

APPENDIX 2

PLANNING PURPOSES

Is the Studio Land held for Planning Purposes

1. As part of its objective to redevelop part of the Town Centre, in the 1950s to 1970s the Council designated the land to the southwest of what is now Reading town centre a Comprehensive Development Area (“**CDA**”) under section 4 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1962. The area of redevelopment was bounded by Oxford Road (north), Castle Street (south) and St Mary’s Butts (east) and what is now the IDR (to the west). The Studio Land was part of the CDA.
2. The redevelopment brought forward the Thames Valley Police Station, the Magistrates Courts, the former Civic Offices of the Council (now demolished leaving a vacant site), Broad Street Mall, the Hexagon Theatre and the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) to the west of the site (the “**Original Scheme**”). Prior to the redevelopment, the area comprised housing, car parking areas and some commercial buildings including shops and public houses.
3. Some parts of the CDA site were already owned by the Council. Others had been acquired compulsorily or voluntarily under the “slum clearance” provisions of the Housing Act 1957 or the Town and Country Planning Act 1962
4. There were a wide range of CPOs over time under the above powers. It has not been possible to establish the full extent or purposes of some of the acquisitions.
5. The Studio Land includes land acquired by the Council for the construction of the Hexagon Theatre which was built in the 1970s as part of the Original Scheme. In addition to highway land, the Studio Land formerly comprised 11-27 (odd) Soho Street, 13-19 (odd) and 8-18 (even) Lavender Street. The properties on the Studio Land not owned by the Council were acquired by the Council voluntarily or by CPO under the Housing Act 1957 or (possibly) under the TCPA 1962.
6. The records of acquisition of land comprised in the Studio Land are set out below. The properties are listed in the Council’s schedule of properties to be included in the Comprehensive Development Area dated 6th January 1964 and in a same Schedule of 25th January 1962.
 - 19-27 (odd) Soho Street, and 17 and 19 Lavender Street - The Reading Borough Council (Lavender Street, Soho Street, Howard Street and Hosier Street) CPO No.1 1962. The CPO was made for housing slum clearance under the Housing Act 1957.
 - 10 and 18 Lavender Street - acquired by the Council under the Reading Borough Council (Hope Street, Soho Street, Lavender Street and Hosier Street) CPO 1959 which was under the Housing Act 1957.
 - 11, 13, 15 and 17 Soho Street – Voluntary acquisition January 1950
 - 13 and 15 Lavender Street – Voluntary acquisition December 1958
 - 16 Lavender Street – Voluntary acquisition December 1958
 - 8 Lavender Street - Voluntary acquisition November 1959
 - 12, 14 and 16 Lavender Street. – Voluntary Acquisition December 1958

7. The properties in paragraph 6 above, noted to have been voluntarily acquired by the Council, are the properties that were in the ownership of the Council at the time of the Council's decision to appropriate land held for Housing Act clearance purposes to planning purposes in November 1966. These properties are likely to have been acquired for comprehensive development purposes at the outset but may have been acquired under Housing Act clearance powers.
8. The Council's Housing Committee report of 24th October 1966 recommended the Council appropriation of "*an area of land shown coloured pink on plan no SV.246*" (the **Pink Land**) to planning purposes subject to the consent of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.
9. The Estates Committee, on 2nd November 1966, noted the decision of the Housing Committee of 24th October 1966 to appropriate to the Estates Committee "*for planning purposes land formerly acquired for housing purposes in the area of the Civic and Commercial Centre be noted; and that an order be sought for the extinguishment of the rights of way over highways to be incorporated in the Civic and commercial centre*".
10. The Council resolved to appropriate the Pink Land on 29th November 1966 in accordance with the Housing Committee recommendation and under s.163 of the Local Government Act 1933 (now s.122 of the Local Government Act 1972). In so far as the resolution covered land acquired under compulsory powers, the resolution was subject to the consent of the Secretary of State.
11. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government consent was granted on 2nd February 1967 under s.23(2)(b) of the Town and County Planning Act 1959.
12. Despite extensive research, the Council does not have a colour copy of the plan under the CPOs and does not have a copy of the plan showing the Pink Land, the subject of the Council decision to appropriate of November 1966.
13. However, the reference is to "**an** area" coloured pink on the plan subject to Council's decision to appropriate and it is considered that such area would cover a large and single block of land needed to deliver the original development including the Studio Land. This is on the basis that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government granted consent for appropriation of land under several different CPOs that pepper-potted a large area forming part of the Council's comprehensive development area and it cannot have been the intent of the Council to just appropriate land acquired under CPO. That would have made no sense. It is considered that the Council would have appropriated, in its decision of November 1966, all of the land it required as one block (coloured pink) being those acquired under CPO and for which the Secretary of State's consent was required for appropriation as well as those in its ownership where the Secretary of State's consent was not required. .
14. The Council decision, based on the same Housing Committee recommendations, to extinguish rights of way over highways to be included in the Civic and Commercial Centre was carried out by *The County Borough of Reading (Soho Street, Hope Street North, Lavender Street, Hope Street, Seamer Place, Grape Passage and parts of Hosier Street and Boarded Lane) Rights of Way Order 1967*. Soho Street and Lavender Street were highways over which the Hexagon Theatre was constructed and form part of the current Studio Land.
15. The necessary inference is that based on the above, the parts of the Studio Land were either: (1) originally acquired for planning purposes voluntarily by the Council or under the TCPA 1962 CPOs; or (2) were appropriated to planning purposes having previously been held for Housing Act clearance purposes. Either way the inference from all the above is that they must all have been held for planning purposes by the time of the

carrying out of the comprehensive development - although absent the Pink Land plan in the Report of the Housing Committee on the appropriation, the Council cannot be entirely confident that that was the position.

16. Despite extensive research there is no evidence of any subsequent appropriation. There is also no reason to infer a subsequent appropriation as building a theatre would be a standard use of land held for planning purposes.
17. However, without a colour copy of the plan showing the Pink Land, although it is very unlikely that it did not happen, there is a possibility that some of the Studio Land was not held for or appropriated to planning purposes.