



# Contents

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Masterplan Proposals</b>	<b>53</b>
1.1	About Berkeley Homes	6	3.1	Design Principles	54
1.2	Our vision	8	3.2	Our Proposed Layout	56
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Site Context and Character</b>	<b>11</b>	3.3	Proposed Character	58
2.1	Site Location	12	3.4	The Sidings: Character Area	60
2.2	Planning Policy	14	3.5	Coal Drop Terrace: Character Area	72
2.3	Historical Context	16	3.6	Thames View: Character Area	80
2.4	Wider Site Context	22	3.7	Scale	92
2.5	Local Site Context	24	3.8	Access and Movement	94
2.6	Local Character	28	3.9	Comprehensive Development	105
2.7	Locally Listed Buildings	34	3.10	Wayfinding	106
2.8	Analysis	44	3.11	Security	108
			3.12	Sustainability	109





# 1.0 Introduction

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**This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Berkeley Homes in support of a Full Planning Application for the redevelopment of the former SSE Office site on Vastern Road in Reading. The site address is:**

**53-55 Vastern Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 8BU**

Berkeley Homes are the self-appointed architects and landscape architects, with Barton Willmore providing town planning consultancy and Peter Brett Associates providing flood risk, transport and engineering advice.

The document contents are based on the advice on design in the National Planning Policy Framework and on the policies in the documents that make up the Reading Borough Council Local Plan.

In summary, the statement:

- Assesses the context of the site and relevant planning policies;
- Identifies the opportunities and constraints that influence the principle of the development;
- Explains how the proposal responds to the opportunities and constraints and also how it relates to the use, amount, layout, scale, massing, appearance and access of the development;
- Summarises the design consultations and how the design has responded to the feedback received;
- Concludes that an aspirational and deliverable proposal should be brought forward on this important site.

# 1.1 About Berkeley Homes

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## About Us

Berkeley builds for everyone: from families to first time buyers, students to older people, and luxury living to affordable housing, creating fantastic places where people aspire to live, work and socialise.

Our developments range in size from a few dozen homes near a market town to complex, mixed-use urban regeneration programmes for thousands of dwellings.

Berkeley are currently building some of the best new communities in England, including the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich, Woodberry Down in Hackney, Green Park Village in Reading and Kidbrooke Village in Greenwich, all of which will be home to more than 10,000 people.

Last year, the company supported more than 30,000 jobs and committed half a billion pounds to affordable housing and community facilities. Over the last 5 years, they have contributed £13.5 billion to the British economy.

The Berkeley Group has also had more than 850 apprentices on its sites and offices over the last 18 months and is creating 519 acres of public realm and planting 9,500 trees across London and the South of England.

The Berkeley Group is a business built on 40 years of excellence. We focus all our efforts on creating exceptional places in which to live, work and enjoy.

Our homes and developments are designed not just for today, but for tomorrow and the future. They are designed to enhance the neighbourhoods in which they are located.

## Experts in Placemaking

Berkeley has unrivalled experience in regenerating complex sites to deliver beautiful developments that are tailored to their surroundings and unlock public realm: a real identity is led by Berkeley's strong focus on placemaking. It's about creating strong communities where people from all walks of life can live comfortably together.

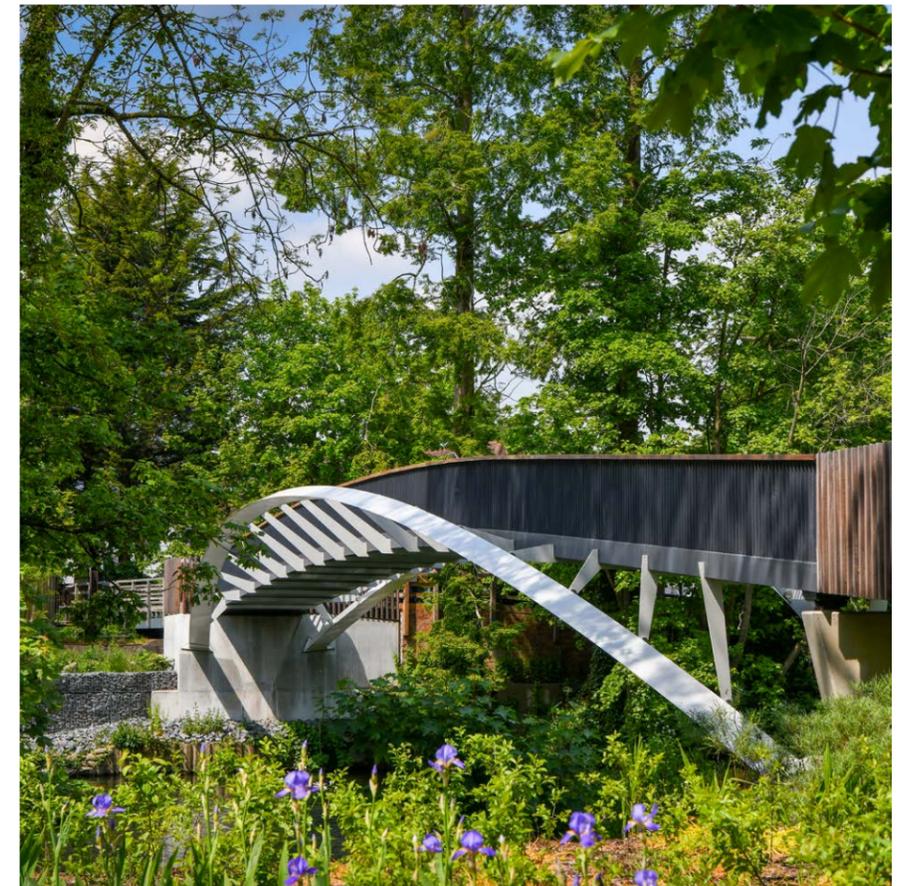
Berkeley takes a holistic approach to development – we consider the nature, the spaces between the buildings, where people meet, where they socialise, where they interact. We invest as much time and funds into the landscaping and public realm as we do the internal design of the homes and buildings.

We understand the importance of encouraging a new community spirit. For it to work, it needs to be planned but also self-sustaining with residents able to take long term ownership of it. Organising events for the residents to come together and meet is crucial.

We believe the key to 'placemaking' is ensuring that it is delivered in true partnership with the parties involved and making decisions for the long-term. Collaboration is key to our success. It helps us create high quality places that go on to become thriving communities.



Photograph from Kidbrooke Village



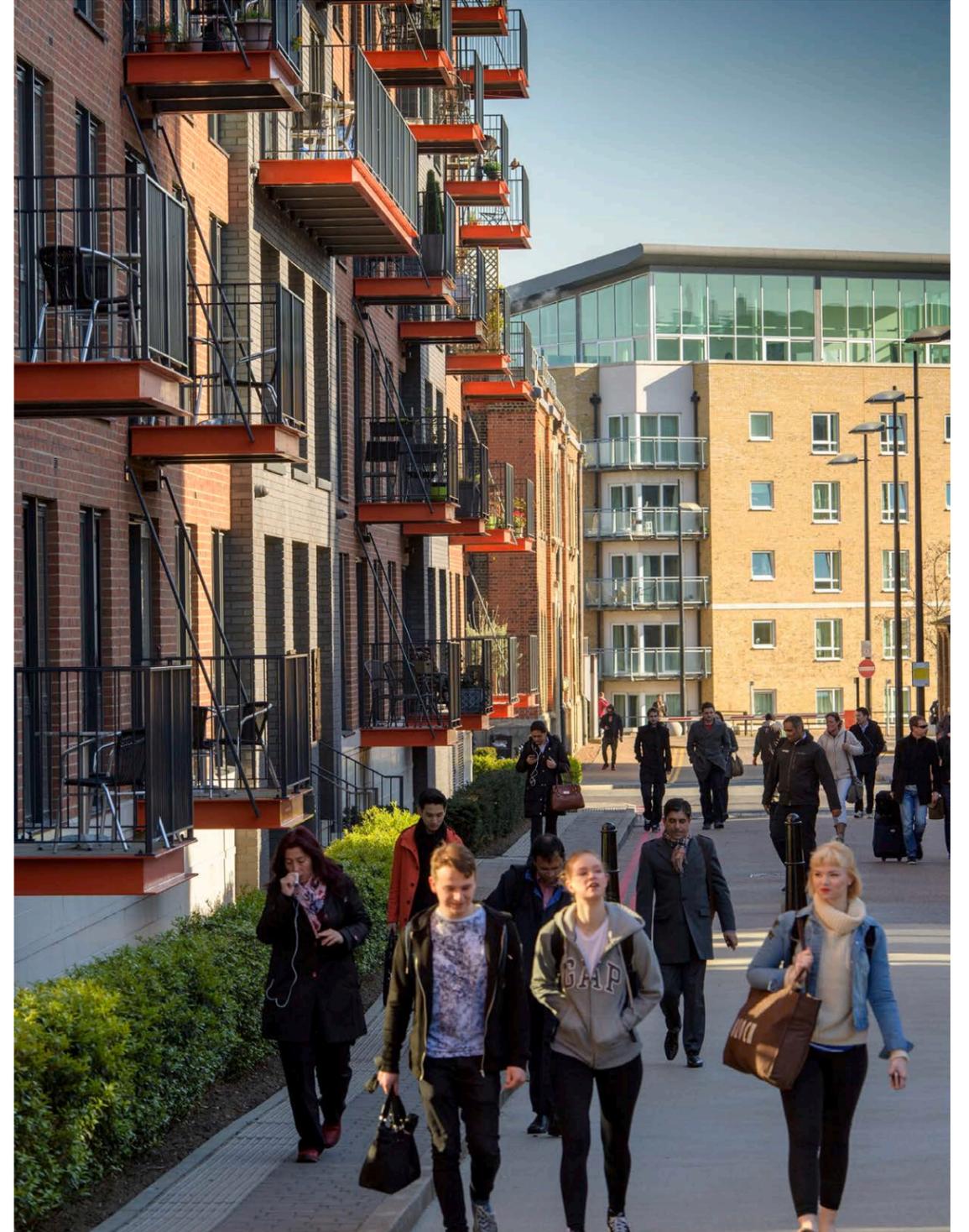
Photograph from Taplow Riverside



Photograph from Taplow Riverside



Photograph from Taplow Riverside



Photograph from Royal Arsenal

## 1.2 Our Vision

The creation of an iconic place where people will feel welcome, connected, energised and proud. The Old Power Station provides a truly exciting opportunity to create a landmark place to live in the heart of Reading. The scheme will “reveal and reconnect” with the River Thames and create beautiful spaces for the community to meet, relax and enjoy.

The journey between Caversham and the Town Centre is currently a convoluted one, with the Town Centre feeling very disconnected from the River Thames that runs through the heart of the Town.

Reading Borough Council have laid a solid foundation in starting to breakdown these barriers through the enhanced public link of the station underpass, the improved pedestrian crossing of Vastern Road and the Christchurch Bridge.

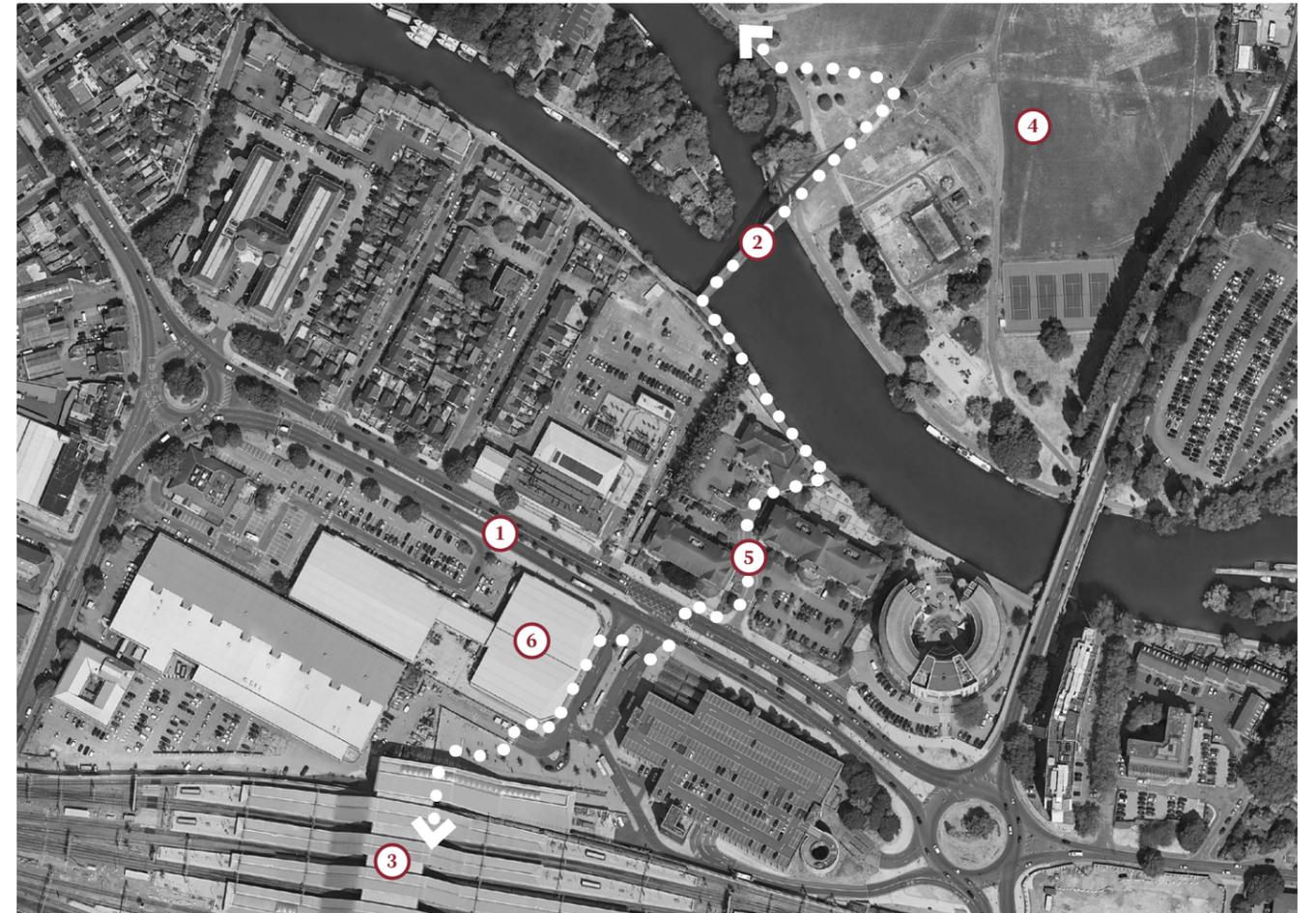
The site of the former SSE offices on Vastern Road presents a key opportunity for further connecting the town centre to the river and the northern communities within Caversham.

Our vision is to create a new community that is rooted with a sense of place, connecting town to river.

Our vision is to “reveal and reconnect” with the River Thames, by creating a landmark place to not only live, but to visit and commute through.

We seek to achieve this by introducing a new pedestrian link through the site, giving a clear and legible route to the river. This new route will increase permeability through the river corridor. The route will use way finding to guide people through the space, to and from the river to the Town centre.

The proposed scheme will reference the site's industrial past but will be forward looking to create homes for the 21st Century.



- ① Vastern Road
- ② Christchurch Bridge
- ③ Reading Station with Underpass
- ④ Christchurch Meadows
- ⑤ Current Commuting Route
- ⑥ Vastern Court Retail Park