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# Caversham Lock Area

Development Principles – Adopted 20th March 2006

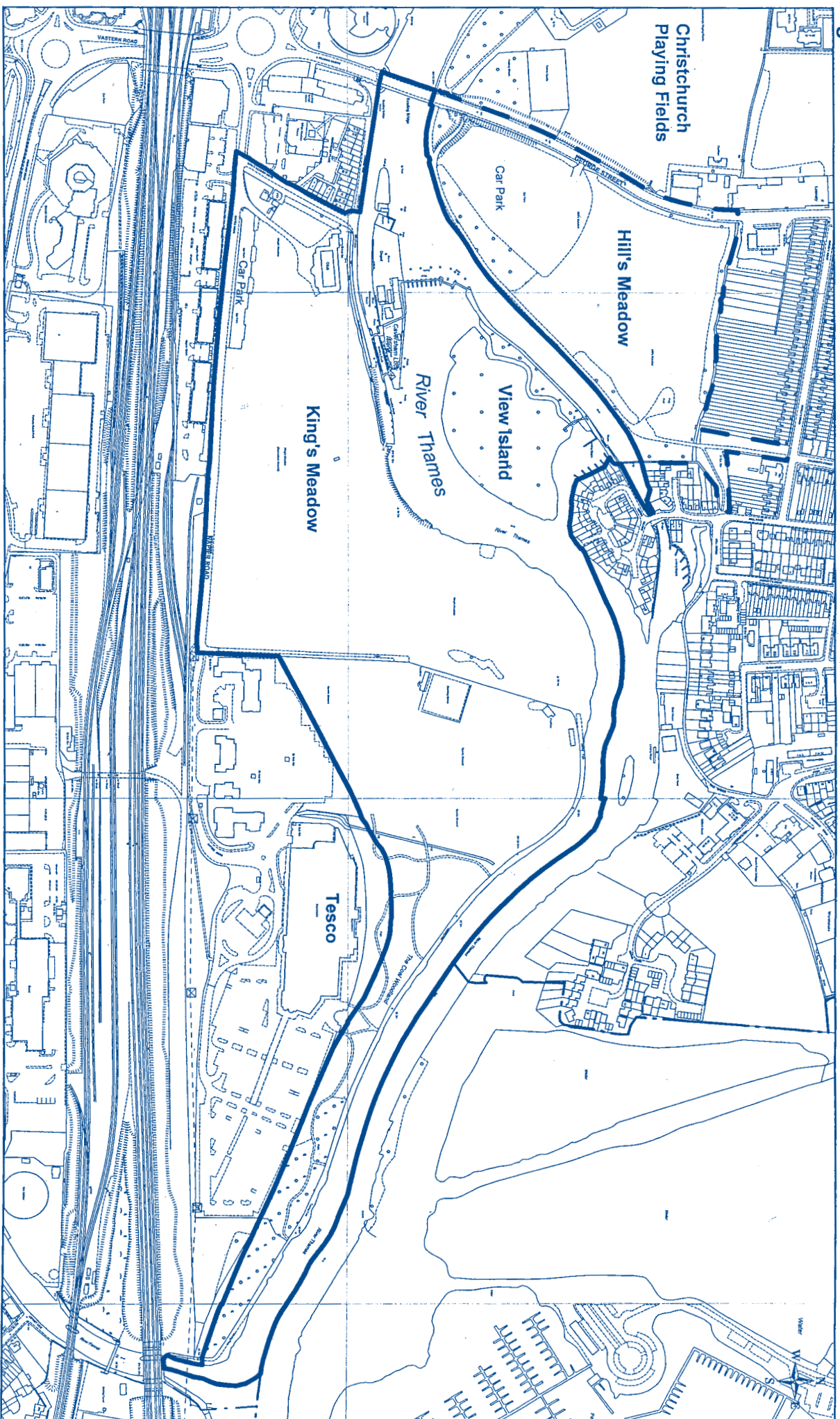
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**Figure 1.**



— AREA COVERED BY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT Title: **Figure 1. DRAFT CAVERSHAM LOCK AREA DEVELOPMENT BRIEF**

— AREA OUTSIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

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# Caversham Lock Area – Development Principles

## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

### 1.1 The objectives of the brief are:

- To develop a vision for the future of the area.
- To provide a planning context that will guide any future proposals in a way that benefits and enhances the area's role as an important focus for land and waterborne visitors, leisure and wildlife.

**1.2** The area covered by this document comprises four distinct but inter-connected areas, shown in Figure 1: King's Meadow, Caversham Lock Island, View Island and Hill's Meadow. The area shown within the solid line in Figure 1 will be the subject of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). For reasons of conformity, Hill's Meadow, shown within the dotted line, cannot form part of the proposed SPD at this time, but the area has been included in the document as appendix 1 for reasons of comprehensiveness. The brief considers the assets and future of each of these areas in turn, before drawing together the following comprehensive vision for the area as a whole:

**1.3** *As a green gateway into Reading, King's Meadow will optimise its river frontage and become a premier area of open space providing a wide range of both formal and informal recreation and sporting opportunities, as well as being an accessible venue for a range of festivals and open-air events; Caversham Lock Island will be a focus for visitors and those enjoying the River; View Island will provide a tranquil haven for wildlife and an area for relaxation and learning; Hill's Meadow car park will be transformed into Reading's premier cultural attraction on the banks of the River Thames.*

**1.4** There are a range of policies, national guidance, sustainability issues and other generic issues that apply equally to any of the following development proposals that will be used in assessing any applications that come forward. In order to avoid repetition, they have been included together in Appendix 2, but nevertheless they are an integral part of the main document.





## 2.0 KINGS MEADOW

### Existing Area/Uses

- 2.1** The area is typified by flat parkland and is situated on the Southern bank of the River Thames and bounded to the south by Napier Road. A Tesco superstore and a development of 246 apartments provide a built edge along the south-eastern boundary, while Kingfisher Place and Kings Meadow House do the same at the western edge. The railway line to the south forms a significant physical and visual barrier.
- 2.2** The towpath runs along the entire length of the water's edge, forming a pedestrian link between the Kennet and Thames. This is an important link and is part of the Sustrans National Cycle Path, the Thames National Footpath and a river canoe trail.
- 2.3** The Coal Woodland forms the most easterly part of this area and contains specimen trees and rare plants and is an important habitat for wildlife. It provides an important green screen when viewed from the Thames and the north. The remainder of the area is the former Huntley and Palmers sports ground, and comprises mainly open grass, sports pitches and associated structures. There are a significant number of mature trees that line the banks of the Thames and the western edge of this area.
- 2.4** The western end of this area is characterised by a public car park next to Napier Road and a disused listed swimming pool in the northwest corner of this area, near to the river.
- 2.5** King's Meadow (site 86 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP)) forms part of the Thameside Meadows major area of open space and is protected by Policy LEI2 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (see Appendix 2).
- 2.6** The area is currently used for recreation and leisure activities, with the disused Kings Meadow Pool being used as a store. There is a temporary building used as a changing room. The grass area is used for formal and informal sports and leisure activities, and other events such as fireworks displays, Beer Festivals etc.

### Access

- 2.7** The main vehicular access is via Napier Road and King's Meadow Road. The latter provides vehicular access down to the Thames Towpath. There is a pay-and-display car park in the south-western corner. The area can be accessed by pedestrians at many points along the boundary. The riverside walk runs the entire length of the area, linking Thameside with Kennet Mouth. The site is situated approximately 10-15 minutes walk from the town centre and less than 10 minutes from the mainline station. A regular bus service runs along Napier Road, linking the town centre with the Tesco superstore.
- 2.8** There is a proposal to re-open an underpass under the railway to the south of the site, providing a pedestrian/cycle link to Kenavon Drive and the River Kennet. The site is potentially very accessible by boat.





## Historic Environment

- 2.9** The historic environment enriches the quality of life and contributes to local character and a sense of place. Kings Meadow, along with the other areas covered by the Brief, has potentially significant archaeological and historic landscape dimensions as well as a listed building.



- 2.10** The Edwardian King's Meadow swimming pool was given Grade II Listed Building status on 26th August 2004. The pool was purpose-built as a river-fed, women's swimming pool with a partly open roof. The facility was closed in 1973 due to high running costs and has not been operational since. (Appendix 2 summarises the national guidance (PPG15) on the treatment of listed buildings.)

## Other considerations

- 2.11** The majority of this area lies within the floodplain and is prone to seasonal flooding, and notwithstanding the policy constraints in the Reading Borough Local Plan, the area would not be suitable for any form of major development, including residential uses.
- 2.12** There is no known contamination on the site, but Vastern Ditch brings contamination in from up-stream. The source of this is currently unknown, despite attempts to locate it.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.13** Daubenton bats have been sighted in the Vastern Ditch, in a small culvert. Any future development must seek to conserve and enhance the bat's habitat. A detailed survey would need to be carried out to ascertain the level of impact of development on the bats, and to identify measures needed to mitigate any impacts.

<sup>1</sup> Caversham Lock Environmental and Landscape Survey & Scoping Report (2002) produced by Babbie Group for Reading Borough Council and the Environment Agency.



- 2.14** The benches along the towpath are of historical interest, as they are made out of materials from former industrial businesses in Reading.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.15** The eastern end of the Coal is designated as a Wildlife Heritage Site in the Reading Borough Local Plan (Appendix 2). The Reading Borough Local Plan also identifies a wildlife link along the entire length of the riverside and into Kennet mouth.
- 2.16** Tree Preservation Orders would be placed on appropriate trees, if the Council intended to dispose of any of the land in question.
- 2.17** The following detailed leisure-related issues for this area were identified in the recently adopted ***Thames Park Plan***:
- Relatively poor access for those with mobility problems
  - Variable standards of landscaping and maintenance
  - Wildlife enhancement needs to be encouraged
  - Cyclist and pedestrian conflicts need to be addressed
  - Boundary treatments deter people from using the site
  - Moorings are of a relatively poor quality and more are required
  - Lack of visitor facilities
  - Lack of children's play area
  - Car park is in need of rationalisation/upgrading

The detailed leisure-related proposals made in response to these issues in the Thames Parks Plan are summarised in Appendix 3.

## Proposals

- 2.18** The Kings Meadow area together with its River Thames frontage presents a unique opportunity to enhance an important public facility that can serve the whole of Reading and its visitors. Although well-used, its playing fields, open space, wildlife and landscape are considerable assets that have the potential to provide an even wider range of activities and could appeal to a wider variety of users. As well as providing an important leisure facility, King's Meadow is highly visible from the River Thames and the mainline railway to London, and is an important landscape feature and green gateway into Reading. However, the area could be enhanced by a programme of sensitive environmental and leisure-related improvements that acknowledge each element of the historic environment. This document seeks to protect and enhance these intrinsic assets and ensure that any proposals for the area do not detract from its primary function as a major area of public open space, but contribute to creating a special place where people want to spend their leisure time.
- 2.19** Many leisure-related improvements that can contribute to this objective are already proposed as part of the Thames Park Plan, and are summarised in Appendix 3. These include new leisure facilities, improvements to the car park, increasing access to the River and additional moorings.

<sup>1</sup> Caversham Lock Environmental and Landscape Survey & Scoping Report (2002) produced by Babbie Group for Reading Borough Council and the Environment Agency



- 2.20** The proposed creation of a pedestrian/cycle link under the railway would open up this facility to the residential development in the Kenavon Drive and Gasworks Road residential development and create a much needed pedestrian link between the River Thames and Kennet.
- 2.21** In summary, the future role of King's Meadow is as a major area of prime public open space that allows a high degree of leisure interaction with the River Thames, yet manages and protects those areas that provide an important habitat for wildlife. The area will be easily accessible to all sectors of the community, provide a range of activities from informal enjoyment of the riverside open space to more formal activities such as sporting events, carnivals and festivals.

### **King's Meadow Pool**

- 2.22** The future of Kings Meadow Pool and how it could contribute to delivering the objectives for the wider area needs to be addressed. One of the purposes of this document is to provide the planning context for the future use of this building; whilst it suggests a range of possible uses, these are not exhaustive and their viability has not been assessed. Their inclusion in this brief does not imply that the Council will fund these uses or activities, it merely means that they are the type of uses that may be acceptable in planning terms. Other low-key uses may also be acceptable, provided they fulfill the objectives of this brief and are compatible with role of King's Meadow as a major area of open space, as set out above.
- 2.23** The pool and building are in a poor state of repair. A structural survey of the pool element only has been undertaken. Whilst the Council believes that the refurbishment of the whole building and its subsequent use as a public municipal swimming pool complying with modern-day specifications would be neither viable nor consistent with the Council's leisure strategy, this does not preclude either a private operator or a Community Trust undertaking to restore the building and operate such a use, subject to being able to demonstrate viability.
- 2.24** English Heritage advises that the listing of a building is intended to bring about deeper consideration of any proposals to alter or demolish that building. Where it is not practical or viable to bring a listed building back into its original use, alternative and more viable uses need to be explored. Any proposals for the future use of the listed building and its environs would need to ensure that the integrity of the building's historical character was preserved in some way. English Heritage recognise the considerable challenge in adapting the swimming baths complex to a viable use that respects their special interest. A summary of the government's Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 on Listed Buildings is included in Appendix 1.
- 2.25** If it is not possible to return the pool house to its original use, then the building could be used to provide an appropriate focus for visitors to this part of the park and riverside. Such uses could include a café/restaurant, small shop/kiosk/information/staff centre, changing rooms, toilets, or other leisure-based facilities. Alternatively, the building may be suitable for some form of community-related facility, such as an arts centre. Additional small-scale development may be acceptable in order to provide practical and viable facilities in this location, but the



impact on the listed building, the affect on flood storage capacity and flow, and any resultant loss of open space will need to be carefully assessed.

- 2.26** As a part of any application for development associated with the pool, the setting of the building will need to be defined and the impact of the proposed development on the setting as well as the wider historic environment will need to be demonstrated and assessed.

### 3.0 CAVERSHAM LOCK ISLAND

#### Existing Area/Uses

- 3.1** The Island is located between Hills Meadow and Kings Meadow in the River Thames. The Island is currently owned and used by the Environment Agency for a range of operational activities. The eastern end of the Island includes the Lock Keeper's cottage and the lock itself. A further house is located at the western end of the island. The remainder of the Island is developed with low rise buildings and hard-standing, used predominantly for operational offices, stores, craneage, workshops, a covered wet dock and access to moorings.
- 3.2** The channel immediately to the south of the island is navigable and the lock itself is heavily used, as it is the only passable route for boats on the River Thames. There are extensive moorings situated just upriver from the weir, formed through pontoons and jetties attached to the island.







## Access

- 3.3** The island can only be accessed by boat or on foot. The majority of the island is not accessible by the public. However, there is a public right of way across the Island that connects King's Meadow, via the lock gate, to View Island and lower Caversham, via the weir crossing. There is no permanent provision for wheelchair access. Vehicular access extends from King's Meadow Road along the towpath at this point to serve the lock and operational activities on the island.

## Other Considerations

- 3.4** The EA have indicated that a significant part of the Island falls outside the current 100 year floodplain. However, there is no dry access/safe means of escape in the event of a flood, which will limit the scale and type of any future development on the Island itself.
- 3.5** The site forms part of the Thameside Major Area of Open Space and the Major Landscape Feature (Thames Valley), as designated in the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 3.6** As set out above in paragraph 2.9 the area the Island has potentially significant archaeological and historic landscape dimensions.
- 3.7** Archaeology: Bronze Age Axe head found previously. In the event of development a 'strip and record' excavation process would be required because of the sensitive location<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.8** Daubenton bats have been sighted in a culvert in the Vastern Ditch. This runs close to the lock gates and Caversham Lock Island. (See above). Caversham Lock Island contains a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) TPO 189.

## Proposals

- 3.9** The Environment Agency has indicated that they would like to see the Island developed as a visitor destination that would comprise viable uses. However, some operational requirements will need to be accommodated, including lock keeper's accommodation and other associated facilities (See Appendix 4 for a full list).
- 3.10** The scale and type of future uses on the island are clearly limited both by the lack of a vehicular access and by the absence of a possible "dry access" in the event of flooding. This latter issue is likely to rule out any type of residential or hotel development on the site, other than required for operational requirements (e.g. lock keeper, future caretaker arrangements)
- 3.11** The construction of a vehicular bridge linking the Island with the mainland is considered impractical due to the navigable status of the river at this point. Such a construction would require considerable land take in order to be fully accessible and would need to be of a scale and massing that is unlikely to be appropriate given the character of the immediate locality. Some form of enhanced pedestrian access should be explored. For example, the current access arrangements over the lock gates could be upgraded to provide an alternative means of access to the Island, possibly suitable for some form of small-scale powered vehicles,

<sup>2</sup> Caversham Lock Environmental and Landscape Survey & Scoping Report produced by Babbie Group for Reading Borough Council and the Environmental Agency



although this would need careful management to avoid abuse by motorcycle riders. This approach would respect the relatively peaceful setting of the lock and King's Meadow but could facilitate some limited intensification of activity on the Island itself.

- 3.12** When taken together, these constraints suggest that redevelopment on the Lock Island will need to be of a relatively low-intensity and of a sensitive design, in line with the Waterways policies of the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan, and that acknowledge each element of the historic environment. However, the existing uses do set a baseline for future activity on the site and it should be noted that they could be reinstated at any time. It is considered that some form of tourist/visitor-focused activities, such as a restaurant/café with river-related interpretation centre, with small-scale conference/meeting space and boater facilities may be appropriate in principle. However, other uses may also be acceptable, provided they contribute to the objectives of the brief for this area.

## 4.0 VIEW ISLAND

### Existing Area/Uses

- 4.1** The island lies immediately below the weir on the River Thames and floods regularly. The Island is now under the control of Reading Borough Council and is being managed as a dog-free informal haven for flora and fauna that is open to the public. The site is grassland cut to attract wild flowers and there is an 'outdoor classroom'. There are benches, a pond, and canoe landing stage situated on the island.
- 4.2** As set out above in paragraph 2.9 the Island has potentially significant archaeological and historic landscape dimensions.

### Access

- 4.3** No vehicular access. Pedestrian access can be gained either from the south across the weir crossing, or from the north by a pedestrian bridge across to Hills Meadow. Wheelchair users can access the island from the car park at Hills Meadow. Access on the Island consists of a circular footpath.

### Proposals

- 4.4** There is no major change of emphasis proposed for View Island, other than to ensure that it is well-linked to other facilities and areas. Its role as an informal area for wildlife should be protected and enhanced. Proposed improvements include an additional entrance to increase a feeling of safety, the creation of a reed bed and clearing out of a stream to enhance biodiversity. There is also a Reading Borough Council Parks Department objective to explore the provision of angling facilities. These proposals are summarised in Appendix 3.





## 5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1** The discrete areas addressed by this brief are varied and distinctive. Individually, they each have an important role to play: together they will present a well-connected and inter-related mosaic of complementary leisure and cultural experiences focused on the River Thames, and serving the whole of Reading.

## APPENDIX 1 - HILLS MEADOW

### Existing Area/Uses

The site is located on the northern bank of the River Thames, immediately to the east of George Street. The southern section consists of loose stone and tarmac public pay and display car park. Hills Meadow is the council's dedicated 'Showground' and as such since the 1920s has hosted two fairs throughout the year (these are now The Showmen's Guild Fair which visits in May and Traylor's which visit in October). All circuses (annual visit) have had regular use of that site since the 1950s. Other facilities include a BMX track, skate park, and recycling units.

The northern part of the site includes a brook that runs west to east across the area and re-joins the River near Heron Island/View Island. This waterway provides an important wildlife habitat and link across this site, and this area is an intrinsic part of a continuous green corridor that follows the path of the Thames across the borough.

### Access

George Street is the only vehicular access point onto the site. Pedestrians and cyclists can access the site via Christchurch Meadows under the bridge, Reading Bridge, George Street, Mill Road, Queens Road, and Heron Island. A bus service runs past the site, linking Caversham to the central area of Reading.

### Other Considerations

A significant part of the site falls outside the current 100 year floodplain. There is a brook along the northern boundary, which flows to the north of the BMX track from Christchurch Meadows, into the River Thames near Heron Island. There are a significant number of trees around the site.

Policy: Along with View Island, Hills Meadow forms part of site 85 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The site forms part of the Thameside Major Area of Open Space and the Major Landscape Feature (Thames Valley). Site-specific proposals in policy WAT10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan state that the area should be returned to greater public leisure use.

### Proposals

Appendix 3 summarises the leisure-related improvements proposed for the existing facilities at Hill's Meadow, as set out in the Thames Park Plan. In particular, the Council is considering using the area of hard-standing currently used as a public car park as a possible future location for a new theatre / arts venue complex, to replace the Hexagon.



The development of a such a facility on the north bank of the Thames would be an important step towards achieving the Council's Reading City 2020 Vision; not only will it be an important contributor towards Reading becoming the principal cultural centre in the Thames Valley sub-region, but a major cultural attraction in this location would capitalise on the unique asset presented by the River Thames and strengthen the latter's relationship with the centre of Reading.

A new theatre / arts venue complex in this location could become a focal point of this area, and provide the additional infrastructure necessary to enable the wider area to be more accessible to a wider range of users. For example, major development here could facilitate a new pedestrian crossing over the Thames and/or may make a footbridge link to View Island and/or Caversham Lock Island viable.

If such a proposal were to come forward in this location, detailed impact assessments would be required for a range of issues, including flood risk, transport and design. Any development would also need to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area and strengthen the continuity of the major landscape feature that runs along the Thames corridor and characterises the area. A new location would need to be found to accommodate visiting fairs and circuses. The Council will relocate the BMX track and/or the skate park, if the need arises.

This proposal is not covered by the SPD, as it is technically inconsistent with the adopted policy allocation in the Reading Borough Local Plan for this site. The future location of a new theatre / arts venue complex will be dealt with under the new Local Development Framework (LDF) process and will be considered as part of the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) Issues and Option Paper, due to undergo public consultation early in 2006. However, given the significance of the proposal, and its relationship with the other areas covered, the Council feel that it is appropriate that its aspirations for Hill's Meadow be incorporated now, in order to provide a comprehensive vision for the future of the area. This document should be seen as the start of a process of community engagement that should inform the RCAAP Issues and Option stage.







## APPENDIX 2 - DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER POLICIES & GUIDANCE

The determination of any planning application must have regard to current planning and development legislation. The development plan for Reading comprises the Berkshire Structure Plan (adopted in 1995, with new plan likely to be adopted in the near future) and the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted in 1998).

### Reading Borough Local Plan

The Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) was adopted in October 1998. The policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan are effectively “saved” under the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and remain part of the Development Plan for the purposes of Section 54a of the Principal Act.

Of most relevance but not exclusively, the Reading Borough Plan policies, which are likely to be significant in assessing development proposals for the site, include:

KEY 1:	Equality of Access to Development
KEY 2A:	Conservation of the Environment and Natural Resources
KEY 2B:	Conservation of the Built Environment and Assets
KEY 3:	The Role of Development in Improving the Town
EMP 9:	Implementation of Mixed-Use Schemes
TRN 1-16:	[various Transport policies]
CUD 1:	Works Affecting Listed Buildings
CUD 4:	Setting of Listed Buildings
CUD 5:	Historic Buildings
CUD 12:	Development Impact on Archaeological Remains
CUD 13:	Preservation of Archaeological Sites
CUD 14:	Standards of Design in Development
LEI 2:	Major Areas of Open Space
LEI 5:	Recreational Pathways
CEN 6:	Town Centre Car Parking for Class B1 and A2 Uses
NE 1 – 10	All policies in the Natural Environment Chapter
WAT 1:	General Objectives for Waterways
WAT 3:	Access to the Waterways
WAT 6:	Waterways Cycling Policy
WAT 7:	Development in the Flood Plain
WAT 9:	Waterway Design Objectives
WAT 10:	Waterways – Site Specific Proposals

### Other Reading Borough Council Documents

In addition to Local Plan policies, the following RBC Supplementary Planning Guidance is relevant to the development:

- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (2004)
- A Developers' Guide: A Checklist for Good Environmental Building (1999) (produced by the Council to advise developers on sustainable construction methods) (See also Sustainability Objectives in following section)
- Planning Application Checklist (2003)



Developers should also be aware of the Council's Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011, and in particular of the following three strategies contained within it:

- The Interim Cycling Strategy
- The Walking Strategy
- The Bus Strategy

The Council's Cultural Strategy states that open spaces, woodlands, waterways and parks are a vital asset in ensuring environmental sustainability of Reading. It also states that the right balance needs to be drawn between encouraging biodiversity and public expectations for use and presentation of parks. There is an opportunity to carry out full ecological surveys of parks and open spaces. It states that there is scope to involve the voluntary sector of the community in developing more local ownership of and contribution to the environmental management of spaces. Objective 8 on page 10 of the document shows how the Council would like the open spaces of Reading to develop.

Developers should be aware of "Reading 2020 – Making it Happen" the Community Strategy for Reading. This sets the strategic direction for Reading and provides the context for planning policy.

### **Sustainability Objectives**

Prudent use of natural resources - Policy EN7 and EN8 of the adopted Structure Plan, along with policies KEY2A and CUD14 of the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan promote energy and water efficiency in new developments. In particular, Policy EN8 seeks to ensure that all forms of development will maximise the opportunity to incorporate current best practice in energy efficiency and energy conservation into their design, layout and orientation. For example, the EA have put forward the following sustainability objectives for any future development on the Lock Island, and these could usefully be applied to any development proposals covered by the SPD:

- include a sustainability audit that tracks performance against key indicators
- incorporate the full use of appropriate water and energy conservation and efficiency measures during construction and operational phases
- ensure sustainable resources and material procurement – recycled / reused wood from certified sustainable source, consideration of Life Cycle Assessment
- adopt 'sustainable urban drainage system' practices
- ensure design and construction processes produce a minimum of waste

Other sustainability issues that will need to be addressed as part of any development proposals include:

- Accessibility – undertake transport impact assessment and include proposals to enhance the accessibility of the area. This should maximise the opportunities of facilities by a choice of transport modes, especially pedestrian, cycle and public transport modes.
- Crime and Safety – undertake an audit and produce a crime prevention strategy in consultation with Thames Valley Police
- Wildlife Habitat – undertake appropriate ecology surveys and ensure adequate protection/mitigation as part of any development proposals.





## Other Legislation

British bats are protected under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended). This makes it illegal to:

- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure, or capture bats;
- Deliberately disturb bats, whether in a roost or not;
- Damage, destroy, or obstruct access to a bat roost;

## National Planning Policy

National planning advice relevant to the development of this site includes that contained in the following Planning Policy Guidance Notes. Also of relevance are several recent draft Planning Policy Statements and other government guidelines:

- PPS1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2004)
- PPG3: Housing (2000)
- PPS3: Housing (draft 2003)
- PPS6: Planning for Town Centres (2005)
- PPS12: Local Development Frameworks
- PPG13: Transport (2001)
- PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)
- PPG16: Archaeology and Planning (1990)
- PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)
- PPG 23: Planning and Pollution Control (1994)
- PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control (draft, 2002)
- PPG 25: Development and Flood Risk (2001)
- Planning a Future for the Inland Waterways – A good practice guide published and promoted by Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, DEFRA and DTLR
- Waterways For Tomorrow – DETR 2000

### PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994)

PPG15 sets out the Government's policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, and explains the role of the planning system in their protection.

Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals and will need to show why works, which would affect the character of a listed building, are desirable or necessary.

The guidance recognises that the best way to secure the upkeep of a listed building is to keep it in active use. The majority of listed buildings need to be economically viable if they are to survive and new uses will often necessitate some degree of adaptation. The range and acceptability of possible uses must therefore be a major consideration when the future of a listed building is in question. The applicant is advised to obtain specialist advice on refurbishment or repair of the listed building.

Judging the best use for a listed building requires balancing the economic viability of possible uses against the effect of any changes they entail in the special architectural and historic interest of the building or area in question. In principle, the aim should be to identify the optimum viable use that is compatible with the fabric, interior, and setting of the historic building.



### **PPG 25: Development and Flood Risk (2001)**

PPG25 advises local authorities to adopt a precautionary approach to proposals for development in or affecting flood-risk areas. It recommends a sequential approach to allocation and permitting of sites for development, avoiding areas of highest risk (zone 3) where possible. Further information and advice on the interpretation of this guidance can be obtained from the Environment Agency (EA). Any proposal should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment and submitted to the EA for evaluation, in advance of any planning application. The EA summarise their requirements from new development proposals as follows:

- No loss of flood plain storage.
- No impedance to flood flows.
- Safe access to and from the development, requiring a Flood Plan.
- Assessing the impact of climate change.
- A Flood Risk Assessment to be submitted looking at a range of flood events and covering the points above.

## **APPENDIX 3 - THAMES PARK PLAN**

The Thames Park Plan is a leisure management plan for the whole of the Thames reach and was adopted in November 2004. The following is a summary of proposals in the Thames Parks Plan for the area covered by the brief and is attached as an appendix in order to provide context. In the event of any inconsistency between the Thames Park Plan and the Supplementary Planning Document, the comments or proposals in the latter will represent the Council's current position in respect of the area covered.

### **Kings Meadow/Caversham Lock Island**

- Opening the railway underpass:
  - i. Opening the entrance to provide access from Gasworks Road and Kenavon Drive
  - ii. Access through the underpass would be for everything apart from vehicles.
  - iii. Providing a link to the River Thames from the River Kennet
- Improving the Kings Meadow car park:
  - i. Complete resurfacing and landscaping, including expanding it and properly laying it out
  - ii. Providing a complimentary edge to Kings Meadow
  - iii. Accommodating cars for visitors to the park on days of special events
  - iv. Producing themed signs for facilities and activities
- Reusing the car park in the centre of Kings Meadow:
  - i. Removing the car park and railings around the edge
  - ii. Extending the track to the towpath and into the new underpass and resurfacing the track creating a new access route
- Improving and increasing the moorings outside Tesco



- Carrying out general improvements on the towpath and other paths:
  - i. Resurfacing and realigning all the paths and surfaces
  - ii. Removing the railings and providing benches along the river
  - iii. Putting in lighting along the towpath making it desirable during the evening and at night
- Creating new facilities on the site:
  - i. Major new facilities including, a visitor centre, commercial leisure venture, river crossing and park staff base. Maybe including a café, toilets, information centre
  - ii. Consideration for a new children's play area
  - iii. Park management & cleaning system
  - iv. Themed signs for parking, entrances, explaining facilities, such as fishing, mooring, links to the adjacent sites, naming different areas of the park
- Improving wildlife and habitat areas, including:
  - i. An active tree management scheme
  - ii. Continuation of new planting schemes
  - iii. Protecting and diversifying wildlife habitats within the park
- General improvements to encompass the majority of the park:
  - i. Increasing and improving the vegetative screening in front of the new development facing onto Kings Meadow
  - ii. Creating a riverside 'beach' area to launch unpowered boats
  - iii. Improving the structure to create a variety of spaces whilst retaining areas for large gatherings and events
- Major improvements:

A new facility or leisure centre – suggested as part of the Lock Island redevelopment, including:

- i. Park Management Centre (Park Staff Base) with a Park staff office and store, for staff to have a permanent presence, which could also act as extra security
  - ii. Visitor Centre, where people can learn about wildlife and habitats along the river
  - iii. Leisure Venture for organised river/riverside (park) activities, including changing facilities
  - iv. Café and toilets to encourage people to spend the more time at the park. Also providing facilities for boat users using the moorings outside Tesco
- Improving the pedestrian crossing over the weir and Caversham Lock Island:
  - i. Widening the path to make it more accessible
  - ii. More lighting to make the path more inviting and for people to feel saferMaking the walkway more attractive and opening up the surroundings

## **View Island**

The Thames Parks Plan proposes the following:

- Improving water flow around the island:





- i. Creating a new reed bed to improve the biodiversity potential
- Ensuring ease of movement into and around the island:
  - i. Adding a second entrance to increase the sense of security
  - ii. Resurfacing the circular path around the island to make it more accessible
- Ensuring prohibitions work and are managed successfully:
  - i. Enforcing the by-laws about dogs and fishing

### **Hills Meadow**

There is currently a proposal for a theatre / arts venue complex on this site. It would provide the town with a brand new theatre / arts venue and conference centre. As part of this proposal, a new pedestrian link is being considered over the River Thames alongside Reading Bridge, providing an easier access route for pedestrians and cyclists.

The Thames Parks Plan propose the following:

- Improving the current car park:
  - i. Resurfacing, enclosing and defining the park and non-park edges
- Improving the existing skate park:
  - i. Investigating how to extend and modernise the park, which may however move to Rivermead
- Improving the current BMX track:
  - i. Investigating how to extend and modernise the existing facilities
  - ii. Looking at plans to involve a new BMX club taking over the track to manage events, redevelop the current circuit and for them to provide a young people's meeting shelter
- Relocating or screening the recycling units
- Engaging in an active tree management scheme, including replanting
- Improving paths and access points:
  - i. Resurfacing of all the paths
  - ii. Permanent surfacing of the well used desire lines
  - iii. Preventing unauthorised access to the site
- Improving access and parking at the site:
  - i. Putting in a new crossing from this site to the western end of View Island and the weir giving pedestrians and cyclists a direct route; providing Kings Meadow and Caversham Lock Island with a passing trade
  - ii. Constructing a landing stage to allow easier access to and from the River Thames



- Improving wildlife habitats:
  - i. Providing a corridor between View Island and the stream contributing to the objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan
  - ii. Creating a wildlife habitat between the BMX track and the rear of the private gardens on Queens Road
- Major improvements:
  - i. A complimentary new leisure facility creating an opportunity to improve the landscape of the area or
  - ii. A replacement theatre complex, which provide new infrastructure, including a pedestrian link across Reading Bridge

## **APPENDIX 4 - CAVERSHAM LOCK ISLAND - OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS**

### Caversham Lock Island - Operational Development Requirements

It will be essential that any future development proposals provides for:

- river and navigation management free of obstruction and hindrance to performance
- an operational focal point for visitor education and information leaflet display
- store for routine maintenance equipment and staff welfare room to accommodate toilet, kitchenette, washing and work attire drying facility
- boater service area at downstream entrance to lock capable of incorporating toilets, showers, water supply, elsan disposal, refuse disposal and laundry equipment
- lock keepers lobby and lock operating area adjacent to lock similar to existing
- provision for 2 lock keeper car parking spaces within close proximity to lock
- lock keeper's family 2/3 bed residential accommodation near to lock
- security of existing moorings with pedestrian access to tugs and patrol craft
- covered boat storage comparable to the existing accommodation – other operational space requirements could potentially be accommodated over the wet dock.
- ability for vehicles, plant and machinery to pass over towpath to and from lock side
- retention of public pedestrian access across lock island and weir to Caversham
- retention of potential to extend the length of the lock at a future date
- retention of provision for powerhouse for weir operation and flood warning telemetry



**If you need help to either fill in or understand this planning document or planning application form, please call 0118 939 0587 or 0118 9553717, or visit the Information Centre on Level 4 of the Civic Centre.**

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਪੱਤ੍ਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਂ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਪੱਤ੍ਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਭਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0118 9390587 ਤੇ ਜਾਂ 0118 9553717 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਸਿਵਿਕ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਵਿਚ ਚੌਥੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਆਓ।

Punjabi

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Arabic

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zyres informacionit Civic Centre Katin e 4

Albanian

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Urdu

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Further general information about planning call us on **0800 626540** or  
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Or visit the Planning Reception in the foyer on the ground floor of the Civic Centre, Reading.



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