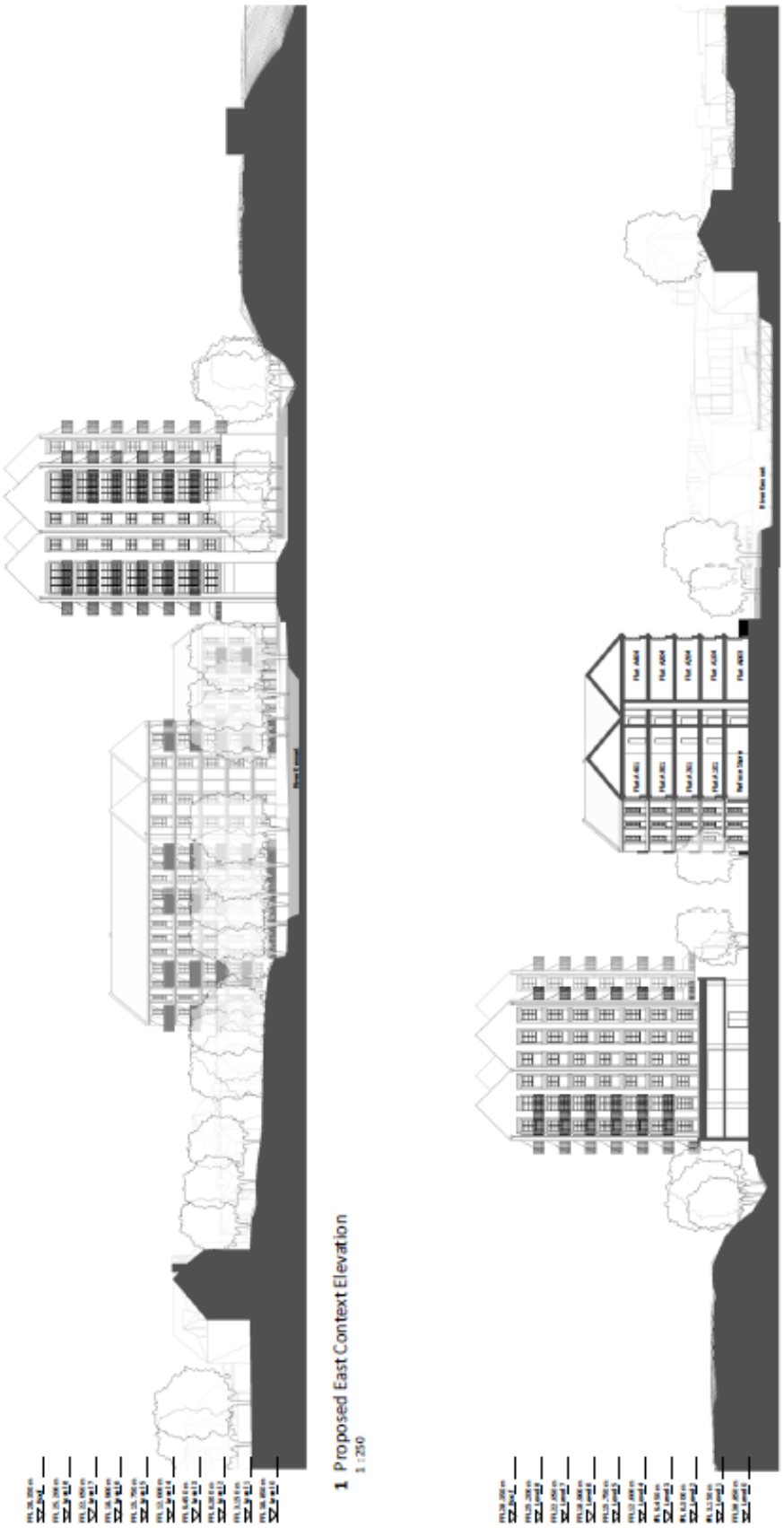
Block A - Proposed North and South Context Elevations



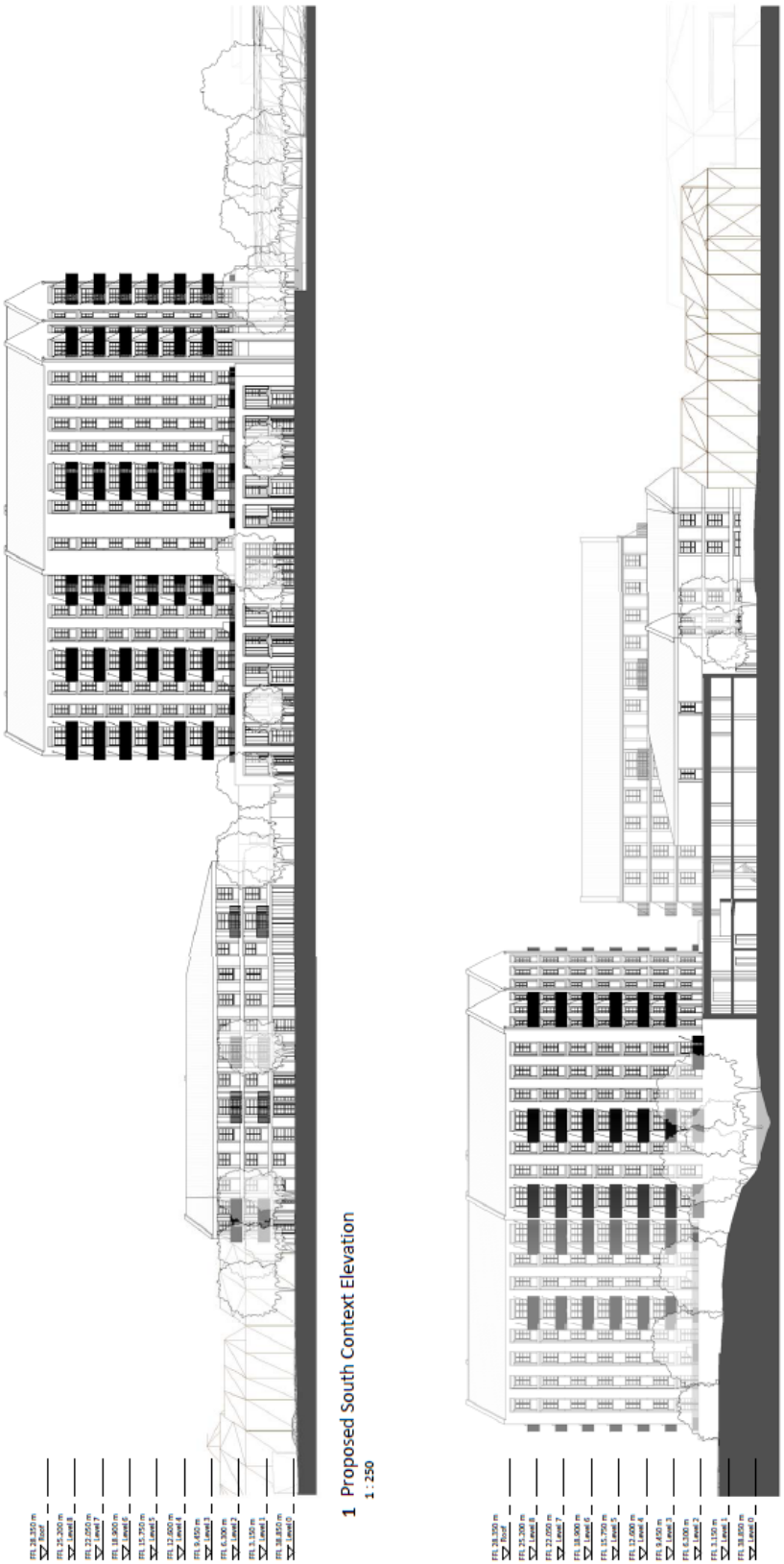
Block A – Proposed East and West Context Elevations



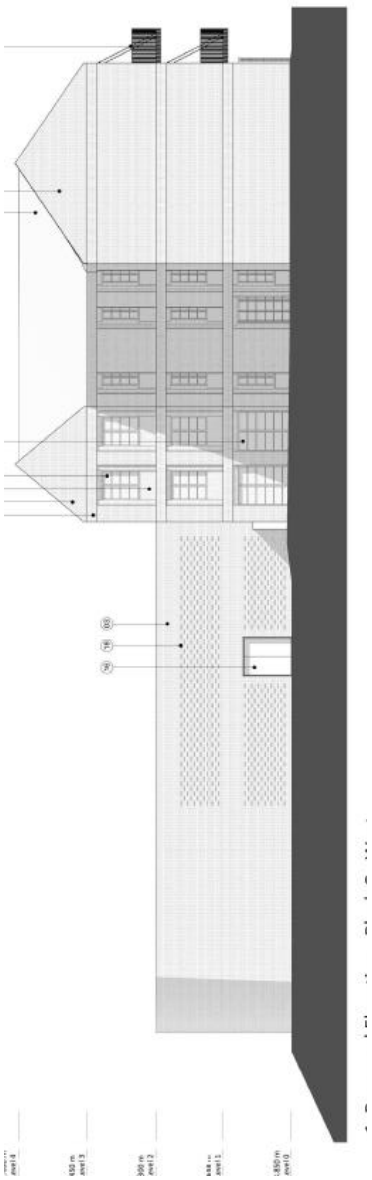
Block B – Proposed North and South Context Elevations



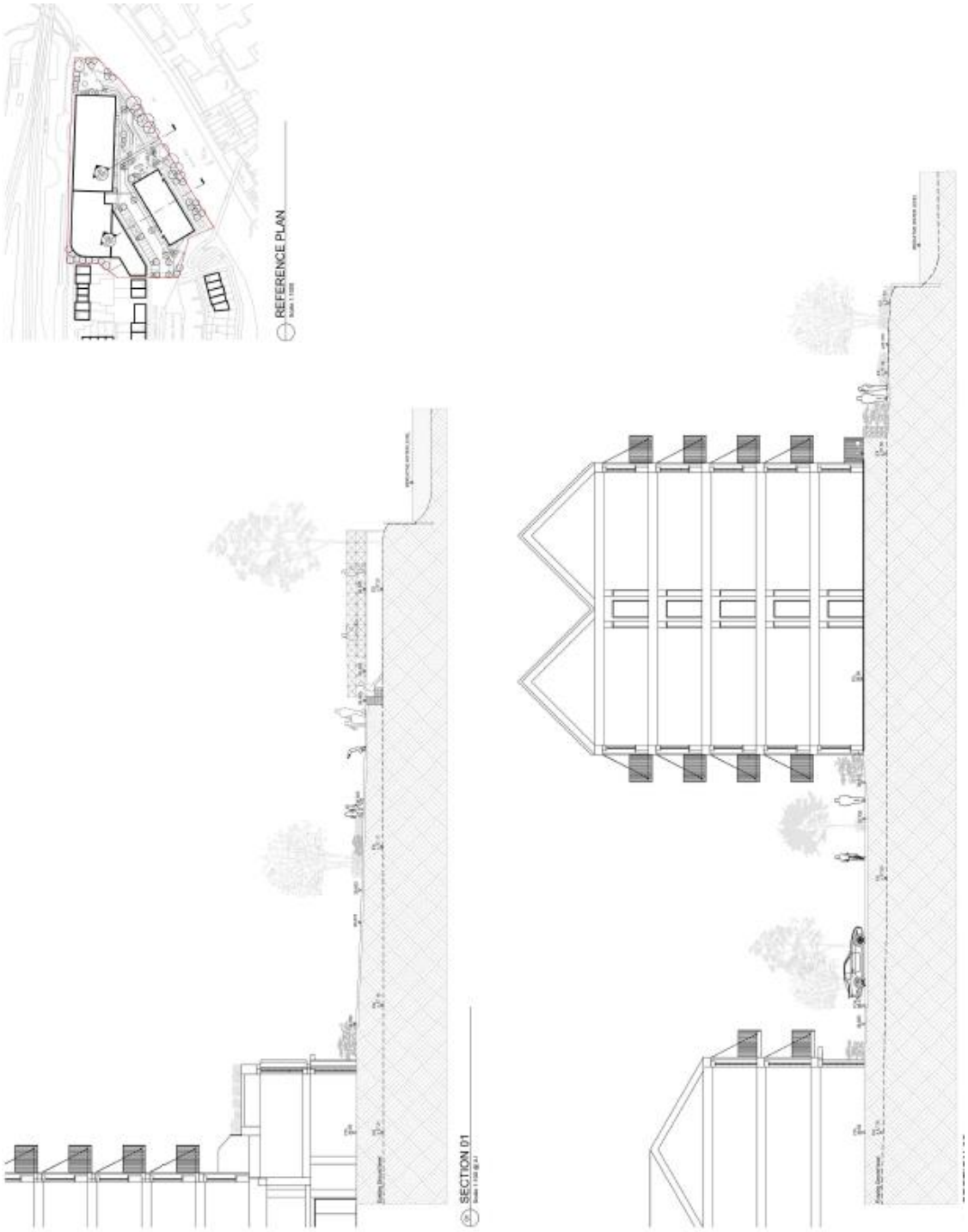
Block B – Proposed East and West Context Elevations



Block C - Proposed North and South Context Elevations



Block C – Proposed West Context Elevation



Existing and Proposed Site Levels Section (from river)

Existing View West from South Bank of River Kennet

Proposed View West From South Bank of River Kennet

Existing View East from South Bank of the River Kennet

Proposed View East from South Bank of the River Kennet

Existing View North from Cholmeley Road and Grade II Listed Newtown Primary School

Proposed View North from Cholmeley Road and Grade II Listed Newtown Primary School

Existing View North from Cumberland Road

Proposed View North from Cumberland Road

Existing View South West past Grade II Listed Railway Bridge

Proposed View South West past Grade II Listed Railway Bridge

Existing View North West from Liverpool Road

Proposed View North West from Liverpool Road

Proposed Visual Looking Directly North towards the Application site from Kennet Side across the River

Proposed Visual Looking East From Alexander Turner Close at the Entrance to the Site

Proposed Visual Looking North West from the River Bank within the site

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UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL **ITEM NO. 9**
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 13th November 2019

Ward: Abbey
App No: 190627/FUL
Address: Gas Holder Site Alexander Turner Close
Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space
Date validated: 28/05/2019
Application target decision date: 27/08/2019 **Extension of time:** 04/12/2019

RECOMMENDATION:

As per the main agenda report but the recommendation is no longer 'subject to' confirmation from the Council's Ecologist that the final ecological surveys have been carried out to an appropriate standard and that the proposed ecological mitigation/enhancement measures are acceptable

The following additional section 106 Heads of Terms are also proposed:

- A deferred payment mechanism for affordable housing in the form of an open book review of standard development cost and value inputs (triggered on sale or equivalent of the 90th percentile of units) to secure that any excess above a developer's profit of 18.7% of gross value is shared on a 50/50 basis (£1 for £1) between the applicant and the LPA up to the equivalent of the 30% policy cap, either in the form of additional units or a cash equivalent (at the discretion of the LPA).

  The Council can also require a further viability review if substantial implementation does not occur within 21 months of an implementable consent.

- A financial contribution of £10,000 towards street lighting adjustments along Kennet Site (to reduce light-spill/glow for bats)

The following additional conditions are proposed:

50. Pre-commencement submission and approval of scheme of biodiversity enhancements (to include peregrine platform, bird and bat boxes and native and wildlife friendly landscaping). Implementation prior to occupation and retention thereafter.

51. All demolition to be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (mid-March to end of August) or if this cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check

the areas to be removed immediately prior to demolition and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, works that may disturb active nests shall proceed until all young have fledged the nest and it is no longer in use.

52. Pre-commencement submission and approval of details of the river viewing platform

The following condition from the main agenda report is corrected as follows:

29. Pre-occupation ~~pay~~ play facilities to be submitted and approved. Pre-occupation implementation and retention thereafter.

1 Affordable Housing

1.1 Paragraph 6.12 of the main agenda report sets out at that there have been ongoing discussions between the Applicant and the Council's Principal Valuations Officer with regard to the final affordable housing offer. The on-site affordable housing provision referred to in the paragraph 6.13 of the main agenda report [15 on-site units which equates to a provision of 12%) has now been agreed. In addition to this a deferred payment mechanism has now also been agreed to ensure that the LPA would receive an equal share of any future additional profit made on the development (through savings in development costs or increases in value). The following is to be added to the section 106 heads of terms in terms of affordable housing provision:

> *Deferred payment mechanism in the form of an open book review of standard development cost and value inputs (triggered on sale or equivalent of the 90th percentile of units) to secure that any excess above a developers profit of 18.7% of gross value is shared on a 50/50 basis (£1 for £1) between the applicant and the LPA up to the equivalent of the 30% policy cap, either in the form of additional units or a cash equivalent (at the discretion of the LPA). The mechanism will also include the agreed existing use value as the land price input together with any financial benefits that are available and can be secured for mitigating the impact of decontamination and site related costs. The Council can also require a further viability review if substantial implementation does not occur within 21 months of an implementable consent.*

2. Ecology

2.1 The recommendation on the first page of the main agenda report was subject to 'confirmation from the Council's Ecologist that the final ecological surveys have been carried out to an appropriate standard and that the proposed ecological mitigation/enhancement measures are acceptable'.

2.2 Policy EN12 (EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network) of the Local Plan 2019 sets out that on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and seeks that development should protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site and provide new tree

planting, wildlife friendly landscaping and ecological enhancements (such as wildlife ponds, bird and bat boxes) wherever practicable.

2.3 The Council's Ecologist has now reviewed the final ecological surveys and is satisfied that they have been carried to an appropriate standard. An additional condition is recommended to ensure all demolition is undertaken outside of the bird nesting season.

2.4 The Council's Ecologist has also reviewed the proposed scheme of biodiversity mitigation/enhancement measures, including a proposed lighting strategy. The Ecologist is satisfied that the mitigation/enhancement measures proposed (summarised in paragraphs 6.63 – 6.66 of the main agenda report) are comprehensive. An additional condition is also recommended to secure detailed information on each of the measures proposed to be submitted and approved by the LPA (and the EA) prior to the commencement of development.

2.5 The proposed lighting strategy has also been reviewed and the Council's Ecologist considers that this has been designed, through application of low mounting heights and warm white LED lamps, such that lighting impact on the river environment and in particular on the river channel would be minimal. However, it is identified that in combination with the existing street lighting to Kennet Side on the opposite side of the river there would be an unacceptable cumulative increase in lighting levels within the central part of the river, which is a commuting corridor for bats. To mitigate against this cumulative impact and to demonstrate a biodiversity enhancement and net gain from the proposed development a financial contribution of ten thousand pounds (£10, 000) is to be secured as part of the section 106 legal agreement towards altering of the lamp heads to the Kennet Side Street lighting which would ensure that light levels within the central part of the river would not exceed those recommended for wildlife. Subject to securing this contribution and the recommended conditions Officers are satisfied that the proposals would result in a biodiversity enhancement and would accord with Policy EN12.

3 Other

3.1 Paragraph 6.3 of the main agenda report which refers to Policy CR13 (East Side Major Opportunity Area) is amended (deletions shown with a ~~strike-through~~ and additions in *italics*) to accurately reflect the final adopted wording of this Policy within the 2019 Local Plan:

'Development in the East Side Major Opportunity Area will:

i) Provide a more defined urban environment than currently exists, of a medium to high density;

ii) Contribute towards the provision of a new residential community at the eastern fringes of the central area. *Development for education will be acceptable within the site;*

iii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, in particular east-west links through the area and links between development areas and the station, including improved crossings of the IDR and railway;

iv) Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;

v) ~~Preserve the historic features in the area and enhance~~ *Conserve and enhance the listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and historic garden in the area and* their setting where possible;

vi) Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;

vii) Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space;

viii) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, particularly in the centre of the new community;

ix) Maintain, improve and create new access along the north side of the River Kennet *to the Kennet Mouth; and;*

x) Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.

3.2 The above corrections do not alter the conclusions of the main agenda report.

3.3 Paragraph 6.5 of the main agenda report which refers to Policy CR13d (Gas Holder Site) is amended (deletions shown with a ~~strike through~~ and additions in *italics*) to accurately reflect the final adopted wording of the this Policy within the 2019 Local Plan:

'This area will be used for residential development. Development should enhance the character of ~~the mouth of~~ the Kennet and should maximise the potential of the site to be a river gateway to Reading. Public access along the river will be sought. Development should be set back at least ten metres from the top of the bank of the river ~~and allow for a wildlife corridor along the river~~ *to reflect its wildlife significance*. Development should take account of potential contamination on the site.'

3.4 The above are typographical corrections and do not affect the conclusions of the officer report.

3.5 Paragraph 3.2 of the main agenda report incorrectly refers to Building C as being two storeys in height. Building C as proposed is three storeys in height as referred to elsewhere within the report.

3.6 Paragraph 3.3 of the main agenda report refers to Buildings A and B having balconies. It should also be noted that Building C also has balconies to the upper floors in addition to the private rear gardens to the ground floor units.

3.7 Paragraph 3.5 of the main agenda report refers to the unit mix within Building B. This incorrectly refers to 2 x 2 bedroom units and should instead state 2 x 3 bedroom units.

3.8 Paragraph 6.21 of the main agenda report refers to engineering advice received by the applicant advising that any new building on the site of the existing gas holder should be limited to 4 storeys. It should be noted that further investigation established that a new building should be limited to 5 storeys.

3.9 The drawing below paragraph 6.35 of the main agenda report shows only an indicative location of the new pedestrian connection to the footbridge over the Kennet. The agreed layout of the new link is shown in the drawings at the end of this update report as well as a visual indicating the appearance of the link.

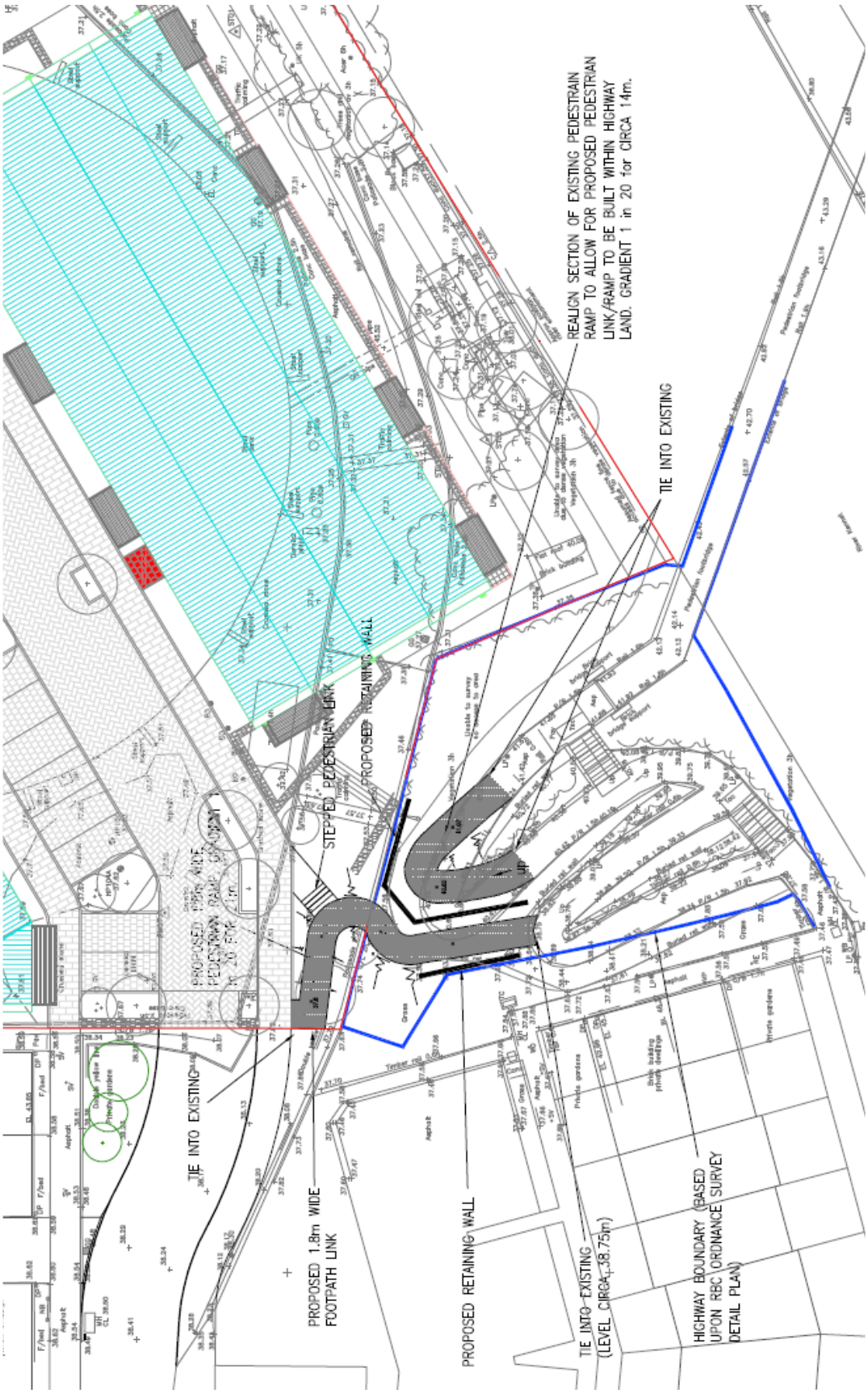
3.10 For clarity additional detail is also set out with regard to the detailed requirements of proposed condition no. 4 which requires a construction method statement to be submitted and agreed prior to the commencement of development:

4. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority to provide for:

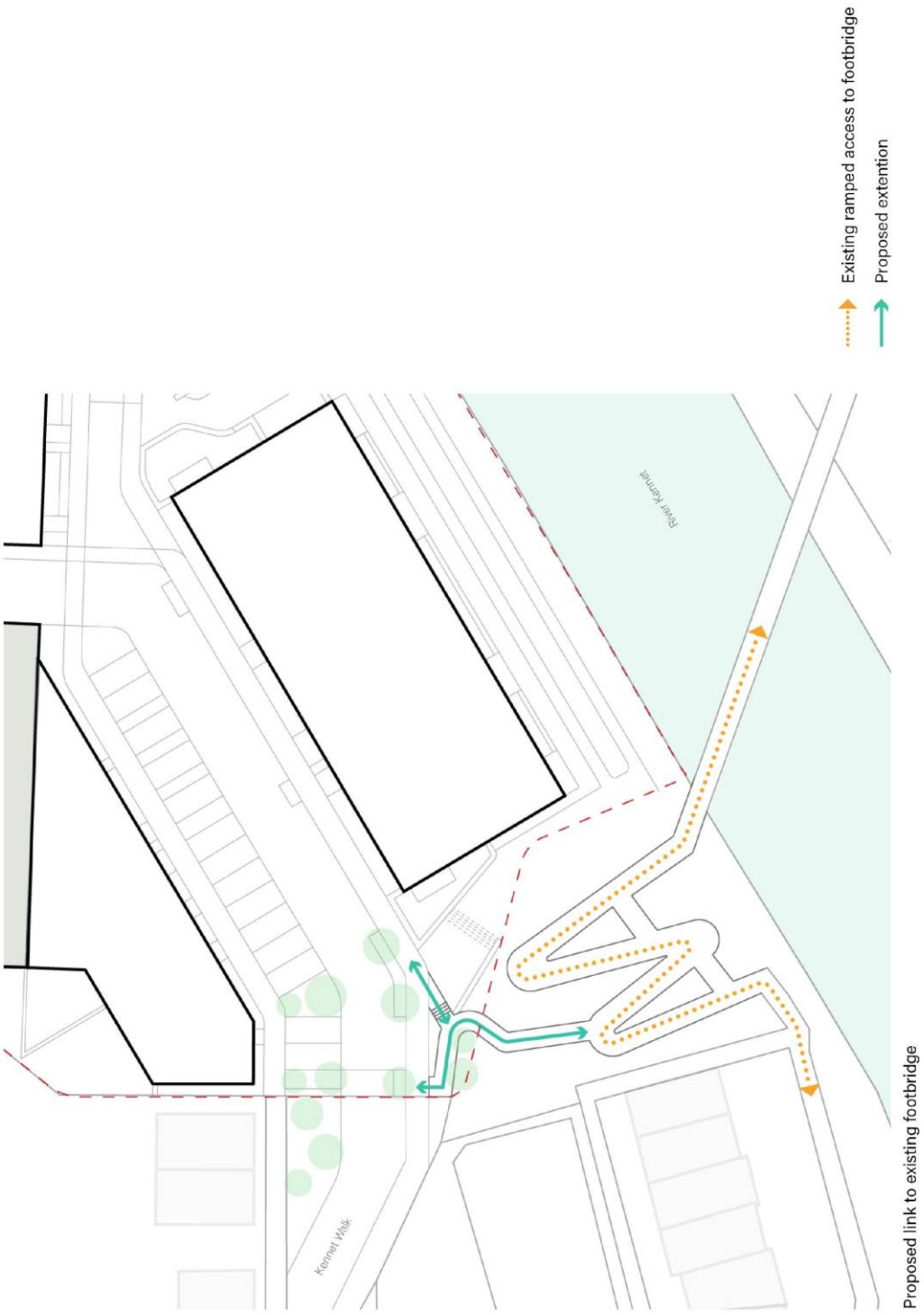
(A) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided
(B) Loading and unloading of plant and materials used in constructing the development.
(C) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
(D) The erection and maintenance of security hoarding / scaffolding if required.
(E) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
(E) Wheel washing facilities on site
(F) A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
(G) Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes.
(H) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;
(I) Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements.
(J) Traffic Management needed during construction.
(K) Times, routes and means of access into and from the site for construction traffic and delivery vehicles (including the removal of waste from the site and methods of preventing deposition of materials on the public highway).
(L) Emergency contact and Site manager contact details.

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the development process unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Officer: Matt Burns



Plan showing layout of the proposed new pedestrian connection to the footbridge over the River Kennet



Plan showing route of the proposed new pedestrian connection to the footbridge over the River Kennet

Visual of proposed new pedestrian connection to footbridge over the River Kennet

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Appendix 3

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING AND COMPENSATION ACT 1991
THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION

To: Boyer
Crowthorne House
Nine Mile Ride,
Wokingham
RG40 3GZ

Application No: 190627
Application type: Full Planning Approval

Applicant: Danescroft (Kenavon Drive Project Management) LLP

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL as Local Planning Authority **GRANT FULL** planning permission for the following development in accordance with the plans and supporting information submitted in connection with this application.

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and Gas Holder and the erection of new buildings ranging between 2 and 9 storeys in height, providing 130 residential units (Class C3) with associated access, car parking, landscaping and open space.

At: Gas Holder Alexander Turner Close Reading RG1 3EA

Subject to such conditions and for such reasons as may be attached

OTHER STATUTORY CONSENTS MAY BE REQUIRED
PLEASE READ THE NOTES ISSUED WITH THIS DECISION NOTICE

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

Application At: Gas Holder Alexander Turner Close Reading RG1 3EA

Application No: 190627
Application type: Full Planning Approval

CONDITIONS & REASONS

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Proposed Context Elevations - Block A (1) P3-011 P1
- Proposed Context Elevations - Block A (2) P3-012 P1
- Proposed Context Elevations - Block C P3-015 P1
- Proposed Context Elevations - Block C (2) P3-016 P
- Proposed Elevations - Block C – West P3-302 P

Dated 08/05/2019
Received by the Local Planning Authority dated 20th May 2019

- 716-FH-XX-00-DS-L-101 P1 – Site Sections

Dated May 2019

- Proposed Sections P2-201 P1

Dated 28/03/19

- Proposed Elevations - Block A - South and East P3-101 P
- Proposed Elevations - Block A - North and West P3-102 P
- Proposed Elevations - Block B – North P3-202 P
- Proposed Elevations - Block C P3-301 P
- Site Location Plan P0-001 P
- Proposed Plan - Second Floor P0-102 P
- Proposed Plan - Third Floor P0-103 P
- Proposed Plan - Fourth Floor P0-104 P
- Proposed Plan - Fifth to Eight Floor P0-105 P
- Proposed Plan – Roof P0-109 P
- Proposed Plan - Block B - Ground Floor P1-200 P
- Proposed Plan - Block B - First Floor P1-201 P
- Proposed Plan – Block B – Second Floor P1-202 P
- Proposed Plan – Block B - Third Floor P1-203 P
- Proposed Plan - Block B - Fourth to Eighth Floor P1-204 P
- Proposed Plan - Block C Plans P 1-300 P

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

Reading Borough Council
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Dated 01/04/2019
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th April 2019
- Proposed Site Plan P0-010 P1
- Proposed Plan - Ground Floor P0-100 P1
- Proposed Plan - First Floor P0-101 P1
- Proposed Elevations - Block B – South P3-201 P1
- Proposed Elevations - Block B - East and West P3-203 P1
- Proposed Context Elevations - Block B (1) P3-013 P2
- Proposed Context Elevations - Block B (2) P3-014 P2
- Proposed Plans – Proposed Plans Block A - P1-100 P1

Dated 23/09/2019
- Landscape Softworks Strategy Plan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-401 P2
- Landscape Hardworks Strategy Plan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-201 P2

Dated February 2019
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 1st October 2019
- Nick Smith Associates Lighting Strategy ref.2569 - Former Gas Holder Site at Kenavon Drive
- 2569-D-05 Rev A – Proposed Exterior Lighting and Vertical Illuminance Layout
- 2569-D-03 Rev A – Proposed Illuminance at Various Z Heights

Above River Layout
- 2569-D-04 Rev A – Proposed Exterior Lighting and Illuminance
- 2569-D-02 Rev A – Proposed Full Lighting Illuminance Layout

Dated 22/10/19
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 23rd October 2019
- Levels Strategy Plan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-301 P1
- Illustrative Masterplan 716-FH-XX-00-DP-L-101 P1

Dated February 2019
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 24th April 2019

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted a plan showing how 74 cycle parking spaces can be satisfactorily provided on site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The 74 cycle parking spaces shall be provided in full in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the development and thereafter kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of cycles at all times.

REASON: These details are required to encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to private vehicle in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

4. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the vehicle access serving it has been constructed in accordance with the approved plans.

REASON: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policy TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

5. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the refuse and recycling storage facility has been implemented fully in accordance with those details shown on the approved plans and thereafter retained for use by occupiers of the dwellings at all times.

REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area and to ensure that bins can be easily accessed when required in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

6. No piling using penetrative methods shall be carried out unless first approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure that the proposed foundations do not harm groundwater resources in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

7. No drainage systems for the infiltration of surface water to the ground are permitted unless first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any proposals for such systems must be supported by an assessment of the risks to controlled waters. The development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To ensure that the development does not contribute to and is not put at unacceptable risk from or adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of water pollution caused by mobilised contaminants. This is in line with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

8. The roof area of the car park building hereby permitted shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area without the grant of further specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 2, Article 3, of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no further lights, meter boxes, flues, vents or pipes, plant, and no window cleaning or telecommunications equipment, building maintenance unit, alarm boxes, television aerials or satellite dishes shall be fixed or installed on any external face or roof of the buildings, without the prior approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To safeguard the appearance of the buildings and the character of the immediate area in accordance with the requirements of Policies CC7, EN17, EN16 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

10. The 7 wheelchair adaptable units hereby approved within Blocks A and B as detailed in paragraphs 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 of the Collado Collins Architects Design and Access Statement ref. 16035 dated April 2019 received by the Local Planning Authority on 20th May 2019 and on the corresponding floor plans, shall be maintained so as to be adapted to wheelchair units if required.

REASON: To ensure that the internal layout of the building provides flexibility for the accessibility of future occupiers and their changing needs over time, in accordance with Policy CS3 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policy DM4 of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).

11. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the glazing, ventilation and any other mitigation specified is installed in accordance with the specifications recommended within the Stuart Michael Associates Noise Assessment ref. 5757/NA Issues 01 dated April 2019 received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th April 2019. The specified mitigation measures shall be permanently retained and maintained in accordance with the approved specifications thereafter. The noise from the ventilation system shall not cause internal levels to exceed the design target noise levels in BS8233.

REASON: In order to protect the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

12. The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the ventilation systems have been installed in accordance with the specifications recommended within the Stuart Michael Associates Air Quality Assessment ref. 5757/AQ dated April 2019 received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th April 2019. The specified extract/ventilation systems shall be permanently retained and maintained in accordance with the approved specifications thereafter.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

REASON: To safeguard the amenity of nearby premises and the area generally in accordance with Policy CC8 and EN16 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

13. No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

14. No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works, or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.
REASON: In the interests of air quality, the amenity of neighbours, and to promote more sustainable approaches to waste management in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

15. No dwelling located above ground floor level within Block A of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until the lifts within that block, as shown on the approved plans, has been provided in full. No dwelling located above first floor level within Block B of the development hereby permitted, shall be occupied until the lifts within that block, as shown on the approved plans, has been provided in full. The lifts shall be retained in full working order thereafter.

REASON: to ensure a suitable level of access for those with mobility impairments in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

16. All demolition is to be undertaken outside of the bird-nesting season (mid-March to end of August) or if this cannot reasonably be avoided, a suitably qualified ecologist will check the areas to be removed immediately prior to demolition and advise whether nesting birds are present. If active nests are recorded, works that may disturb active nests shall not proceed until all young have fledged the nest and it is no longer in use or a suitable mitigation strategy has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure that wildlife is not adversely affected by the proposed development in line with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

17. **No development, except demolition above slab level, shall commence** until an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This assessment must be

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

undertaken by a competent person, and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:
a. a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
b. an assessment of the potential risks to:
• human health,
• property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
• adjoining land,
• groundwaters and surface waters,
• ecological systems,
• archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

18. **No development, except demolition above slab level, shall commence** until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s), and a timetable of works and site management procedures and a validation plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy in (2) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer-term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

19. The approved remediation scheme under condition no. 18 shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable of works. A Validation Report (that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out and shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met) shall be

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before construction above foundation level.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019

20. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development not previously identified, development shall be halted on that part of the site the contamination is reported.

An assessment of the nature and extent of contamination shall be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme, together with a timetable for its implementation, shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority for its written approval.

The measures in the approved remediation scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable. Halted works shall not be re-commenced until the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme have been completed and a Validation Report has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

21. **No development shall commence, including demolition and any preparatory works (except for any demolition works expressly granted under an alternate permission by the Local Planning Authority)** until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with the relevant recommendations of appropriate British Standards or other recognised Codes of Good Practice for all existing trees that are not shown as being removed on the approved drawings, both within and adjacent to the site, has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan,

REASON: In order to ensure that appropriate protection is given to trees of amenity value within and adjacent to the site in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

22. **No development, except demolition , shall commence** until details of a habitat enhancement scheme, to include as a minimum, a Peregrine Falcon platform, bird and

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

bat boxes, and native wildlife friendly landscaping have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme is to include a programme for implementation and ongoing maintenance. The habitat enhancement scheme shall thereafter be implemented and adhered to in accordance with the agreed programme.

REASON: In order to avoid harm to habitats and species whilst securing biodiversity enhancement in the long term. This accords with Paragraph 175 of the NPPF (2019), Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

23. **No development shall commence, including demolition and any preparatory works (except for any demolition works expressly granted under an alternate permission by the Local Planning Authority)**, until a scheme for the retention and re-use of the 1887 cast iron item has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works detailed within the approved scheme shall have been implemented in full prior to occupation of the development and retained as approved thereafter.

REASON: In the interest of sustainability and safeguarding the character and appearance of the building and the wider immediate area in accordance with Policies CC2, CC7 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

24. **No development shall commence, including demolition and any preparatory works (except for any demolition works expressly granted under an alternate permission by the Local Planning Authority),** until a site-specific Construction and Demolition Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to include details of:

a. Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided;
b. Loading and unloading of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
c. Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
d. The erection and maintenance of security hoarding / scaffolding if required;
e. Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
f. Wheel washing facilities on site;
g. A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works;
h. Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
i. Required measures to control noise, the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

j. Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements;
k. Traffic Management needed during construction;
l. Times, routes and means of access into and from the site for construction traffic and delivery vehicles (including the removal of waste from the site and methods of preventing deposition of materials on the public highway);
m. Emergency contact and Site Manager contact details; and
n. Details of the temporary Peregrine Falcon landing perch during the construction period
The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

25. **No development, except demolition, shall commence** until a scheme for the provision and management of the Ecological Buffer Zone alongside the River Kennet has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. The Ecological Buffer Zone scheme shall be free from built development including lighting, domestic gardens and formal landscaping. The scheme shall include:
a. plans showing the extent and layout of the Ecological Buffer Zone, including the distances of buildings and hard standing from the bank top of the river;
b. details demonstrating how the Ecological Buffer Zone will be protected during development, for instance by suitable fencing;
c. details of the habitats to be created or enhanced and the planting schemes, which should be native species of UK provenance, appropriate to this riverside location;
d. details of enhancements to the river bank and channel margins. The following should be considered:
- artificial sand martin tunnels incorporated into the existing river wall, or a free-standing sand martin bank, to enhance the existing and long-established population of sand martins that nest in old drainage pipes in the river walls and railway tunnels in this location on the Kennet;
- establishment of emergent vegetation in the channel margins in front of the revetted river wall.

e. details of any proposed footpaths, fencing and external lighting. Any footpaths within the Ecological Buffer Zone should be informal paths such as mown paths through the wildflower meadow. Any external lighting close to the Ecological Buffer Zone

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

should be directional to minimise light within the Ecological Buffer Zone and river corridor and hence minimise potential impacts on biodiversity;
f. details demonstrating how the Ecological Buffer Zone will be managed over the longer term including adequate financial provision and named body responsible for management plus production of detailed management plan. This should be a stand-alone document for the Ecological Buffer Zone, river bank and margins, or included within a wider Landscape and Ecological Management Plan for the whole site.

REASON: Land alongside watercourses is valuable for wildlife and it is essential this is protected in accordance with paragraphs 170 and 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and Policy EN11 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

26. **No development, except demolition, shall commence** until a Sustainable Drainage Strategy and associated detailed design, management and maintenance plan of surface water drainage for the site using SuDS methods has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include:
a. a timetable for its implementation, and
b. a management and annual maintenance plan for the lifetime of
the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to reduce the risk of flooding onsite or elsewhere in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

27. Prior to the first occupation of the development the sustainable drainage strategy for the site (as referred to in condition no. 26) shall be completed in accordance with the submitted and approved details. The sustainable drainage scheme shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

REASON: To reduce the risk of flooding onsite or elsewhere in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

28. **No development, except demolition above slab level, shall commence** until a detailed land gas site investigation has been carried out by a competent person to fully and effectively characterise the nature and extent of land gas and its implications. The method and extent of this site investigation shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the work and shall then proceed in strict accordance with the measures approved.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas due to the presence of land gas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

29. **No development, except demolition above slab level, shall commence** until a scheme showing how the development is to be protected against the possibility of land gas has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme as approved shall be fully implemented and completed prior to first occupation and those measures incorporated into the development shall thereafter be retained unless the Local Planning Authority agrees otherwise in writing.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas due to the presence of land gas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

30. The land gas remediation scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable of works. A Validation Report (that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out) must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to any part of the accommodation hereby approved is occupied, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas due to the presence of land gas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

31. **No development, except demolition, shall commence beyond foundation level** until details of a lighting scheme (covering all external lighting proposed), including a plan indicating the locations of the lights, specifications, height, luminance; lens shape/beam pattern and any hoods/shades has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No dwelling hereby permitted shall be occupied until the approved lighting scheme has been completed. The lighting scheme shall be maintained in accordance with the approved scheme thereafter.

REASON: In order to protect the amenity of adjoining and future occupiers and users (e.g. the rail line) and enhance the appearance of the development in accordance with Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

32. **No development, except demolition, shall commence beyond foundation level** prior to a glint and glare study being submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

with the approved glint and glare study, with measures in the approved scheme in place before the first occupation of the development and permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

REASON: To protect the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development and existing/future nearby occupiers and users (e.g. the rail line) in accordance with) Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

33. **No development, except demolition, shall commence beyond foundation level** until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

a. Hard surfacing materials and ancillary structures including the river viewing platform (e.g. furniture, refuse or other storage units and signs);
b. Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;
c. A maintenance and management programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting, its future maintenance as well as maintenance and management of all areas of landscaping and open space; and
d. routes and details of proposed and existing functional services above and below ground including foul and surface water drainage, soakaways and SUDs details, power, communications cables and water and gas supply pipelines, including access points, tree pit specifications.

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be implemented in the first planting season following the first occupation of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required prior to commencement of development because of insufficient information contained within this submission and in the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

34. **No development, except demolition, shall commence beyond foundation level** until a schedule of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

maintained in accordance with the details approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

35. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a plan showing the location of the 13 visitor spaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All vehicle parking for the development (127 vehicle parking spaces) shall be provided in full accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and thereafter all parking spaces shall be kept free of obstruction and shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

REASON: Because not all details have been supplied with the application and these details are required to meet the needs of future occupiers and to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

36. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas (except privately owned domestic gardens), has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The Landscape and Ecological Management Plan shall be carried out as approved and shall include the following elements:
a. details of the type and frequency of maintenance regimes;
b. details of management responsibilities including adequate financial provision and named body responsible for management for the long-term.

REASON: To preserve and enhance biodiversity within the development in accordance with paragraphs 170 and 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy EN12 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

37. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, all flood mitigation and protection measures as contained within the Stuart Michael Associates Limited Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement ref. SMA Ref: 5757-FRA&DS issue 2 dated April 2019 and received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th April 2019 shall be implemented in full and maintained in perpetuity for the lifetime of the development.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

REASON: In order to comply with good practice building for flood resilience/safety in the flood zone and in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

38. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected, shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatment shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan before the development is occupied or otherwise in accordance with a timescale agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect the privacy of adjoining and future occupiers and in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and local wildlife in accordance with Policy CC7 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

39. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, a scheme with the details of all on-site play-space facilities shall have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include a plan indicating the locations of the facilities, full specifications and designs of the equipment and maintenance and management (including safety inspections) arrangements. The approved scheme shall be installed before occupation of the residential accommodation and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In order to provide suitable on-site play-space facilities for future occupiers and the wider public and to enhance the appearance of the development, in accordance with Policies CC7 and EN9 of the Reading Borough local Plan 2019.

40. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted details of measures to prevent pests and vermin accessing the bin stores has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved pest and vermin control measures, shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development.

REASON: To ensure that adequate provision is made for the storage and collection of refuse in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

41. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted details (exact form, font, wording, materials and maintenance strategy) of the entrance signage and sculptural elements as indicated on page 32 of the Farrer Huxley Landscape Statement dated April 2019 received by the Local Planning Authority on 24th April 2019 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

details shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of any residential unit within the development and maintained as such thereafter.

REASON: In the interests of providing suitable public art in the development, safeguarding the character and appearance of the building and the wider immediate area in accordance with Policies CC7 and CR2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

42. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted written verification shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that all of the dwellings hereby permitted have achieved a minimum of a 35% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in The Building Regulations for England Approved Document L1a: Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings (2013 edition). Such evidence shall be in the form of an 'As Built' Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) assessment, produced by an accredited energy assessor.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards in accordance with Policy CC2 and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

43. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted details of an electric vehicle (EV) charging scheme comprising a layout plan and detailed specification for a minimum of ten percent of all vehicle parking spaces to be provided with electric vehicle charging points, and a further ten percent of spaces provided with cabling and other supporting infrastructure reasonably required to enable EV charging points to be fitted, shall been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall not be occupied until the scheme has been fully provided in accordance with the approved details. The spaces and charging points shall be maintained for vehicle charging in accordance with the approved Scheme at all times thereafter.

REASON: In the interests of environmentally sustainable transport in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

44. **No development, except demolition, shall commence beyond foundation level** until details of finished floor levels relative to existing floor/ground levels have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall carried out and retained only in accordance with the approved details.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

REASON: These details are required in order to ensure a satisfactory relationship between the proposed development and adjacent development, and to protect views in and out of the development in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. 46

45. Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a security strategy, including CCTV details and measures to be incorporated into the development to demonstrate how full and robust access control to all parts of the development will be achieved, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved security strategy, with measures in the approved scheme in place before the first occupation of the development and permanently retained and maintained thereafter.

REASON: To protect the amenity of future occupants of the proposed development and in the interests of safeguarding the character and appearance of the buildings and the wider immediate area, in accordance with Policies CC7, CC8 and CR2 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

46. Within 5 months of the first occupation of the sixty fifth residential dwelling hereby permitted, a Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include a full analysis of the existing modal split for residents, reasons for the modal choice, and detailed proposals for future transport provision with the aim of securing reduction in car trips generated to and from the development hereby approved.

REASON: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway in and encourage modal shift in accordance with TR1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

47. On the first anniversary of the approved Travel Plan and annually for a further 4 years, an annual review of the Travel Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include a detailed survey of the number of movements generated by the residents and shall be compared with the initial survey carried out under the terms of condition no. 46, (the control level) and in the event of any reduction not being secured, the Travel Plan Co-ordinator shall undertake measures to reduce the number of car borne trips to, as a maximum, the control level. This may include such options as a greater provision of subsidised transport.

REASON: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway in accordance with TR1 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

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INFORMATIVES

1. The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit to be obtained for any activities which will take place:
- on or within 8 metres of a main river (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 8 metres of a flood defence structure or culvert (16 metres if tidal)
- on or within 16 metres of a sea defence
- involving quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert
- in a floodplain more than 8 metres from the river bank, culvert or flood defence structure (16 metres if it's a tidal main river) and you don't already have planning permission.

For further guidance please visit https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood- risk-activities-environmental-permits or contact the Environment Agency's National Customer Contact Centre on 03702 422 549. The applicant should not assume that a permit will automatically be forthcoming once planning permission has been granted, and we advise them to consult with us at the earliest opportunity.

2. Throughout the works and following development, the Environment Agency will need to retain vehicular access to the monitoring point at the footbridge on site for routine maintenance. The fence around the compound which is leased will need to be retained and disruption to the mains power supply to the EA's gauge kept to a minimum.
For further information on this requirement, please contact enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk

3. To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.

4. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the prescribed target or agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.

5. The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1st April 2015. CIL is a way of securing financial contributions towards infrastructure from new development, and partially replaces the Section 106 planning obligation regime. It is a set charge per sq m of floorspace for different uses, and, unlike Section 106, it is non-negotiable. It applies to developments which result in at least one dwelling; where the space has not been in lawful use for 6 months within the last 3 years or 100 sq m of new floorspace. For this approved development the CIL status is CHARGEABLE. If

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

chargeable you will be sent a CIL Liability Notice with the calculated amount soon. CIL becomes payable on commencement of the development or by instalments.
For more information go to:
http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2791/Community-Infrastructure-Levy- Advice-to-Applicants/pdf/CIL_Advice_to_Applicants.pdf

6. In accordance with Article 35 (DMPO 2015) some conditions have been highlighted to make clear that they require approval from the Local Planning Authority before any development begins. This is because the details need to be designed or works implemented before any other works start on the site or are of a nature that it would be impractical to consider after work has started.

7. i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.
ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.

8. Your attention is drawn to the requirement for submission of a Building Regulations application for the proposed development. Please contact Building Control on 0118 937 2449 for advice.

9. Soakaways / attenuation ponds / septic tanks etc, as a means of storm/surface water disposal must not be constructed near/within 5 metres of Network Rail's boundary or at any point which could adversely affect the stability of Network Rail's property/infrastructure. Storm/surface water must not be discharged onto Network Rail's property or into Network Rail's culverts or drains. Network Rail's drainage system(s) are not to be compromised by any work(s). Suitable drainage or other works must be provided and maintained by the Developer to prevent surface water flows or run-off onto Network Rail's property / infrastructure.
Proper provision must be made to accept and continue drainage discharging from Network Rail's property. (The Land Drainage Act) is to be complied with. Suitable foul drainage must be provided separate from Network Rail's existing drainage. Once water enters a pipe it becomes a controlled source and as such no water should be discharged in the direction of the railway.
Full details of the drainage plans are to be submitted for acceptance to the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer. No works are to commence on site on any drainage plans without the acceptance of the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineers: Network Rail has various drainage standards that can be provided Free of Charge should the applicant/developer engage with Network Rail's Asset Protection Engineers.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

10. Any works on Network Rail land will need to be undertaken following engagement with Asset Protection to determine the interface with Network Rail assets, buried or otherwise and by entering into a Basis Asset Protection Agreement, if required, with a minimum of 3months notice before works start. assetprotectionwestern@networkrail.co.uk

11. Where works are proposed adjacent to the railway it may be necessary to serve the appropriate notices on Network Rail and their tenants under the Party Wall etc Act 1996. Developers should consult with Network Rail at an early stage of the preparation of details of their development on Party Wall matters.
The applicant is reminded that any works close to the Network Rail boundary, and any excavation works are also covered by the Party Wall Act of 1996. Should any foundations, any excavations or any part of the building encroach onto Network Rail land then the applicant would need to serve notice on Network Rail and they would be liable for the costs. An applicant cannot access Network Rail without permission (via the Asset Protection Team) and in addition to any costs under the Party Wall Act, the applicant would also be liable to all Network Rail site supervision costs whilst works are undertaken. No works in these circumstances are to commence without the approval of the Network Rail Asset Protection Engineer.

12.If not already in place, the Developer/applicant must provide at their expense a suitable trespass proof fence (of at least 1.8m in height) adjacent to Network Rail's boundary and make provision for its future maintenance and renewal without encroachment upon Network Rail land. Network Rail's existing fencing / wall must not be removed or damaged and at no point either during construction or after works are completed on site should the foundations of the fencing or wall or any embankment therein be damaged, undermined or compromised in any way. Any vegetation on Network Rail land and within Network Rail's boundary must also not be disturbed

13. The developer/applicant must ensure that their proposal, both during construction and after completion of works on site, does not affect the safety, operation or integrity of the operational railway, Network Rail and its infrastructure or undermine or damage or adversely affect any railway land or structures. There must be no physical encroachment of the proposal onto Network Rail land, no over-sailing into Network Rail air-space and no encroachment of foundations onto Network Rail land and soil. Any future maintenance must be conducted solely within the applicant's land ownership. Should the applicant require access to Network Rail land then they must seek approval from Network Rail Asset Protection Team. Any unauthorised access to Network Rail land or air-space is an act of trespass and we would remind the council that this is a criminal offence (s55 British Transport Commission Act 1949). Should the applicant be granted access to Network Rail land then they will be liable for all costs incurred in facilitating the proposal.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

14. All roads, paths or ways providing access to any part of the railway undertaker's land shall be kept open at all times during and after the development.

15. Network Rail offers no right of support to the development. Where foundation works penetrate Network Rail's support zone or ground displacement techniques are used the works will require specific approval and careful monitoring by Network Rail. There should be no additional loading placed on the cutting and no deep continuous excavations parallel to the boundary without prior approval.

16. The works involve disturbing the ground on or adjacent to Network Rail's land it is likely/possible that the Network Rail and the utility companies have buried services in the area in which there is a need to excavate. Network Rail's ground disturbance regulations applies. The developer should seek specific advice from Network Rail on any significant raising or lowering of the levels of the site.

17. All excavations / earthworks carried out in the vicinity of Network Rail's property / structures must be designed and executed such that no interference with the integrity of that property / structure can occur. If temporary compounds are to be located adjacent to the operational railway, these should be included in a method statement for approval by Network Rail. Prior to commencement of works, full details of excavations and earthworks to be carried out near the railway undertaker's boundary fence should be submitted for approval of the Local Planning Authority acting in consultation with the railway undertaker and the works shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved details. Where development may affect the railway, consultation with the Asset Protection Engineer should be undertaken.

18. The proposal must not interfere with or obscure any railway signals that may be in the area.

19. The current level of railway usage may be subject to change at any time without prior notification including increased frequency of trains, night time train running and heavy freight trains.
There is also the potential for maintenance works to be carried out on trains, which is undertaken at night and means leaving the trains' motors running which can lead to increased levels of noise.
It is recommended that all future residents are informed of the noise and vibration emanating from the railway, and of potential future increases in railway noise and vibration.

20. Any scaffold which is to be constructed adjacent to the railway must be erected in such a manner that, at no time will any poles or cranes over-sail or fall onto the

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

railway. All plant and scaffolding must be positioned, that in the event of failure, it will not fall on to Network Rail land.

21. A section 106 Agreement has been completed for this development. A copy of the S106 Legal Agreement is available on the Council's Public Register of Planning

22. Complaints are commonly received about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. The developer is reminded that construction and demolition associated with the approved development will be subject to environmental health law.

Date: 16th July 2021

RJE

Head of Planning, Development & Regulatory Services

NOTES

APPEALS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

If you are aggrieved by the decision of the Council to refuse permission for the proposed development or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

If this is a decision on a planning application relating to the same or substantially the same land and development as is already the subject of an enforcement notice, if you want to appeal against the Council's decision on the application you must do so within 28 days of the date of this notice.

If an enforcement notice is served relating to the same or substantially the same land and development as in your application and you want to appeal against the Council's decision on your application, you must do so within 28 days of the date of service of the enforcement notice, or within 6 months (or 12 weeks in the case of a householder appeal) of the date of this notice, whichever period expires earlier.

If the above circumstances do not apply, any appeal must be made within the following time limits.
If this is a householder application and you want to appeal against the Council's decision then you must do so within 12 weeks of the date of this notice. If this is an advertisement application and you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision then you must do so within 8 weeks of the date of this notice. If you want to appeal against your local planning authority's decision for any other type of application (which is not a householder or advertisement application, or an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness) then you must do so within 6 months of the date of this notice.

Appeals can be made online at: https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate.
If you are unable to access the online appeal form, please contact the Planning Inspectorate to obtain a paper copy of the appeal form on tel: 0303 444 5000.

The Secretary of State can allow a longer period for giving notice of an appeal but will not normally be prepared to use this power unless there are special circumstances which excuse the delay in giving notice of appeal.

The Secretary of State need not consider an appeal if it seems to the Secretary of State that the local planning authority could not have granted planning permission for the proposed development or could not have granted it without the conditions they imposed, having regard to the statutory requirements, to the provisions of any development order and to any directions given under a development order.

If you intend to submit an appeal that you would like examined by inquiry then you must notify the Local Planning Authority and Planning Inspectorate (inquiryappeals@planninginspectorate.gov.uk) at least 10 days before submitting the appeal. Further details are on GOV.UK.

Purchase Notices
If either the Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State refuses permission to develop land or grants it subject to conditions, the owner may claim that he can neither put the land to a reasonably beneficial use in its existing state nor render the land capable of a reasonably beneficial use by the carrying out of any development which has been or would be permitted. In these circumstances, the owner may serve a purchase notice on the Council in whose area the land is situated. This notice will require the Council to purchase his interest in the land in accordance with the provisions of Part VI of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Street Naming & Numbering

You must contact Reading Borough Council to:

- Name or number a new development
- Name a new street
- Get addresses for flat conversions
- Name or rename an existing building

Otherwise the following may occur:

- You will not have an official address or postcode. When your property goes through the official process it may be given a different address and Postcode than you are currently using.
- You may have difficulty receiving mail
- You may have problems when buying goods or services such as utilities and telecommunications
- The emergency services may have difficulty locating you.
- You may have problems accessing Council services such as Education, Parking Services and Electoral Registration.

The Council is responsible for assigning house names and numbers and street names. It is also responsible for updating the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) which is a list of addresses which meet a common standard (BS7666) used throughout the country.

When a new address or change of address is requested, the Council contacts Royal Mail who check the address on behalf of the Emergency Services, assign a postcode and add it to their Postal Address File (PAF). The PAF list is used by many companies and services to check addresses, authenticate transactions and order goods, as well as deliver mail, so it is in your interest for your address to be on that list. Royal Mail will not create an address until requested to do so by the Council.

How to apply:

Email us using streetnamingnumbering@reading.gov.uk

Or telephone us on 0118 9373737

What we need to complete your request:

For new addresses or flat conversions:

- Site layout plan containing plot numbers
- Location plan – No bigger than A3 size (hard copy, PDF, JPEG or AutoCAD) showing the site boundary, including the new development, together with surrounding buildings for reference
- Anticipated completion and occupation dates

For change of address:

- You must be, or have authorisation from, the owner to request a change of address.
- Floor plan of the existing property
- Reason for change

Once created, the Council informs various bodies of your new address including the Emergency Services, Council Tax, Land Registry and utility companies as well as adding it to the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

Please be advised that companies and services using the PAF file only update the addresses monthly, quarterly or even less frequently, therefore it may take a while for your address to be listed in some places. It will, however, appear on the Royal Mail website within a few days once it has been added to the live address file.

Reading Borough Council has no control over the frequency by which other organisations update their address files.