

Kenavon Drive Urban Design Concept Statement

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A Supplementary Planning Guidance Note (SPG) is a material consideration that can be taken into account in the determination of a planning application. This SPG is intended to provide additional guidance for property owners, architects and developers which is consistent with the provisions of national policy guidance, and strategic and local policies.

In accordance with PPG12 'Development Plans' (1999) the Council issued a draft version of this document for public consultation for a six week period during April/May 2004. The consultation exercise was carried out in accordance with the Council's Consultation and Participation Policy and with the advice in the Council's 'Consultation Guidance Pack'. The document was amended to address the issues raised in response to the consultation and the final version of the document was adopted as SPG by the Council on 12th July 2004. A copy of the report to Cabinet on 12th July 2004 which includes a statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the local authority's response to those representations, is available from the Council (planning section) as a separate document at:

www.reading.gov.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Kenavon Drive area has recently been the subject of considerable developer interest. In response to this, Reading Borough Council (RBC) commissioned consultants to produce a strategic design-led concept statement for the area outlined in figure 1. The purpose of this Urban Design Concept Statement (UDCS) is to provide a broad vision and urban design framework for the area, to guide future redevelopment proposals. While the Council is not actively promoting redevelopment of this area, it does believe there is a need for some unifying guidance in the event that further development proposals come forward from land owners.

Although this UDCS has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), it is not intended to be a prescriptive development brief or rigid masterplan for the area; rather it sets out a series of flexible urban design principles that are intended to guide both developers and the Council towards achieving a sustainable community within a high quality mixed-use environment.



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Figure 1: The UDCS study area





National and Local Policy Context

Reading Borough Council is committed to achieving the aims of the Urban Renaissance, and this UDCS has been guided by the premise that 'Urban neighbourhoods must become places where people of all ages and circumstances want to live' (Lord Rogers of Riverside, Urban Task Force Report, 1999). It has also been drawn up in response to the Sustainable Communities Plan by seeking to 'improve the local environment of all communities, including cleaner streets, improved parks and better public spaces'.

Planning Policy Guidance 1 and draft Planning Policy Statement 1 (Creating Sustainable Communities) both emphasise the importance of high quality design in new development. Para 1.27 of draft PPS1 states that:

"Design policies should encourage developments which:

- Are appropriate to their context in respect of scale and compatibility with their surroundings.
- Secure positive improvement to the streetscape or place where they are located.
- Create safe environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.
- Make efficient and prudent use of natural resources.
- Address the needs of all in society, including people with disability."

The government's publications: "By Design" and its companion document, "By Design - Better Places to Live" provide guidance on how these objectives can be achieved and the UDCS has had regard to the principles they promote.

PPG1 also promotes mixed–use development. This can help create vitality and diversity and reduce the need to travel. A mix of uses can contribute to a richer, more attractive urban form and dynamic, while increased development density can support sustainable and more efficient use of land. For example, a combination of retail activity with housing can provide a continuity and variety of presence, contributing to the vitality and viability of residential communities.

PPG3 (Housing) provides guidance on creating sustainable residential environments. Paragraphs 54-56 emphasise the importance of good design and set out the principles that need to be applied in order to achieve a high quality residential environment.

Strategic and Local Policy Context

Strategic planning policies also seek high standards of urban design and sustainable development as part of their urban renaissance objectives. Policy Q2 of the Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) seeks to raise the quality of life in urban areas by achieving significant improvements to the urban environment. Policy EN1 of the adopted Berkshire Structure Plan (BSP) and Policy DP5 of the Deposit Berkshire Structure Plan (DBSP) seek to enhance the quality of the urban environment in order to achieve more sustainable communities.

Along with the BSP, the adopted Reading Borough Local Plan (1998) (RBLP) provides the statutory policy platform for this SPG. In particular, but not exclusively, policies CUD 14 (Standards of Design in Development), HSG5 (Residential Design Standards), TRN 6 (Pedestrians), and WAT 9 (Waterway Design Objectives) provide the policy context against which this UDCS has been prepared. Paragraph 9.98 of policy CEN 13 (Major Development Sites in the Town Centre) anticipates that further development sites, other than those listed, are likely to come forward during the plan period and does not preclude their consideration.





City 2020 Vision

The Urban Design Concept Statement has been developed in line with the objectives of the Council's Vision: Reading City 2020. Design principles have been established which recognise the existing viability of sites within the statement area and outline a vision for future investment. Key elements of this vision include maximising the benefits that a mix of uses can deliver and raising the quality of the built environment. The vision allows for greater residential development set within the framework of creating a sustainable urban neighbourhood with good access to a range of services and transport options. The adoption of higher density development, a vertical mix of uses, enhanced pedestrian and public transport links and high quality public spaces are key to achieving this vision.

In 2002 Reading Borough Council produced an urban design framework study for the City Centre, to progress the Reading City 2020 Vision and to inform future design guidance such as this UDCS. The Kenavon Drive area forms a significant part of the Reading 'East Side Project Area', as defined by the framework.

Development Context

Development pressures on land in the town centre are widely recognised, as is the quantum shift towards Reading as a destination for 'City Living'. This UDCS seeks to guide the continued development of the Kenavon Drive area and provide the following:

- A design framework for the development of an inclusive and integrated community;
- Guidelines for the design and development of unambiguous public open space;

- Guidance on links for all transport modes (including walking), within and into the study area, considering design, location and safety;
- Advice on massing and scale within the context of an edge of centre site;
- A flexible plan to accommodate existing and changing uses on the site.

Local History

Originally a low-lying area of grassland known as King's Mead, previous uses in the study area include Huntley & Palmer's Biscuit Factory, the gasworks and a sewage pumping station (to the south-west).

During the early 1990s the gas works were redeveloped for depot and office buildings. Former factory buildings to the west were replaced by low-rise retail, and B1/B8 uses. As it lies in the valley of the River Kennet, the study area is identified in the Local Plan as having archaeological potential. However it is possible that previous developments truncated or destroyed those findings.

Location

The area is situated within the eastern part of Reading town centre, to the east of the A329 Inner Distributor Road (IDR) and is accessed via Kenavon Drive.

The study area is bordered by the Reading to London railway embankment to the north, the River Kennet to the south/east and Forbury Road to the west.





2. THE STUDY AREA AND LOCAL CONTEXT

Settings and surrounding issues

The heavily trafficked Inner Distribution Road (IDR) that forms the western boundary of the study area, physically and perceptually separates it from the town centre. Crossing of the IDR is provided over the pelican crossing in the Watlington gyratory area and a pedestrian underpass beneath Forbury Road. This allows pedestrians to access Kings Road, westbound Kennetside and Watlington Street leading into the town centre or to the Station via the Abbey Ruins and Forbury Gardens.

To the north of the study area, separated by the railway line, lies King's Meadow, an important green open space with frontage onto the River Thames. Tesco supermarket also lies north of the railway lines adjacent to new housing on Napier Road.

The Napier Road residential scheme has surface car parking and is predominantly 4 – 6 storey with 2 elements rising to 9 storeys and one to 10 storeys. The development sits adjacent to retail in a parkland setting adjoining the River Thames with immediate and extensive open views.



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Figure 2: Kenavon Drive and the surrounding area





Development to the south and east of the study area is predominantly terraced, two storey housing known as the Newtown area, with some buildings between 4/5 storeys, mainly focused on the river frontage. The River Kennet forms a barrier between the study area and this community. The new Kennet bridge, a pedestrian/cyclist bridge link at the eastern end of the study area provides the only means of access to these existing residential areas from Kenavon Drive.

Current Uses

The western end of the study area comprises mainly low rise, large-scale retail and retail warehousing with significant areas of surface car parking.

B1 and B8 uses housed in modern metal clad structures occupy the centre of the area covered by this UDCS.

To the east of this sits a modern, three-storey office block, and a fairly standard modern B1 building with surrounding parking, handling and storage areas with industrial/storage units. The far eastern end of the study area is occupied by Transco and comprises a Gasholder and associated installations.



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Figure 3: Kenavon Drive Context





The southern part of the study area is occupied by residential developments including Kennet Walk, a development of 134 units built in 2001 with frontage onto the River Kennet and 37 Kenavon Drive, a scheme of 113 units set within a 'U' shaped block with undercroft parking. Development height at 37 Kenavon Drive rises to a maximum height of 7 storeys (three elements rise to this seven storey height and have a profile roof, whilst the majority of the development is 6 storeys with flat roof). At the time of writing, this development is nearing completion.

The Riverside Museum and new restaurant at Blake's Lock, sit on Gas Works Road with frontage onto the River. There are a number of two storey semidetached houses (2 listed) adjacent to, and opposite the museum.

Visual Issues

Views into the study area are available from a number of locations. Visual exposure onto the study area includes:

- Long range views of the gasholder fromCaversham to the North and the university area to the South;
- Long range views from the train across the study area with the prominent Prudential building in the distance and church spires beyond;
- Views from the river walk on the southern side of the Kennet revealing the fronts and backs of the Kennet Walk residential properties;
- Views from the raised pedestrian bridge over the River and into the Kenavon Drive area from east; and
- Views from the railway line to the north, particularly from stationary trains overlooking Kenavon Drive and giving glimpses of the River Kennet;



Figure 4 : Key views into and across the area





Strengths/Opportunities

- The River Kennet/Avon Canal forms the southern boundary of the study area and offers a rare town centre opportunity for the enhancement of the Kennet water front;
- The study area encompasses the newly created restaurant in the renovated Blake's Lock Museum, a listed building.
- There is a significant area of green open space (King's Meadow) to the north of the study area that could become a valuable amenity resource.
- Key to the success of the open space as a resource will be the opening up of the railway underpass as an attractive and busy route, resulting in the study area gaining wider strategic importance as a link between the town and the areas north of the railway embankment. This is a specific objective of Policy TRN6 and CEN13 (C16) of the RBLP. For example, the shortest distances travelling on foot to reach Kings Meadow from the study area without the underpass are: via Forbury Road for the western edge and centre of the study area (780m and 1185m



approximately and respectively) and 1060m from the eastern edge of the area using the river footpath and the Horseshoe pedestrian bridge. With the underpass this would reduce to 500m from the centre of the area,

- The new foot/cycle bridge links the two communities
- The historic ambiance of the area is of significance.

Weaknesses/Constraints



Figure 6: Weaknesses of the study area

- The eastern pedestrian link which provides access to King's Meadow and the facilities north of the railway is of poor quality, unobserved and convoluted. The walking distance to access King's Meadow from the centre of the study area is approximately 1.2 km.
- The perception of the eastern part of the study area is that of a 'deadend', accessed only by a single vehicular route.
- The majority of existing development comprises poor quality low-rise 'bigbox' retail/warehousing which offers blank sides to the street and public realm;





- There is a poor sense of integration between the Kennet Walk residential development and the Newtown area. Within the Kennet Walk residential area there is a clear distinction between the social housing and the private housing. Social housing has been positioned at the end of the development adjacent to the Gasholder within poor quality open space;
- The study area is dominated by tarmac/concrete block hardstanding and surface car parking offering a very harsh physical environment with little green space;
- Noise intrusion from railway lines to the north;
- Overlooking from the railway, particularly from stationary trains;
- Exposure to cold north-east winds along the River Kennet.
- The existing 18m exclusion zone around the Gasholder and a further 45m zone restricts development to no more than 2 storeys. This exclusion zone may be extended further under HSE guidance.

Existing Movement Patterns

Vehicular Access

The only vehicular access to the study area is via Kenavon Drive, a single carriageway cul-de-sac accessed from the Forbury Road roundabout. The area was originally served by Gasworks Road, which is now closed to traffic other than pedestrians and cyclists. The IDR (A329) tends to be congested during the peak hours. In particular, traffic tends to back up along Forbury Road making movement onto and around the roundabout particularly difficult.

Access to new housing on Kennet Walk is via a private (gated) road from Kenavon Drive.

Transco's retained land to the east of the study area is accessed via Kenavon Drive.

Pedestrian /Cycling Access

The study area is poorly integrated within the wider movement network, mainly as a result of its position between the railway lines, the Kennet and Avon Canal and the IDR. This results in physical and perceptual isolation compounded by heavy traffic movements at peak times.

Access to the River along its northern side is limited to a path running in front of the new housing developments along Kennet Walk. This path leads to the new pedestrian/cycle bridge link to the east of the study area and from there into Newtown.

Kennet Side (path and cycle track) runs along the southern side of the river and canal. The route continues under King's Bridge with steps giving access to the King's Road and providing access along the river into the town centre and links to the east towards Kings Meadow and retail development to the North of the railway. As a result, movement is relatively restricted for cyclists and those with mobility difficulties.

A comprehensive approach is required to provide strategic and accessible solutions to improve both pedestrian and cycle links to and within the area.





Public Transport

There are no bus stops within the study area boundary and the closest bus stops are approximately between 290m (outbound) and 445m (inbound) from the centre of study area. The nearest, outbound bus stop is situated near the western end of Gasworks Road and, inbound, further west along Kings Road. These are main bus routes with frequent services to the centre of Reading and elsewhere. Reading train station is approximately 1.1kms from the centre of the study area and 1.5km from the eastern edge.

Other key distances of note include:

- The outbound Kings Rd bus stop (just west of Gasworks Rd) : 160m from western edge of the study area and 290m from the centre
- The nearest outbound bus stop at Cemetery Junction is about 680m from the eastern side.
- The inbound Kings Rd bus stop (75 metres from the western edge of the study area, 445m from the centre and 975m from the eastern side (although the inbound bus stops at Cemetery Junction is closer at this point being 680m distant).
- The retail core of the town, measured from the entrance to 'John Lewis' on Broad Street is over 1km from the centre of the study area.



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(Note: all distances are approximate)





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3. A VISION FOR KENAVON DRIVE

The redevelopment of Kenavon Drive presents a unique opportunity to demonstrate Reading's commitment to quality design and neighbourhood creation.

The study area offers the potential to provide a mixed use townscape with prime river frontage and links to recreational and retail areas.

In order to successfully achieve this transformation, the following objectives have been set for the long term redevelopment of this important urban peninsula:

- Create a unified sense of place for an area that is currently detached and isolated;
- Reduce the isolation of the area by creating new links to adjoining areas;
- Provide high quality design in accordance with the principles set out in "By Design";
- Provide a balance between built form that makes an appropriate statement, responding to views into the study area from the railway line and further afield;
- Provide mixed use development;
- Provide lively and animated street frontages;
- Integrate the existing development at Kennet Walk as part of the urban fabric created by new development; and
- Create a high quality public realm with appropriate open space and landscaping.



Area Strategies

These objectives are to be applied to the area of Kenavon Drive as a whole. However within the overall study area boundary, 3 distinct character areas are to be encouraged:

 The Forbury retail/industrial Park, comprised of 'big box' retail/warehousing, dominates the study area entrance to the west. Retail warehousing is generally poor quality built form in terms of exposed dead frontages, side and rear elevations. In the event that redevelopment proposals come forward, the area should be considered as a key opportunity to provide vertically mixed use frontages onto the IDR, whilst using innovative design to maintain the existing uses and flanking the entrance to Kenavon Drive, acting as the gateway to the area from the west.





- 2. The middle part of the study area should be treated as a transition zone between the commercial/retail/industrial area to the west and the mainly residential area to the east. The area offers the potential to become a pivotal location connecting the existing residential areas south of the river through a central space. This central area could support new residential and a variety of community uses, focused on a central, water front public space and building on the local use changes stimulated by the emerging restaurant development at Blake's Lock.
- 3. The existing private and social housing at the eastern end of the study area is poorly integrated into its surroundings due to fencing, neglected areas of open space and parking arrangements. This area could continue as a blend of residential and commercial uses or transfer to a wholly residential development. The visually dominant Gasholder should be considered as part of emerging proposals.

Viable social interaction, especially with regards to affordable units and the development of 'Tenure Blind' layouts will be a key consideration for residential development in this area.

Notwithstanding these broad objectives it is recognised that the final mix of uses will need to reflect commercial viability.

4. DESIGN PRINCIPLES

High visibility from the railway affords the study area the potential role of a 'gateway' into Reading, and as such the development of the area should act as a 'design ambassador' for the Town.

New development must therefore strike a balance between the achievement of design quality and sensitive integration within the context of the neighbouring townscape.

Future development should encourage positive interaction with existing development and surrounding neighbourhoods and contribute to a coherent urban fabric by clearly defining its buildings, infrastructures and landscapes.





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Key Principle 1 – Allowing for Permeability and Movement

Development should provide a coherent relationship between streets, buildings and the river. This should be achieved by developing a network of fine grain, high quality public streets and spaces, following the boundaries of blocks with continuous street frontages, live edges, and building entrances.



Figure 9: Existing access showing the impermeability of layout.

Efficient connections should be delivered by adopting a hierarchy of routes (and spaces), on a simple grid, allowing access throughout the area. New development in the area should include a movement framework that considers:

- The integration of new development into existing routes;
- Provision for the maximum choice in how people make their journeys;
- The control of vehicle movement and speed; and
- The design of routes that reinforce/establish the character of the place and should not only be seen as links but also as places.



Figure 10: Possible access arrangements indicating a permeable grid layout with freedom of choice.







To enable new movement links, a comprehensive circulation pattern and functional street hierarchy has to be developed. This can be achieved by adopting the following principles:

- Kenavon Drive, should develop a 'street' character with a mix of uses and active frontages which lead to the heart of the development;
- Kennet Walk and the northern part of the loop road (or alternative road layouts) should be flanked by mainly residential development and should allow for passive, rather than physical traffic calming measures e.g. the orientation of buildings, spaces and activities onto streets encouraging natural driver caution by design;
- Allow for optimum permeability, ensuring corridors connect the southern and northern parts of the development. Home Zones should be adopted to create social places in-between development;
- Control how parked vehicles are physically permitted to dominate space and limiting the inconvenience they can cause to pedestrians and cyclists by means of landscape design; and
- Design streets to influence the relationship between facing dwellings. A varied building line can create oblique views, allowing the fronts of dwellings to be brought closer together than where buildings face directly onto one another.

Proposals should make provision for comprehensive new movement links which should aim to include as a minimum:

- Upgrading of the footpath along the north side of the River Kennet, which should be continued to the west, strengthening pedestrian routes to the town centre, Reading Station and Forbury Gardens and also further to the east, along the west bank of the river, to create a continuous link with the River Thames;
- Use of the existing railway underpass to the north of the study area, adhering to the principles of Secured by Design and ODPM good practice guidance on planning out crime to provide a connection to Kings Meadow, Tesco and future residential developments north of the railway (Policy inline with CEN 13, Site 16 and TRN6 of the RBLP).

In the longer term, development and infrastructure proposals should consider the potential for a new bridge (e.g. by extending the sluice at Blakes Lock and enhancing the Reading water space). This could further open up the area to its surroundings, local services and parks south of the river.







Figure 12: Sections through typical routes.





Improvements to movement infrastructure will be required as a result of development which increases pressure on the existing network. In combination with a comprehensive redesign and enhancement of all routes as described above, a sustainable approach to parking should be introduced which encourages significantly lower levels of provision. Developers should provide design concepts for decked parking where proposed in conjunction with retention of retail floorspace.

Where undercroft parking is proposed, it must not prevent development from interacting with the street at ground level which means avoiding blank frontages or raised building entrance.

Key Principle 2 _ Designing a Quality Public Realm

Quality of the public realm should be achieved by introducing public spaces, cultural and leisure areas, playgrounds, community facilities, and by facing buildings onto these spaces.

Successful open spaces require individual identities (clearly defining public and private space), encouraging a sense of ownership and safety. Public spaces and routes created should be attractive, well observed, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people.

Landscape and Open Space Standards

It is acknowledged that the existing landscape quality of the Kenavon Drive area is harsh and uninviting.

Applications for new development within the study area will need to demonstrate, through the production of a landscape strategy, how they contribute to the transformation of the area, turning it into a sequence of



unambiguous, connected green spaces which promote bio-diversity and provide high levels of public amenity.

Landscape strategies should be under taken as integral components of the design process (not to be sought as reserved matters or covered by condition) by qualified landscape professionals and proposals for open space should be discussed with the Council's Landscape Architect. Design for open space should consider:

- Use of indigenous plant material or species of local provenance;
- Rationalised siting of street furniture;
- How new spaces contribute to the distinctiveness of the Kenavon Drive area through adoption of similar hard and soft landscape material;
- Demonstrating 'fitness for purpose' for hard and soft landscape material;
- Use of sensitive lighting achieving 'secured by design' standards but not contributing to wider light pollution in the urban area;
- Impact upon the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) regulations;
- Passive observation of space through creation of frontage onto spaces;
- Sustainability issues including maintenance and irrigation impact, provenance of materials, embedded energy ratings etc;
- The inclusion of public art in accordance with RBC Public Art Strategy.



As part of a hierarchy of open spaces, the movement network should also be considered as providing for and linking quality open space.



Figure 13: Possible Open Space Strategy

The following areas have been identified as having the potential to achieve this:

- The corridor between the railway underpass to the north and the proposed new bridge link or towards the Gasholder could be treated as a green 'Home Zone' with integrated trees, street furniture and cyclist/pedestrian routes.
- A square or public space should be created adjacent to the restaurant/museum, which could facilitate meeting, eating or events, including play areas, seats and public art.
- The opening up of the railway underpass should create a continuous link for pedestrian and cycle use. The space to the south and north of the underpass should be positively designed according to its primary use as a 'through' space which connects two areas of the Town. The area should make people feel comfortable and confident, be clearly visible, introduce effective lighting and should incorporate appropriate and easily maintainable levels of planting.

• Routes should facilitate the legibility/orientation of the place, be further defined by paving type, have art installed in the floorscape or introduce other imaginative features.



Figure 14: Possible Public Realm Improvements

The Riverside Museum, railway underpass and river views, should be used to align or create view corridors, along which open spaces, cyclist and pedestrian routes should be sited.

The setting of the Gasholder and its appearance should be considered for temporary improvement to allow it to become a positive landmark through innovative and creative design, lighting and artwork.

The quality of the waterfront along the River Kennet should be improved and it should be integrated physically and visually into the study area. Open space in this location should be enhanced through a comprehensive and congruous landscape scheme to include:

- sensitive lightning;
- appropriate planting;
- seating;
- quality surface materials; and
- public art developed in consultation with the local community.





It is important that the role and status of each space is clear and that the boundaries between public and private spaces are clearly defined. Leftover space is wasted space, which in time is likely to become a source of nuisance.

Key Principle 3 _ Achieving Diversity and Legibility

Improving the legibility of Kenavon Drive (i.e. how people recognise and navigate the space) is to be achieved by ensuring that the roles and functions of different locations are decided in accordance with the principles set out in this document.

Key to this is the formation of a new 'heart' for the area in line with proposals in the City Centre Framework.



Figure 15: Diversity and Legibility

The new 'heart' should be seen as an inner gateway and therefore connect visually and physically with the surrounding areas. It should aim to create active edges comprising community, leisure, commercial or residential frontage at ground level.



Consolidating community, leisure, retail, residential and commercial uses can provide a focus within the urban structure and encourage a sense of community and identity.

To provide a sense of arrival, the points of entry (gateways) should be emphasised with the use of landmark buildings and statement architecture.

By developing the area strategies defined earlier in the document, character areas within Kenavon Drive have been identified which respond to the requirements of users, development pressures and the delivery of a sustainable community and which contribute to both legibility and diversity of the area. The UDCS suggests the following uses:

- Major retail uses should be located at the western entrance of the study area and along Kenavon Drive and fronting the IDR. Mixed use should be considered for the upper floors;
- The area between the study area's western gateway and the heart of the development should be seen as a transition zone. It should provide flexible building types for a mix of uses to adapt to market conditions;







- Local services should be located close to the heart of the development area;
- Residential areas should address the river front and integrate the existing Kennet Walk development;
- Residential development could include single aspect dwellings and development above retail uses. Private amenity space should be provided by the use of balconies, patios and upper level roof gardens/ court yards; and
- In order to retain existing non-residential uses in the study area, mixeduse solutions can be developed as described in the document published in December 2001 by the DTLR and Government Office for London, "Developing additional housing above and on non-residential sites".

Key Principle 4 - Continuity of Frontage

Strong enclosure can be provided by the use of fine grain perimeter blocks rather than bulky separate pavilions.

New development along Kenavon Drive should be designed to provide a strong edge with cohesive facades and building lines developed to an agreed rhythm, avoiding abnormal setbacks and gaps in the frontage. Buildings in new residential areas or linked to Kennet Walk will need to contribute to the enclosure of spaces (public/private).

Development in these areas will need to demonstrate resolution of the conflicts between the backs and fronts of buildings and instances where the backs of buildings are exposed to public view.

Further residential development within the area will need to pay greater attention to orientation (front and backs of uses), location and the definition of public/private streets and spaces.



Figure 17: Achieving vertical Mixed use

Frontage onto the street is a basic requirement of creating safe places and should always incorporate the following:

- Maintaining a continuity of frontage and visual surveillance;
- Securing a direct relationship between habitable rooms and private amenity areas;
- The careful orientation of primary and secondary windows enabling dwellings to be drawn closer together while still providing surveillance of the public realm;





- Setback distances should be minimised to increase the ability of a building to interact with the street; and
- Lively internal uses facing public space e.g.storefronts, community uses or those elements of residential development that need less privacy.
- Maintaining a continuity of frontage and visual surveillance;
- Securing a direct relationship between habitable rooms and private amenity areas;
- The careful orientation of primary and secondary windows enabling dwellings to be drawn closer together while still providing surveillance of the public realm;
- Setback distances should be minimised to increase the ability of a building to interact with the street; and
- Lively internal uses facing public space e.g. storefronts, community uses or those elements of residential development that need less privacy.

Active frontages can be achieved through a mix of uses or building entrances which overlook and interact with the street at ground level.



Figure 19: Corner Issues (adapted from By Design, Better Places to Live, ODPM 2001)







Key Principle 5 _ Sustainable Design

Reading's Community Strategy sets out objectives for achieving sustainable development and specifically seeks the adoption of sustainable design measures in new development. This covers a wide range of initiatives:

- Increased land conservation, quality streets and open spaces (e.g. good balance between efficient land usage and amenity for the occupants, maximised green, soft, permeable surfaces)
- Principles of integrated waste management (to include facilities for waste recycling as integral elements of any design) and use of sustainable or recycled materials.
- Incorporating sustainable drainage systems.
- Increased resource efficiency through alternative energy generating systems, water saving (e.g. grey water systems) or energy saving measures. Where possible renewable sources of energy should be used. Building design should aim to reduce the overall energy requirements for heating, cooling and maintaining buildings through the selection of appropriate building forms, plant and materials. Layouts should be designed to promote natural ventilation and incorporate appropriate levels of insulation.
- The north south orientation of the study area will allow for taller structures to the north of the area without significant visual or daylight impact on existing properties. This does not preclude the necessity for east/west facing blocks as advocated under Key Principle 4, Continuity of Frontage. It will also allow for passive/active solar gain and good daylight measures. Daylight reduces the need for artificial lightning and passive solar gain reduces the need for space heating.
- The form and orientation of blocks and individual dwellings should take account of aspect, allowing sun light into court yards and onto balconies, making them pleasant places and helping to reduce energy demands.

- North facing units should preferably be designed as dual aspect dwellings so that at least part of the accommodation can take advantage of the sun from the south, east or the west.
- Contrary to some attitudes and guidelines, it is possible to achieve high levels of natural light penetration with tight urban forms. The study area is exposed to cold north-east winds, which could eventually be made worse through vortexing of wind around the bases of taller structures.
- In urban sites the risk of overshadowing from adjacent buildings is fairly high and should be a consideration in the setting of building heights, building set backs, permeable built forms and minimum distances, so as to avoid overshadowing and permit the access of winter sun into internal spaces. Shadow studies should be undertaken at the preliminary design stage to ensure that the overshadowing of buildings is minimised.
- Commitment to sustainable transport through the adoption of a green travel plan and the inclusion of secure and adequate cycle parking for residential and commercial development alike.

Schemes should be evaluated using the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) and achieve the EcoHomes and commercial development minimum rating of good in line with the regional guidance.

Principle 6 _ Appropriate use of Height and Scale

Building Height

In order to successfully integrate existing properties within and adjacent to the study area, it is important not to over dominate them with new development. Building heights should relate to street-building height ratios and enable sufficient setback at upper levels to facilitate natural light penetration at the lowest level.





- When considering the north south orientation of the study area, taller buildings should be developed to the north of the study area, to allow efficient sunlight impact. Higher structures should be located towards the west of the area as transition to the city centre where taller buildings are located.
- To emphasise key locations including the western gateway, it is desirable to develop taller buildings along the western boundary and along the approach of Kenavon Drive, emphasising this as the principal route.
- The scale of buildings should step down towards the heart of the development along Kenavon Drive and also from the northern part of the development, adopting a residential character in line with scale of Kennet Walk development in the south-east of the study area.
- Development heights north of Kennet Walk should increase incrementally and appropriately according to their proximity to existing housing. Regard should be paid to the heights of the existing development within the study area (2 to 7 stories) and new development should not therefore exceed a height of 8 residential or 7 commercial stories.
- If the gasholder is redeveloped, there may be scope for a landmark building on this corner site overlooking the river. The gasholder, as an industrial structure of varying height should not be considered to set a precedent for the height of future structures in this area.
- Vacant air space above low-rise retail boxes should be avoided, instead a vertical mixed-use solution should be sought.

Where possible, narrow frontages will be preferred over long horizontal frontages, encouraging a vertical mix and finer grain of development. This will allow buildings to provide vertical rhythm in the street scene.

Development along the railway line should provide visual interest and be enhanced by a variety of building heights, narrow frontages with views between buildings and by varied facades with details such as noise screening, enclosed balconies or winter gardens.



Figure 20: Possible building heights based on conceptual massing of the study area

Scale

Scale of development within the study area needs to be considered at macro and micro levels. The Kenavon Drive gateway will be visible across the town and should therefore seek to convey a distinctive character and be strengthened through built form and enclosed frontage.





5. DELIVERING A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD AT KENAVON DRIVE

This urban design concept statement indicates the level of design quality to be achieved, and principles to be followed, when considering development opportunities in the Kenavon Drive area of Reading.

It is recognised that issues of land assembly, contamination and remediation as well as achieving a viable range and volume of floorspace will need to be addressed before the vision for the area can be delivered.

The Council will consider using its powers, at the appropriate time, to assist in achieving the objectives of the UDCS for this area. In particular, the Council is keen to facilitate the creation of the pedestrian/cycle link between the study area and the area to the north of the railway, as part of future development, in line with policy TRN6 and CEN13, using the existing tunnel under the railway.

Figures 21-23 demonstrate how the principles discussed in this UDCS could be interpreted, and suggest a concept for the area which could be developed overtime.

RBC acknowledges there will be a variety of design solutions that could be achieved using the design principles set out in this guidance.





Kenavon Drive Reading



6. INFORMATION NEEDED FOR A PLANNING APPLICATION

Applicants considering development in this area will need to demonstrate how they have utilised this Urban Design Concept Statement.

They will also need to demonstrate that they have fully considered all the following relevant matters:

- The need for an environmental assessment.
- Ground conditions, contamination and mitigation measures;
- Flooding issues (1 in 100 year situation)
- Gas holder Health and Safety Executive exclusion zone and associated considerations;
- Survey of underground services;
- Detailed contamination survey indication issues associated with excavation, foundations, undercroft parking as well as full remediation strategy;
- Archaeology
- Open space and community facilities provision and appropriate contributions;
- Nature conservation, ecology, trees and other wildlife issues;
- Environmental health issues (fire, waste, noise, fumes, etc.);
- Railway noise;
- Sustainability appraisal (including air, water, waste, noise, land, materials and other matters set out in the RBC "Sustainable Development, A Developers' Guide; A checklist for good environmental building.")
- Appropriate education, RUAP (Reading Urban Area Package) and leisure contributions;
- Full transport assessment including travel plans;
- Developer proposals for upgrading railway underpass;
- Sewerage and drainage considerations;
- Gas, electricity, water supply and other undertakers services;
- Affordable housing provision;



- Car parking provision strategy;
- Other relevant policy matters contained in the Berkshire Structure Plan and the Reading Borough Local Plan (or the emerging Reading Borough Local Development Framework), e.g. restrictions on retail goods in any redevelopment, waterways policies, etc.
- Full site survey
- Site analysis and contextual study
- Detailed design statement including materials;
- Creation of mixed and balanced communities;
- Crime and safety statement;
- Accessibility considerations
- Landscape strategy

All these matters will need to be resolved in discussion with the Council's Planning Section. The Council operates a strict timetable for all applications to meet government set targets. It is essential that all the above matters and any others which may be relevant, are fully researched, resolved and discussed with a planning officer and that Heads of Terms for any Section 106 agreement are agreed prior to the submission of any planning application.

This will assist in the achievement of a favourable outcome. For major proposals, it may be recommended that pre-application consultation be carried out by the applicant and time should be allowed for such an exercise. Further information can be obtained by contacting the Planning Section.

Contacts and Comments:

Tel: 0800 626540, Central Area team email: planning.info@reading.gov.uk







If you would like help in understanding this document, please either telephone: 0118 939 0587 or 0118 955 3717, or call in to the Information centre on Level 4 of the Civic Offices.

যদি এই ডক্মেন্টটি বুৰতেে অসুবিধা হয় তবে দয়া করে ০১১৮ ৯৩৮ ০৫৮৭ বা ০১১৮ ৯৫৫ ৩৭১৭ নাম্বাণ্ডে ফোন করুন অথবা সিভিক সেন্টার এর ৪ নম্বর লেডেল এ অবস্থিত তথ্য কেন্দ্রে আসুন।	Bengali
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Planning Section, Planning & Transport, Director of Environment, Culture & Sport, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, Reading RG1 7TD Tel: 0800 626540

Gerneral Enquiries - email: planning.info@reading.gov.uk To send us comments on a specific planning application - email: planningcomments@reading.gov.uk

www.reading.gov.uk

July 2004



Urdu



