

Donna Williams

Subject: FW: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188)
Attachments: 28876 A7 EF CP 20 09 15 Notes of meeting with RBC.pdf; FW: Vastern Road, Reading - Environment Agency Response (200188); RE: Vastern Rd advice ENV PAC1THM00406; ENV PAC1THM00406 Environment Agency advice 127978.pdf

From: Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>

Sent: 16 September 2020 17:07

To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>; Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>

Cc: Cook, Darren <Darren.Cook@reading.gov.uk>; Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; Emily Ford <Emily.Ford@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; joseph.harding@berkeleygroup.co.uk; Sophie Haslum <Sophie.Haslum@berkeleygroup.co.uk>

Subject: RE: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - transport

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Jonathan,

Thank you for your email below, which we will consider and revert on.

Further to our meeting, please find attached our drafted minutes of the meeting, which I would be grateful if you could confirm are an agreed and accurate representation of what was discussed.

Within the meeting you requested confirmation from us on certain elements:

Café use class – we consider it is most appropriate for the café to be considered as A3, as is currently written within the application.

Correspondence with the Environment Agency – pleased see attached correspondence between Berkeley and the EA. For clarity, we did send you our response in July (dated 15th July 2020 and re-attached for reference). However, I have also attached the EA's response dated 6th August 2020 (PDF) together with our further response on 3rd September, seeking to agree clarification on the ecology buffer (including the landscaping/planting). We are awaiting their feedback (due by 18th September) on the revised shadowing and sunlight assessment EcoConsult/eB7 provided to the EA.

Comments on the layout and 'stacking' of the apartments – on the Velux window's point for the top floor of Block C, we are currently reviewing this to see whether we can incorporate a dormer window or alternatively, create a study.

Clarification on internal changes to apartments:

Alterations to a number of apartments have been made in order to provide the requisite quantum of enhanced Approved Document M dwellings. In some instances, given the movement and turning space requirements, this has led to a handing in the apartment layout from other floors. The affected properties are:

- Southern elevation mid apartment within block B at ground floor (drawing 448.PL.BC.100) and first floor (drawing 448.PL.BC.101)
- 5no. dwellings on the courtyard elevations (north and east elevations) within block B at first floor (drawing 448.PL.BC.101)
- 3no. dwellings on the street elevation (west elevation) within block B at first floor (drawing 448.PL.BC.101)

The south-eastern apartment within block B (drawing 448.PL.BC.109) hands from the floors below in order to make use of the additional external "skin" of the building at this level and provide dual-aspecting to this apartment.

As we turn to other elements I will confirm our response to you in writing.

Actions list

Further to the above, attached and actions contained within the minutes of the meeting, please see below a table of action points, which we thought useful as a tracker. I have updated this, including the submissions within this email. As below, we now await updates in relation to the Element Energy response, BRE availability for a call and final comments from Thames Valley Policy/Environmental Health, from you. Additionally we are awaiting feedback from Steve Hicks, having provided meeting availability for a call with BPS. I would be grateful therefore if you could keep us updated with these points.

Many thanks and do let me know if there are any queries.

RBC (Steve Hicks) to liaise with BPS on viability in preparation for a meeting to discuss with BHOC.	RBC	Urgent
BHOC to advise of availability for a meeting to discuss viability with RBC/BPS during w/c 14 th and 21 st September.	BHOC	Sent – awaiting RBC response
RBC to review Stantec’s submission of 10 th Sept and advise of any further comments.	RBC	Received 15th Sept
BHOC/BW to prepare note relating to the north-south pedestrian/cycle route providing the justification and rationale for the route. To include a policy assessment of the proposals. Note to bring elements of submission together in one place to aid officers.	BHOC/BW	Being prepared
Stantec to prepare note in relation to Vastern Road crossing design and costing.	Stantec	Being prepared
BHOC to advise RBC of the preferred use class for the café building, relevant to recent changes to the Use Class Order.	BHOC	Confirmation provided above (16th Sept)
BHOC to review JM’s comments on detailed design and respond accordingly, namely the internal layout of units and their associated ‘stacking’.	BHOC	Partial response above (16th Sept)
BHOC to advise JM of preferred approach in terms of Employment and Skills Plan (financial contribution or provision).	BHOC	Being considered
BHOC to share copy of correspondence with the EA with RBC.	BHOC	Enclosed above (16th Sept)
JM to liaise with Element Energy and BRE (microclimate) and share updates once received.	RBC	JM to advise (target w/c 21st)
JM to share comments received from Natural Environment Officer and BRE (daylight/sunlight).	RBC	Received
BHOC to review Natural Environment Officer comments following issue and respond as necessary.	BHOC	Being considered
JM to liaise with Thames Valley Police and Environmental Health to obtain final comments.	RBC	JM to advise (target w/c 21st)

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From: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>

Sent: 15 September 2020 16:25

To: Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>

Cc: Cook, Darren <Darren.Cook@reading.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - transport

OFFICIAL

Dear Mr Pettit / Ms McHardy,

Further to our meeting yesterday, please see below from my colleague Darren Cook in specific response to the transport note submitted last week in advance of the meeting. I trust that these comments are of assistance to you and help clarify some points as you draw together the various information, as discussed yesterday.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Markwell

Principal Planning Officer

Planning Section | Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

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From: Cook, Darren <Darren.Cook@reading.gov.uk>

Sent: 15 September 2020 12:47

To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

OFFICIAL

Hi Jon,

Further to our meeting yesterday morning I thought it best to get some comments to you quickly for the applicant to address.

Internal Vehicle Access Arrangements

I still have concerns regarding the turning facility provided within the application site. I would re-emphasise my comments from the meeting that I have no objection to vehicles crossing the footway / cycleway but it is the need for vehicles to reverse over the route that I specifically have concerns about. I reference the following points from Manual for Streets below, to which the application would be at odds with.

6.8.8 Reversing causes a disproportionately large number of moving vehicle accidents in the waste/recycling industry. Injuries to collection workers or members of the public by moving collection vehicles are invariably severe or fatal. BS 5906: 2005 recommends a maximum reversing distance of 12 m. Longer distances can be considered, but any reversing routes should be straight and free from obstacles or visual obstructions.

7.10.3 Routeing for waste vehicles should be determined at the concept masterplan or scheme design stage (see paragraph 6.8.4). Wherever possible, routing should be configured so that the refuse collection can be made without the need for the vehicle having to reverse, as turning heads may be obstructed by parked vehicles and reversing refuse vehicles create a risk to other street users.

I appreciate that the number of servicing movements maybe low but the interaction of vehicles reversing over the pedestrian / cycle route which would be utilised by commuters and leisure users including children would be detrimental to highway safety and cannot be supported.

The applicant has also referred to the development of Colliers Way as a comparison to this application however, the servicing arrangements for that site did not include any reversing movements over the pedestrian / cycle route and a dedicated off carriageway turning head within the development car park was provided.

New Pedestrian/Cycle Route through site / Justification for Northern part of the proposed cycle/footway

I note from the document submitted in advance of the meeting, and as discussed in the meeting, that the applicant does not believe that there is a Policy requirement for a direct route and has referred to Paragraph 5.9 below, of the Reading Station Area Framework.

5.9 A major 'city spine' - a direct pedestrian route - is proposed through the historic core, the Station Area and through to the Thames. This spine is based on the north-south link which is the most significant movement corridor in the RCAAP, and is vital to the success of development in this area. The spine will extend across the Thames with a new footbridge(s) and new riverside parks, which can act as amenity space for new residents. The spine will include enhancements including wider pavements and greater pedestrian priority in Station Road. North of the railway, the spine will incorporate a 'green link' towards the river. Buildings will face onto the spine rather than away from it, and, on all parts of the spine south of Vastern Road, the frontages will be enlivened with active uses including retail and leisure.

However it should be stressed that this section relates to Public Realm and would not feature the requirements of cycling. I would however draw the applicants attention to the Transport section of the Reading Station Area Framework and in particular Paragraph 11.10, which explicitly refers to a direct route for pedestrians and cyclists, see below.

11.10 High-density mixed-use development in the Station Area will maximise the potential for local walking and cycling trips. The framework will help to secure high quality pedestrian and cycle facilities to include routes that are direct, well lit, naturally surveilled and safe.

I would also reiterate the comments made within my previous written statement that referred to Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design dated July 2020, which provides guidance on proposed cycle facilities, see extracts below:

18) Cycle routes must flow, feeling direct and logical.

Users should not feel as if they are having to double back on themselves, turn unnecessarily, or go the long way round. Often, cycling schemes - when crossing a main road, for instance - require cyclists to make a series of ninety-degree turns to carry out a movement that a motor vehicle at the same location could do without turning at all. Schemes should be based on a proper understanding of how people actually behave rather than how they might be expected to behave.

4.2.2 When people are travelling by cycle, they need networks and routes that are:

a Coherent;

a Direct;

a Safe;

a Comfortable; and

a Attractive

4.2.7 Directness is measured in both distance and time, and so routes should provide the shortest and fastest way of travelling from place to place. This includes providing facilities at junctions that minimise delay and the need to stop. Minimising the effort required to cycle, by enabling cyclists to maintain momentum, is an important aspect of directness. An indirect designated route involving extra distance or more stopping and starting will result in some cyclists choosing the most direct, faster option, even if it is less safe.

It is appreciated that the route would be shared with pedestrians but this would not detract from the basic design principles that should be adhered to when designing the proposed route through the site. In addition and as I highlighted at the meeting the pedestrian bridge is already accessed via straight ramps on either side of the river albeit that the ramp turns 90° on the southern side heading east to west. The Highway Authority are unaware of any speeding cyclists, issues or conflicts along the existing route and therefore do not believe that any conflicts would arise from providing a direct / straighter route within the site.

It was stated within the meeting that the development will increase the density of pedestrian movements given residential flows attributed to the development. However, Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design states the following on shared use design:

6.5.9 Research shows that cyclists alter their behaviour according to the density of pedestrians - as pedestrian flows rise, cyclists tend to ride more slowly and where they become very high cyclists typically dismount. It should therefore rarely be necessary to provide physical calming features to slow cyclists down on shared use routes, but further guidance on this, and reducing conflict more generally, is given in Chapter 8, section 8.2.

As I alluded to within the meeting there could be other design features that could aid reduce speeds if this was necessary including the alignment of the route on the podium in the same way as the 90° turn does on the southern side of the bridge.

Overarching all of the above is Paragraph 5.4.6 of the Local Plan which states:

The successful development of this area hinges on improved accessibility by public transport, and improved permeability for pedestrians and cyclists. In terms of permeability, improving links for pedestrians and cyclists through the centre, particularly in a north-south direction, is one of the key principles for the spatial strategy of the centre, along with removing barriers to access within the centre. If visual links are also provided, this will help change the perception of the area north of the station as a separate entity. The opening of the underpass under the station and the provision of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the Thames have recently helped to achieve this vision, but further improvements can still be made. Ensuring active frontages along these routes will assist these to become attractive links, as will the provision of new areas of open space. This is particularly important on the route between the shopping core, the station and the Thames. **In particular, on the Riverside site (CR11g), achieving this north-south link is the main priority for the site, and this should be given substantial weight in development management.**

Given the above it is clear through Policy and design guidance that the development must include a direct north south route and that this is the main priority for the site.

Design of Access to Southern Towpath

The Council have commenced the process that would permit cycling along the towpath and although this may not have reached a conclusion the scheme should ensure that suitable design standards are included within the site as this would form part of the desirable route to and from the town centre. The route will also become the desire line to NCN Route 5 to the east of the site, as previously identified within previous comments.

The Highway Authority therefore does not agree with the comments provided.

Waste Collection Strategy

The submitted information address the concerns regarding Bin store No. 4 but as per previous comments other bin stores were located in excess of 10m which is the design recommendation and the distance to which RBC refuse collection team work to. It would therefore need to be confirmed what arrangements will be put in place for all refuse stores that exceed the distance to ensure that bins are not left obstructing the surrounding footways.

Disabled Parking Bays

In principle I am happy that the location of the disabled bays are acceptable but the development must include locations where pedestrians can access the surrounding footways and this should be included on revised plans.

Cycle Store Design

It has been stated that in addition to the 2.35m headroom that is provided at Building D, there is an additional 0.5m headroom provided as part of the service area. At the location of the cycle store this will remain clear and as such provide an overall headroom of 2.85m and suitable for the josta style racks. I am happy that this would be acceptable but section drawings should be provided confirming this.

I must also stress that access locations for Blocks C and D are still to be addressed.

If you have any questions regarding the above please let me know.

Kind regards,

Darren Cook
Transport Development Control Manager
Transport | Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services (DEGNS)

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From: Markwell, Jonathan
Sent: 10 September 2020 13:41
To: 'Craig Pettit' <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Cc: 'Caroline McHardy' <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Subject: RE: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

Dear Mr Pettit,

Thank you for your email. I can confirm that I will be joined by Darren Cook at the meeting on Monday. It was hoped that Steve Hicks / the consultant from BPS would be in a position to attend too, but I have been advised on Steve's return from leave this week that the consultant is actually on leave this week, so they won't have had an opportunity to both view/assess/discuss the viability response you submitted last week (as at least one of them has been on leave since your submission); as such, this matter will need to be discussed at a later separate date. Steve will make contact with BPS next week to discuss this and we will be in touch to arrange a separate date for this.

In terms of the highways based information just submitted, based on my first glance this appears quite substantial in nature and will be likely to require some time to consider (both from a pure transport perspective and then with wider officers as well as to the wider impacts on the proposals). Before even forwarding the information onto Darren Cook, I doubt whether there is sufficient time for it to be fully assessed prior to the meeting on Monday morning. I presume your thought process was to submit this now for you to then elaborate / explain further at the meeting, and then allow officers to consider matters further in greater detail subsequent to the meeting? I would welcome your clarification.

Turning to the microclimate responses, I will forward on this commentary to BRE and seek whether they are content for this to be discussed further via an initial conference / zoom / teams call and the logistics / procedures around this.

In terms of the energy review, Element Energy advised me (subsequent to receipt of further information from your consultant on 4 September) that their report would be anticipated to be completed during w/b 14 September.

I hope that these initial responses are of assistance to you and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Markwell
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From: Craig Pettit <Craig.Pettit@bartonwillmore.co.uk>
Sent: 10 September 2020 12:38
To: Markwell, Jonathan <Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk>; Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Cc: Kim Cohen <Kim.Cohen@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; Emily Ford <Emily.Ford@bartonwillmore.co.uk>; joseph.harding@berkeleygroup.co.uk; Sophie Haslum <Sophie.Haslum@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; David Taylor (Oxford) <Dave.Taylor@berkeleygroup.co.uk>
Subject: 55 Vastern Rd, Reading (200188) - Agenda and attachments for meeting on Monday 14th September

This is an EXTERNAL EMAIL. STOP. THINK before you CLICK links or OPEN attachments.

Good morning Jonathan,

Ahead of our meeting on Monday, please note for your consideration the following:

1. Proposed agenda (attached)
2. Highways – response prepared by Stantec and accompanying revised tracking drawing (attached)
3. Wind – commentary following comments received by BRE (please see below in body of email)
4. Energy – further to my email on 4th September confirming that our client's energy consultants Hodkinson had supplied the requested cost data to Element Energy, no further dialogue has been received. I have attached the cost data again for clarity.

Regarding the attached highways response, the main change which has been made is to move the location of the refuse collection vehicle from overhanging the footpath when collecting the bins from Block D, to now parking parallel to the building. This will mean that the vehicle will fully cross over the foot/cycleway, however this will only be for a matter of seconds. With the previous approach, the front end of the vehicle would overhang whilst the bins were being collected. We trust that this approach is seen as positive and better than making any changes to the 'direct' nature of the foot/cycleway and/or any unnecessary intrusions onto it.

Regarding wind, our client's consultants RWDI have reviewed the document provided by BRE. The document highlighted three concerns that were considered to be unresolved by the reviewer as follows:

- A. Walking use wind conditions west of the existing Sovereign House entrance in the context of the cumulative surrounding buildings;
- B. Standing use conditions on private balcony spaces; and
- C. The lack of quantitative evidence of mitigation for an area of standing use conditions in the café seating space.

In response to the above identified points, please see the below commentary:

- A. For clarity on point one, the area being referenced is to the western side of the entrance foyer (Figure 1 - attached) for the existing Sovereign House, east of the Site on Vastern Road. In the context of the cumulative schemes (excluding 80 Caversham Road and Vastern Court schemes), wind conditions in this area are predominantly suitable for strolling use (yellow contours in Figure 2 - attached), with a small area of walking use conditions (pink contours in Figure 2). BRE's comments are accepted where it is stated that these conditions would be windier than suitable for an entrance location and made windier by the interaction of the Proposed Development with cumulative schemes, however, the entrance is located some metres further east in an area of sitting use conditions (green contours in Figure 2) that would be considered suitable for an entrance location. The area west of the entrance foyer would not be an area reasonably expected to be frequented by pedestrians (we consider that the only entrance in this location is an emergency exit door, where for this use wind comfort is not a key concern) and therefore has not been considered an entrance or pedestrian thoroughfare. Additionally, existing landscaping in this area has not been accounted for within the assessment and would be expected to shelter this area from the effects of the Proposed Development – it is anticipated that with the planting of the scale seen in this location will result in a drop of one comfort category would be seen in these areas. In the context of the existing surrounding buildings and in the context of the cumulative schemes including 80 Caversham Road and Vastern Court, wind conditions in this area would be calmer. While this has been raised with the reviewer, RWDI would be happy to highlight this in more detail in the report to remove any suggestion that this has been overlooked.
- B. Point two is one of a difference of opinion between RWDI and BRE and RWDI note that their approach has been widely accepted by numerous London boroughs and peer reviewers. The justification for standing use conditions on balconies is that occupants at height would be expected to be more tolerant of windier conditions due to the exposure this location inherently incurs. Additionally, the use of the balcony will also be constrained by the prevailing weather conditions on any given day and would therefore be expected to be used when appropriate weather conditions prevail. Large outdoor amenity spaces are assessed more strictly as these spaces may be expected to be suitable for amenity use regardless of the prevailing weather conditions and being located at ground level.
- C. As discussed with the reviewer, where there are no instances of strong winds it is commonly accepted practice to assess the likely suitability of wind mitigation measures using professional judgement based on experience of similar development. RWDI therefore reaffirm their assessment that the proposed landscaping scheme and the border treatment incorporating a wall to the west of the café space and balustrade formed of dense railings to the north of the café space, would constitute an appropriate level of wind mitigation for the highly localised area of standing use conditions at the north-eastern corner of the spill-out space.

In RWDI's experience a verbal discussion with the reviewer may be a beneficial and positive approach to resolve these remaining areas of concern. I would be grateful therefore if you could please share the above with BRE and

subsequently arrange a call with them, so that our client's consultants RWDI can have a detailed discussion on these elements.

Having considered my commentary above and the attachments I have included, I would be grateful if you would please consider who should attend the meeting from the Council's perspective. In terms of viability we would request the attendance of Steve Hicks, as this is a key discussion and we would welcome Steve's updated thoughts on this matter as well as Darren Cook, RBC Highways, following submission of our revised highways comments.

Many thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.

Craig Pettit

Planning Associate



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MEETING NOTES

28876/A7/EF

16th September, 2020

55 VASTERN ROAD, READING

POST SUBMISSION MEETING WITH READING BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 14th SEPTEMBER, 2020

Present: Jonathan Markwell (JM) - Reading Borough Council
Darren Cook (DC) - Reading Borough Council
Caroline McHardy (CM) - Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Ltd
Joseph Harding (JH) - Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Ltd
David Taylor (DT) - Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Ltd
Thomas Nicolas (TN) - Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Ltd
Scott Witchalls (SW) - Stantec
Joe House (JH) - Stantec
Kim Cohen (KC) - Barton Willmore
Craig Pettit (CP) - Barton Willmore
Emily Ford (EF) - Barton Willmore

Apologies: Steve Hicks - Reading Borough Council

ACTION

1.0 INTRODUCTIONS

2.0 RBC APPLICATION FEEDBACK

Viability

- 2.1 CM requested that a full copy of the viability report is shared with BHOC and that a meeting is arranged to discuss areas of disagreement. JM advised that he would liaise with Steve Hicks.
- 2.2 JM noted that Steve had advised that 0% affordable housing and no review mechanism would not be supported by officers.

RBC

Note

Highways

Response to Stantec submissions

- 2.3 DC advised that RBC are not in a position to feedback in detail on Stantec's submission from 10th September as yet. SW summarised the content of

ACTION

the response, noting that it responds to issues previously raised by RBC and provides justification for the proposed scheme.

Vehicles crossing pedestrian/cycle route

- 2.4 SW outlined that vehicle crossings of the pedestrian/cycle route were likely to be limited with a maximum of one HGV, including refuse vehicles, anticipated at the site each day. SW advised that the vehicle crossings are therefore not a high-risk safety issue as visibility is very good and vehicle speeds will be very low. DC noted that RBC have advised during pre-application meetings that no vehicles should reverse over the route due to safety concerns. DC noted that whilst refuse collection vehicles will have people helping to reverse, other vehicles will not.

Route and design of pedestrian/cycle route

- 2.5 SW summarised the justification for the proposed route of the pedestrian/cycle path. DC advised that while they have agreed to a shared pedestrian and cycle facility, RBC are seeking a straight route through the site providing direct access and a legible route from Vastern Road to the River.
- 2.6 KC noted that policy requires a route through the site but does not require the route to be a straight line with no switchbacks. KC outlined that the proposals were therefore policy compliant as well as responding to the site and place-making aspirations. SW also noted that 90 degree ramps are currently present at the end of the bridge, showing a precedence within the area.
- 2.7 KC advised that the switchbacks do not prevent the route being legible and that the entrance to the site on Vastern Road is sufficiently wide for the route to be clear. KC also noted that RBC's Access Officer welcomed the switch backs. SW/DT noted that signage and public art is proposed which will assist in wayfinding from Vastern Road.
- 2.8 DC acknowledged that the design of the pedestrian/cycle route would need to be balanced with other considerations but reiterated that RBC are seeking a straight route. KC noted that, whilst the RSAF refers to a direct pedestrian route (paragraph 5.9), there is no policy requirement for a straight cycle route, which is a micro scale view. KC also reiterated that the design is supported by RBC's Access Officer.
- 2.9 DC noted that the route did not appear legible, there needs to be a clear vision of where you need to go/get to. SW noted that the route will be used by commuters who will find it once and not forget it, visitors/recreational users will expect to follow signs. DC requested that the design rationale for the proposed route be submitted for consideration alongside technical input. KC/DT advised that justification for the route had been provided as part of the original submission and the additional booklet specifically relation to the route.
- 2.10 KC queried the harm caused by the proposed route. JM/DC advised that there is potential for conflict between cyclists and pedestrians (some of whom would use the steps proposed while others would not), potential for abuse of the route by cyclists taking shortcuts, and a concern about whether the route would be attractive and well used. DC commented that

Note**Note****Note****Note****Note**

ACTION

the switchbacks may limit visibility, leading to conflict between cyclists and pedestrians.

- 2.11 KC reiterated that no concern about potential conflict had been raised by RBC's Access Officer and that the length of the switchbacks ensured good visibility, given pedestrians would likely use the steps in the corner of the switch backs. SW emphasised that the route is a generous and well laid out shared space and would not provide any impairment to cycling to the station, particularly given the need to slow down to cross Vastern Road.
- 2.12 JM recommended that a note be prepared relating to the north-south pedestrian/cycle route providing the justification and rationale for the route. Note to include a policy assessment of the proposals and bring elements of submission together in one place to aid officers. BHOC/BW to prepare.

Vastern Road crossing

- 2.13 SW outlined that the rationale for an additional Vastern Road crossing when all sites come forward was agreed. CM advised that £50k is seen as a reasonable proportion of the cost for delivery. DC advised that RBC are of the view that BHOC should deliver the crossing in full. SW advised that the main users will be existing residents and those from adjacent sites, as well as residents of the Vastern Road site, therefore it is not technically a requirement of the development.
- 2.14 DC advised that the design and costing of the crossing would be required to justify the contribution proposed. Stantec to prepare note identifying proposed design, cost of delivery and breakdown of who will potentially use the crossing to justify proposed contribution.

BHOC/BW**Note**

- 2.15 RBC to review Stantec's submission in detail and advise of any further comments.

Stantec**RBC**Principle of Development

- 2.16 JM advised that sufficient justification had been provided for the loss of office space and that the proposed residential development is justified in principle given the site's allocation in the Local Plan.
- 2.17 JM noted no in-principle issue with the proposed café use. JM queried the use class within which Berkeley would like the café to be considered in light of the updated Use Class Order. JM noted the potential need for further assessment, given the ability for the café to change use class, if left as submitted. BHOC to review and confirm use class.

Note**BHOC**Scale, Massing and Detailed Design

- 2.18 JM advised that RBC are relatively comfortable with proposed scale of development with the remaining caveat of the Environment Agency's/RBC Ecology's objection relating to the potential impact on the River Thames.
- 2.19 JH outlined that further engagement with the EA has taken place with a response expected from the EA w/c 14th September. BHOC to share correspondence with the EA with RBC.

Note**BHOC**

ACTION

- 2.20 JM advised that officers have no fundamental concerns in terms of detailed design, noting that they are comfortable with the proposed character areas and the level of detail shown.

NoteComprehensiveness

- 2.21 JM advised that RBC are unlikely to resist the proposals in terms of comprehensiveness as the DAS demonstrates that adequate allowance has been made during the design process for future development on the remaining SSE land.

NoteEnergy

- 2.22 JM outlined that Element Energy are reviewing Hodkinson's submission with a response anticipated w/c 14th September. JM to share Element Energy response when available.

RBCWind

- 2.23 JM noted that a response was awaited from the BRE following the submission of comments on 10th September. JM to liaise with the BRE and update BHOC accordingly.

RBCDaylight/sunlight

- 2.24 JM advised that the BRE have provided additional minor comments and noted that EB7's justification is largely agreed. JM advised that it was acknowledged that given the site context it was not possible to avoid all impacts on surrounding buildings and that in this regard RBC intend to take a flexible approach.

NoteHousing Mix

- 2.25 JM noted that the proposed housing mix fully accords with policy and is therefore supported. JM advised that RBC intend to seek a planning obligation whereby any amendments to the mix through subsequent planning applications would be considered on a cumulative basis.

NoteLayout of Units

- 2.26 JM noted that the north-facing unit on the third floor of Block B/C has a bedroom which is only served by rooflights. JM recommended that this could be better suited as a study or a dormer window should be provided if the room is to be a bedroom. JM also noted an inconsistency in the number of roof lights shown on the roof plan and fourth floor plan and requested the submission of an updated roof plan.

BHOC

- 2.27 JM noted some queries in relation to the 'stacking' of units in Block B. DT advised that the varied layout on the first floor is to accommodate a Part M compliant dwelling. DT outlined that the variation on the 10th floor is to make best use of the external elevations. DT to confirm justification for proposed layout in writing.

BHOCOther

- 2.28 JM noted that a response from Thames Valley Police was awaited and has been chased. JM to share further comments once received.

RBC

ACTION

2.29 JM advised that a further response had been received from RBC's Natural Environment Officer raising additional points of detail and requesting additional detail. JM to share with BHOC.

RBC

2.30 JM advised that a response from RBC's Environmental Health Officer is awaited and has been chased. JM to shared further comments once received.

2.31 CM noted the proposed open space contribution towards Christchurch Meadow. JM confirmed he would review internally with the relevant department and revert back.

RBC**3.0 S106**

3.1 CM queried progress in identifying and agreeing S106 contributions. JM advised that he would need to discuss internally, including in relation to open space contributions.

Note

3.2 JM noted that contributions towards wider transport improvements may be sought in addition to those offered by BHOC as part of the application. DC to review and advise what contributions are sought.

RBC

3.3 JM queried BHOC's intended approach to Employment and Skills Plan, noting that submissions to date were not clear on whether the preparation of a Plan or contribution towards RBC's strategic Plan was proposed. BHOC to review and advise.

BHOC

3.4 JM noted that financial contributions towards offsetting carbon saving policies would be informed by the outcome of work being undertaken by Element Energy.

Note

3.5 JM advised that further discussion on viability was needed before agreement could be reached in relation to affordable housing provision.

3.6 JM outlined that he intends to instruct legal services once there is certainty that the application will go to Committee with a positive recommendation, although discussion on S106 Heads of Terms at this stage is welcomed.

Note**5.0 TARGET COMMITTEE**

5.1 CP outlined that the team would welcome JM's advice on timescales for taking the application to RBC's Planning Committee.

5.2 JM advised that he was conscious that BHOC were keen to progress the application and welcomed BHOC's work to date to address matters as soon as they have arisen, thanking them for their patience. JM noted that RBC also want to progress the application as soon as possible and advised that he considered it reasonable to target the 4th November Committee.

Note

5.3 JM outlined that all issues need to be fully resolved as part of the committee report which must be complete two weeks prior to the meeting date. JM noted that this allows six weeks [**note:** this will be actually five weeks] for outstanding issues to be addressed, given the report deadline of 21st October.

Note

ACTION

5.4 CM queried whether, subject to BHOC's agreement to targeting the November Committee, a schedule of meetings could be agreed to ensure that the target is met. JM advised that RBC will seek to work with BHOC to progress the application and be flexible in terms of meetings but noted that there is a reliance on external consultants for some inputs.

Note**6.0 NEXT STEPS**

6.1 CP summarised the actions arising from the meeting as follows:

6.2 RBC (Steve Hicks) to liaise with BPS on viability in preparation for a meeting to discuss with BHOC.

RBC

6.3 BHOC to advise of availability for a meeting to discuss viability with RBC during w/c 14th and 21st September.

BHOC

6.4 RBC to review Stantec's submission of 10th September and advise of any further comments.

RBC

6.5 BHOC/BW to prepare note relating to the north-south pedestrian/cycle route providing the justification and rationale for the route. Note to include a policy assessment of the proposals and bring elements of submission together in one place to aid officers.

BHOC/BW

6.6 Stantec to prepare note in relation to Vastern Road crossing design and costing.

Stantec

6.7 BHOC to advise RBC of the preferred use class for the café building following recent changes to the Use Class Order.

BHOC

6.8 BHOC to review JM's comments on detailed design, namely the internal layout of units and their associated 'stacking', and respond accordingly.

BHOC

6.9 BHOC to advise JM of preferred approach in terms of Employment and Skills Plan (financial contribution or provision).

BHOC

6.10 BHOC to share copy of correspondence with the EA with RBC.

BHOC

6.11 JM to liaise with Element Energy and BRE (microclimate) and share updates once received.

RBC

6.12 JM to share comments received from Natural Environment Officer and BRE (daylight/sunlight).

RBC

6.13 JM to liaise with Thames Valley Policy and Environmental Health to obtain final comments.

RBC

6.14 All to work towards November committee (4th). Interim meetings to be booked in leading up to this.

ALL

From: [Caroline McHardy](#)
To: [Markwell, Jonathan \(Jonathan.Markwell@reading.gov.uk\)](#)
Cc: [Joseph Harding](#); [Craig Pettit](#)
Subject: FW: Vastern Road, Reading - Environment Agency Response (200188)
Date: 15 July 2020 16:33:37
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[BHOC.448.LA.102D Planting Framework Plan.pdf](#)
[3591-200710 \(EA Response\) - JB.pdf](#)

Dear Jonathan,

Further to the consultee comments we received from the Environment Agency (EA) on our scheme and our subsequent call with the EA in June, we have undertaken the assessment as requested together with revising the landscaping and species mix as requested. I have included the email below which we have sent across to the EA this afternoon together with the attachments. I would appreciate it if you are able to forward onto your colleagues to review as it will hopefully answer some of the questions your Natural Environment and Ecology Officer had on the scheme.

Do let me know if you have any further questions and I look forward to discussing the scheme at your earliest convenience.

Given the affordable housing response is due this Friday we could pencil in a date for next week?

Kind regards

Caroline McHardy

Land and Development Director

BerkeleyUR-signature



Berkeley Homes (Oxford and Chiltern) Ltd

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From: Joseph Harding

Sent: 15 July 2020 14:50

To: 'Macpherson, Kirsty' <Kirsty.Macpherson@environment-agency.gov.uk>; Sproat, Lesley <lesley.sproat@environment-agency.gov.uk>

Cc: Caroline McHardy <Caroline.McHardy@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; 'David Taylor (Oxford) (Dave.Taylor@berkeleygroup.co.uk)' <Dave.Taylor@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; Thomas Nicolas

<Thomas.Nicolas@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; Sophie Haslum
<Sophie.Haslum@berkeleygroup.co.uk>; John Barnes (eb7) <john.barnes@eb7.co.uk>; Iain Corbyn <iaincorbyn@eco-consult.co.uk>

Subject: Vastern Road, Reading - Environment Agency Response

Dear Kirsty and Lesley,

Thank you for your time at the meeting we held in June on our proposed scheme at Vastern Road. As discussed at our meeting, we promised to provide a revised response on the sunlight/shadowing assessment for the River Thames together with amendments to the landscape and species mix.

Sunlight and Shadowing Assessment

We have prepared an updated assessment for the amount of sunlight exposure onto the River Thames and the impact on the marginal planting located to the southern bank of the River Thames. We have obtained the bridge model from Reading Borough Council and modelled the assessment from 21st March to 21st September (equinox to equinox) to coincide with the growing season. The assessment shows that in the existing scenario, the marginal planting area on the southern side of the footpath receives a reduced amount of sunlight. In the proposed scenario, there is only a very minimal additional impact on the amount of shadowing/sunlight hours onto the River Thames. Our assessment is that this slight increase would not have any additional impact on the River Thames given the existing scenario.

Landscape Species and Net Biodiversity Gain

Following our discussion, our landscape architect and ecologist have reviewed the proposed mix within the ecology buffer whilst taking on board your comments. We have proposed a mix to include more locally native species which will increase the net biodiversity gain achieved on the site and I have attached an updated landscape plan and a native species list below for your review.

The landscape plan shows that instead of the amenity grass that we originally included, we have proposed a layered planting approach. Furthest away from the River Thames is now a native shrub mix including species such as Holly and Field Maple as well as Buckthorn and Guelder Rose; this is only proposed against non-active frontages. Along the active frontages, we propose to use a 1m high native beech hedge around private external spaces. We have then proposed a species rich grassland mix (EM5 Seed Mix or similar) followed by a 500mm (reduced from 1m) amenity strip on the southern side of the Thames towpath which we have included to prevent vegetation overhang. We have changed this strip from amenity grass to a flowering lawn grass mix (EL1 Seed Mix or similar) to provide flowering and more wildlife opportunities. We have also proposed bulb planting which would include native species such as bluebell and wild daffodil. If you agree, this could potentially include the Reading BAP species summer snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum*) if this can be sourced from local stock. This will grow in the drier conditions that we have in the ecology buffer. We hope that the native shrub and grassland mix proposed achieves the 'in keeping' nature of the waterway habitat as suggested at our meeting.

In terms of a tree species, we have adjusted the planting proposals so that we increase the number of native trees within the scheme, especially in relation to the planting along the River Thames. We have included native limes, maples, hornbeam and beech planting along the river edge. We have changed the *Betula nigra* to a *Betula pendula* and replaced the *Alnus glutinosa* with alternate native trees as discussed.

I have below set-out a list of native species which we have chosen for your review within the ecology buffer;

- *Tilia cordata* (Small-leaved lime)
- *Carpinus betulus* (Hornbeam)

- Acer campestre (Field maple)

- Fagus sylvatica (Beech)

And within the remainder of the site;

- Quercus robur (Pedunculate oak)

- Betula pendula (Silver birch)

We hope the above answers all your queries and you are able to review your objection.

If following your review you still require further information or clarification we are more than happy to discuss via MS Teams again as this proved very effective in understanding your concerns.

Kind regards

Joe

Joe Harding MRICS

Land Manager

Berkeley_Berkeley



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Joe Harding

Berkeley Homes (Oxford & Chiltern) Limited

Berkeley House,
Farnham Lane,
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SL2 3RQ

14 July 2020

Dear Joe,

Re: 53-55 Vastern Road – Response to Environment Agency

Introduction

Following a meeting with the EA on 11th June, it was agreed that eb7 would provide more additional information relating to impact of the proposed development on the River Thames and in particular, the impact of the amount of sunlight on the marginal vegetation area on the southern bank of the River Thames. Previously the assessment focused on amenity spaces surrounding the site and did not provide sufficient detail to determine the effects comparatively on the River Thames as a result of the proposals.

We have managed to obtain the detailed bridge model from Reading Borough Council in order to accurately model the sunlight exposure on the River Thames between 21st March (equinox) to the 21st September (equinox) which shows the areas where shading occurs in both the existing and proposed scenarios.

Information and Assumptions

In order to inform the modelling of the river bank and Christchurch Bridge, information within the planning application for the bridge was used, as well as an accurate 3D computer model obtained from the bridge designers. We have assumed that the river level would be at its highest, meaning the obstruction from the existing bank itself would be minimised, thus presenting an absolute worst case in terms of additional effect as a result of the proposed development. Should the river level be lower, the exiting shadow would be greater and therefore the difference as a result of the proposal less. As these assessments are primarily during the summer months, and to simplify the assessments, trees have been assumed to be in full leaf with tree heights and canopies estimated using photographs.

Sunlight Availability

A sunlight availability assessment was run across the surface of the river to assessment the impact resulting from the proposed development. This shows the hours of sun the river will receive each month

from 21st March (equinox) to 21st September (equinox) at a 1 to 6 hour + scale; this also coincides with the growing season which we mentioned at the meeting in June. These images show that there is already overshadowing and a lack of sunlight exposure to the marginal planting on the southern river bank and as a result, the increases as a result of the proposed development are minimal. Where there are reductions, these are generally not for more than 1.5 hours during the day over the period from 21st March to 21st September.

Summary

The assessment provides further details on shadowing and sunlight exposure levels to the river Thames in the existing and proposed conditions. The assessments show that many marginal areas on the south bank already see a level of overshadowing from the bridge, bridge access structures and existing buildings and that the proposed development would not significantly add to the current effects, particularly in relation to the marginal vegetation.

I hope that the information provided is useful in describing the current and likely affects as a result of the proposed development and if you would like any additional information or clarifications I would be happy to help.

Yours sincerely,



John Barnes



Appendix 1

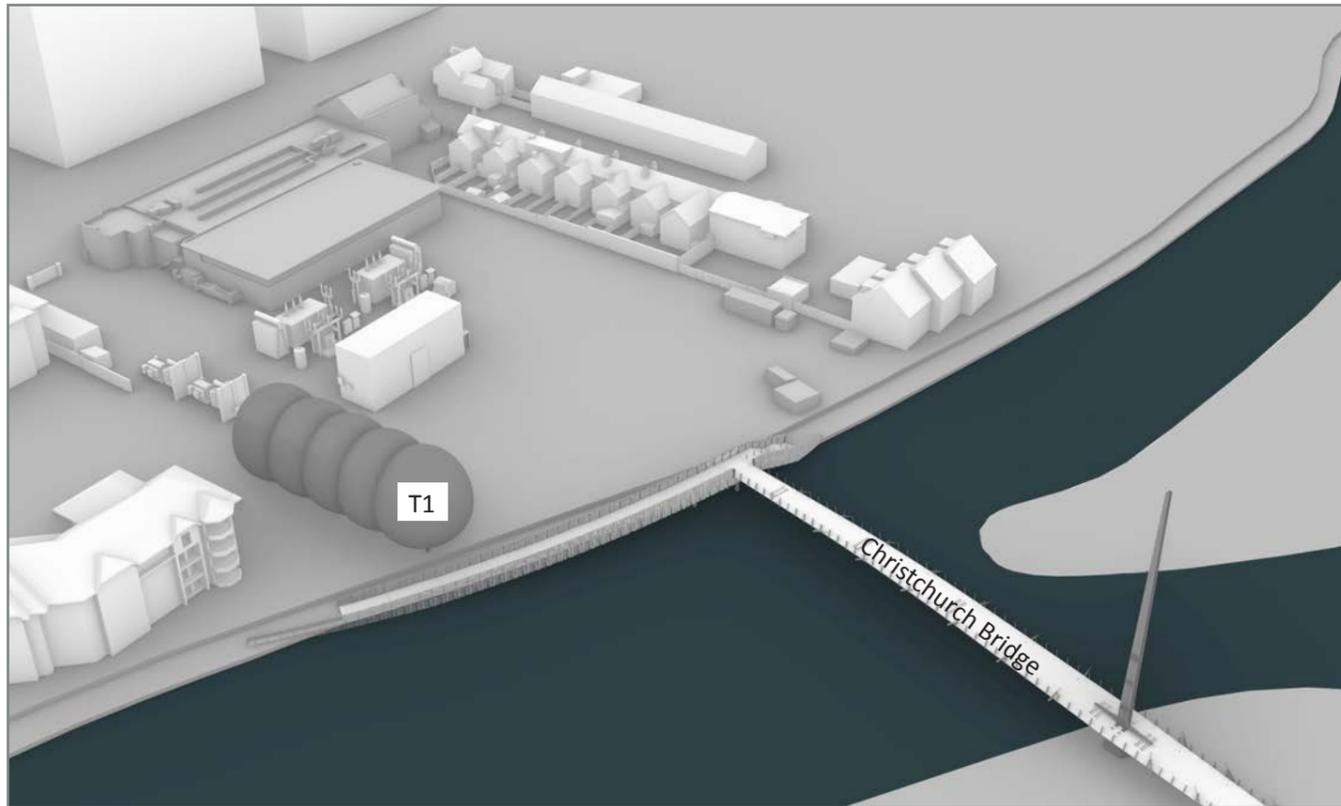


Fig. 1: Existing - Bird's Eye View



Fig. 3: Proposed - Bird's Eye View

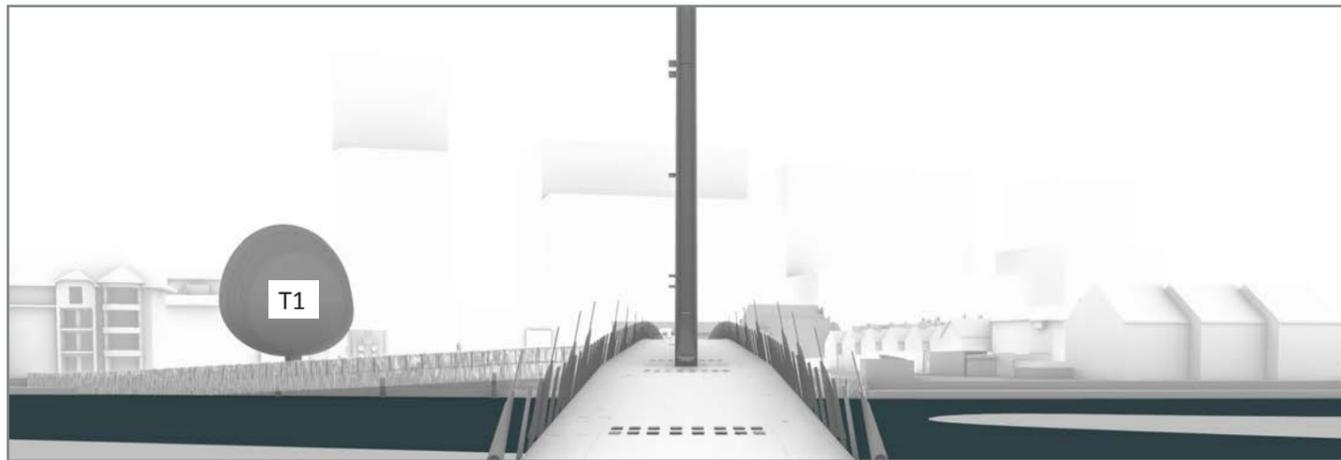


Fig. 2: Existing - View from Bridge

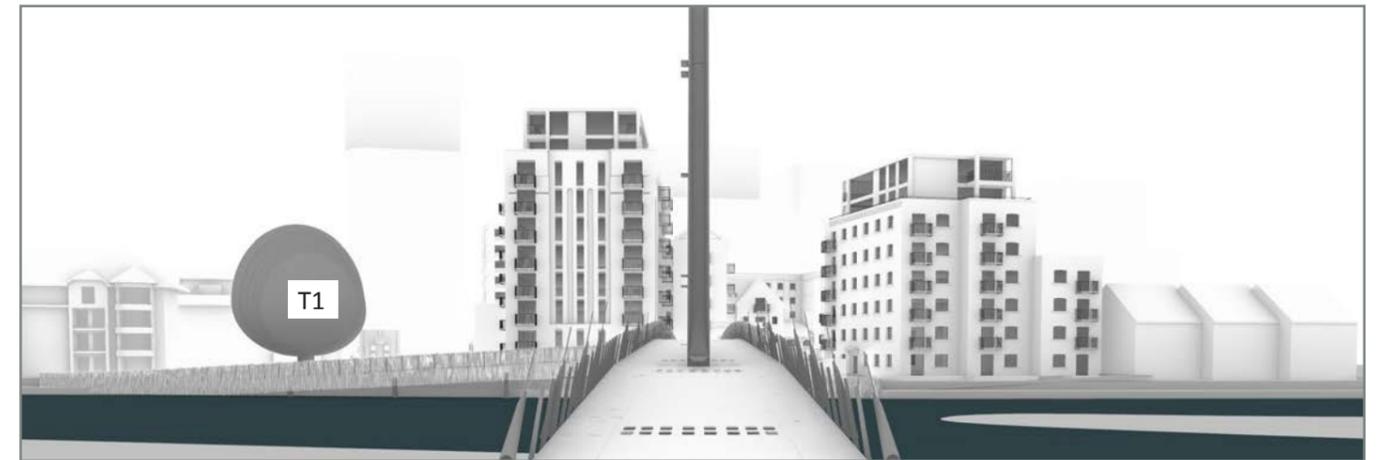


Fig. 4: Proposed - View from Bridge

Tree Code	Species		Foliage type	Height (m)	Spread (m)				Transparency	
	Common name	Scientific Notation			N	E	S	W	Full leave	Bare branch
T1	Unknown	Unknown	D	17	7	7	7	7	20*	55*

Tree transparencies taken from BR209 Table H1 where available
 *Assumed

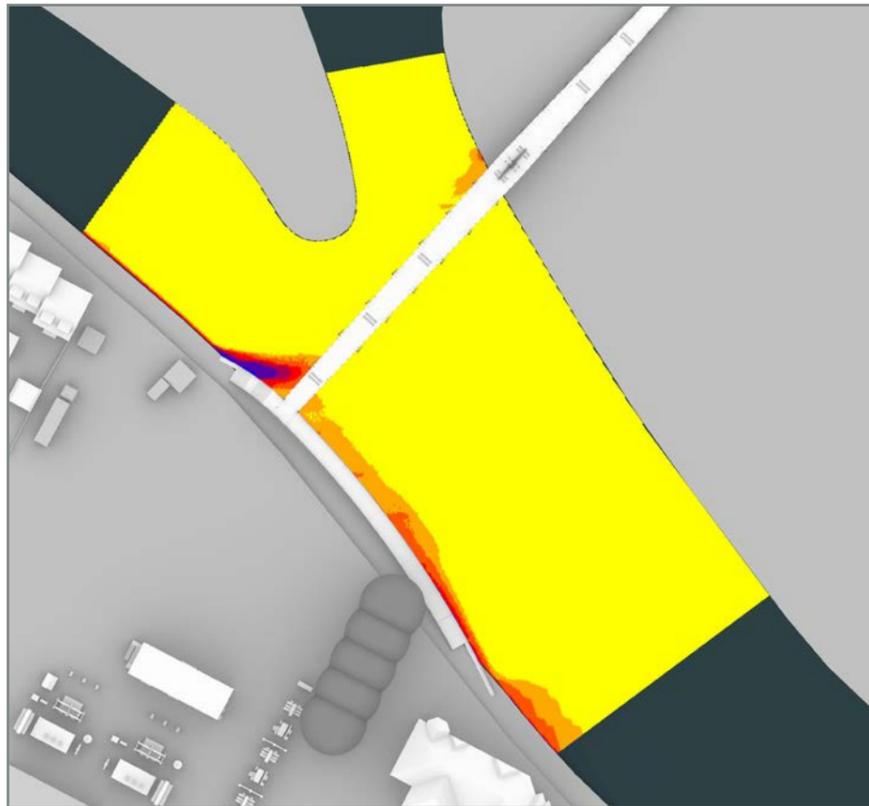


Fig. 5: Existing - 21st March

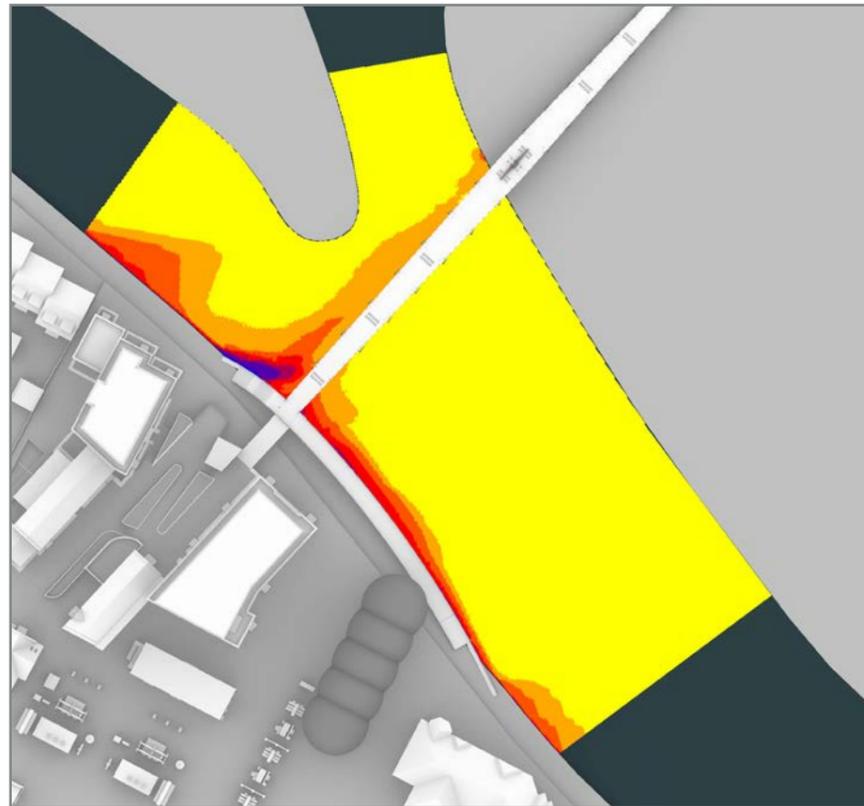


Fig. 6: Proposed - 21st March

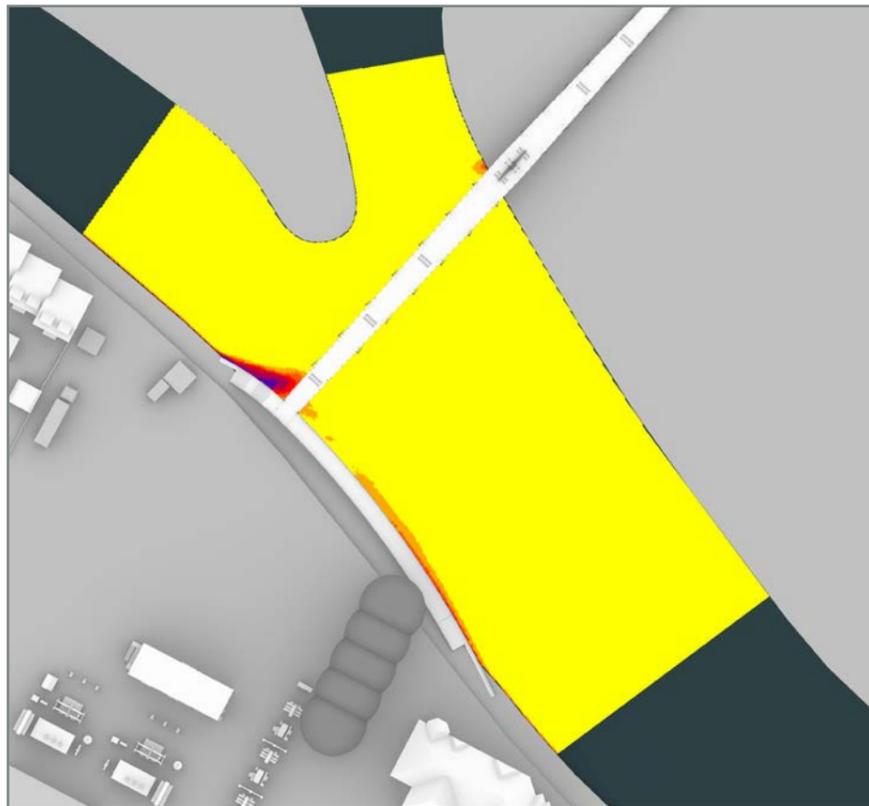
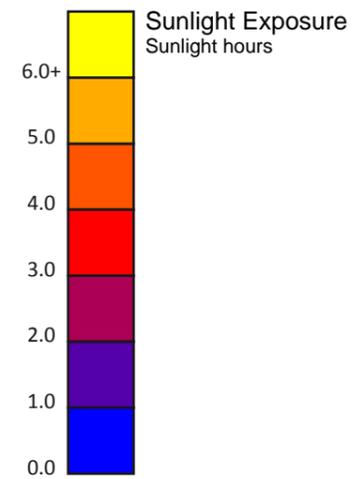


Fig. 7: Existing - 21st April



Fig. 8: Proposed - 21st April



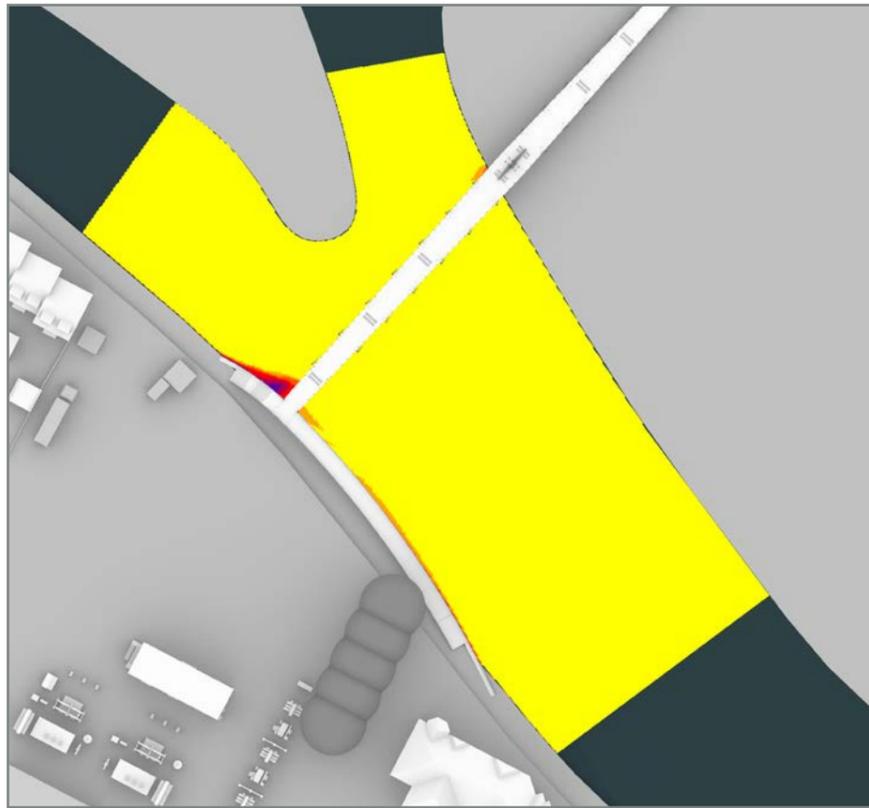


Fig. 9: Existing - 21st May

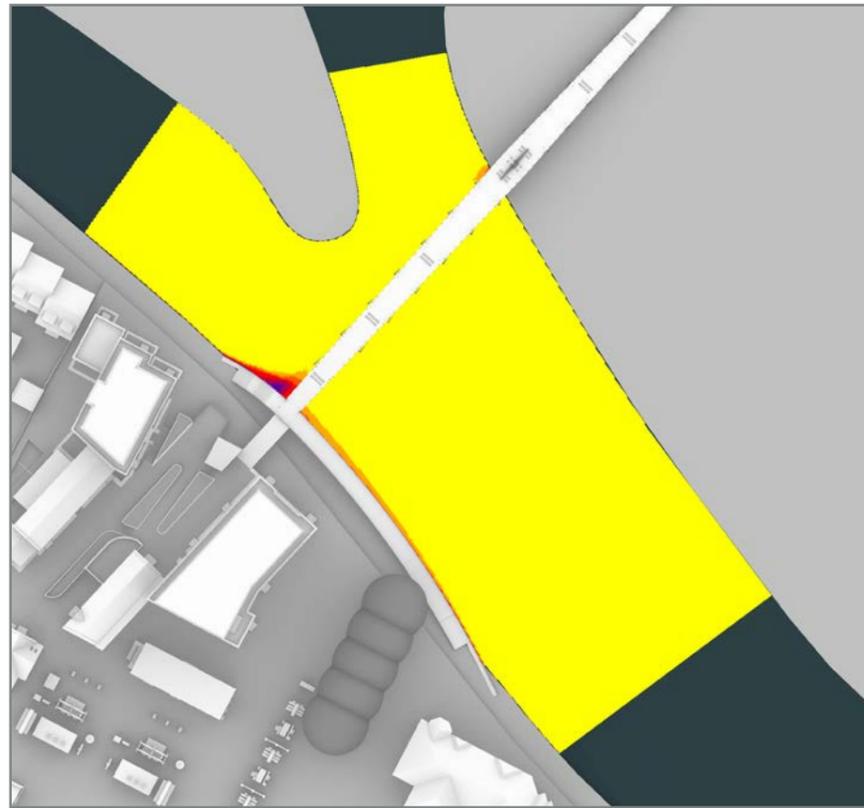


Fig. 10: Proposed - 21st May

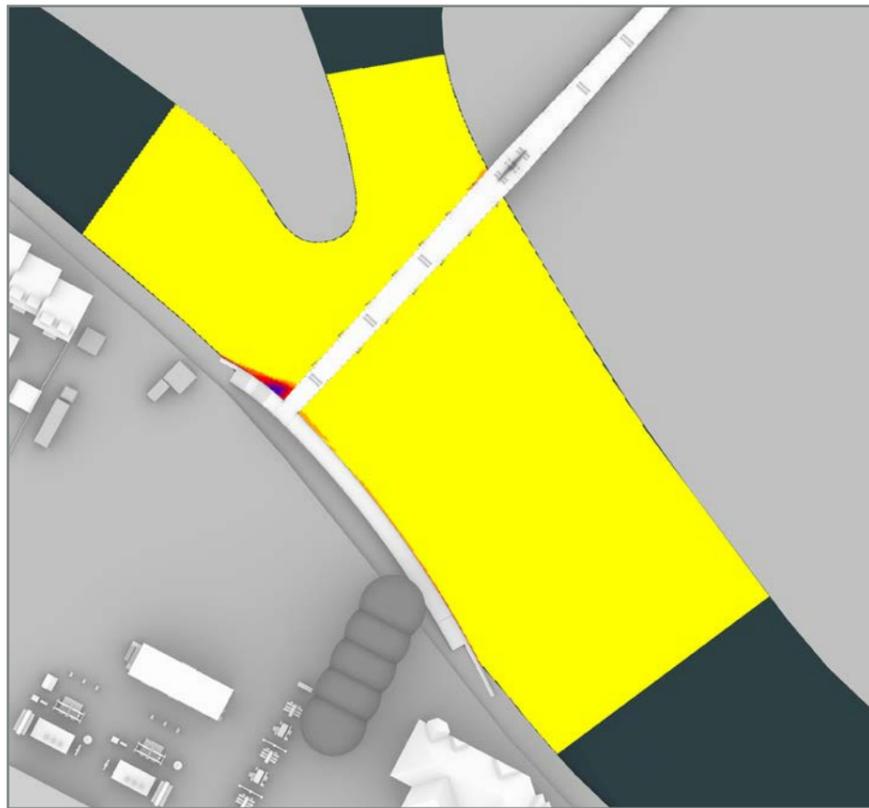


Fig. 11: Existing - 21st June

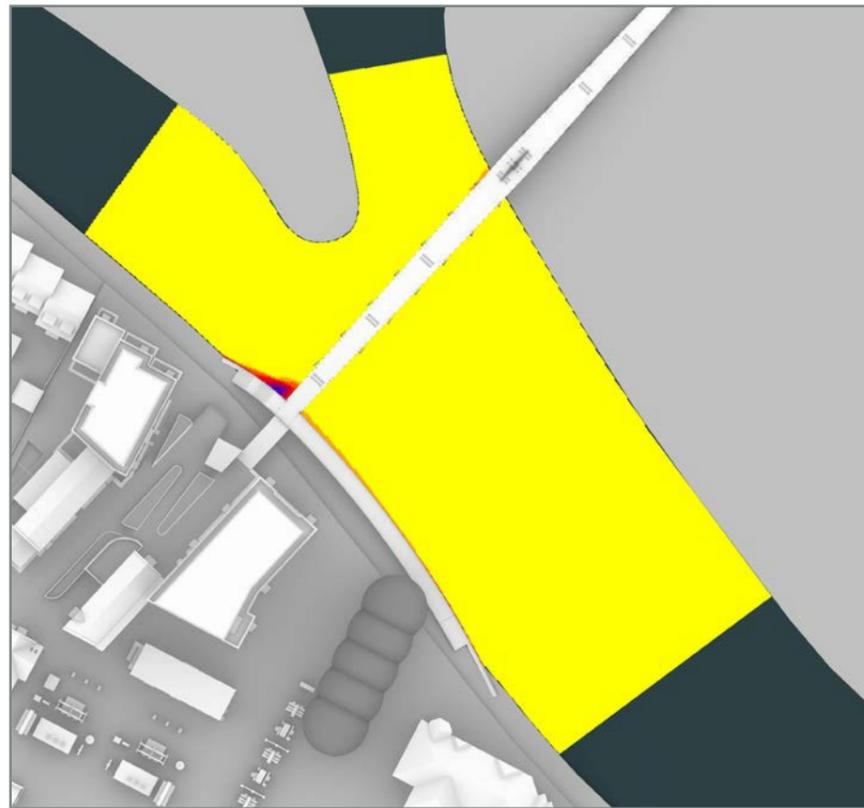
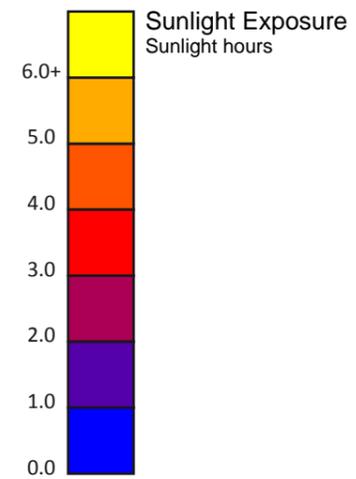


Fig. 12: Proposed - 21st June



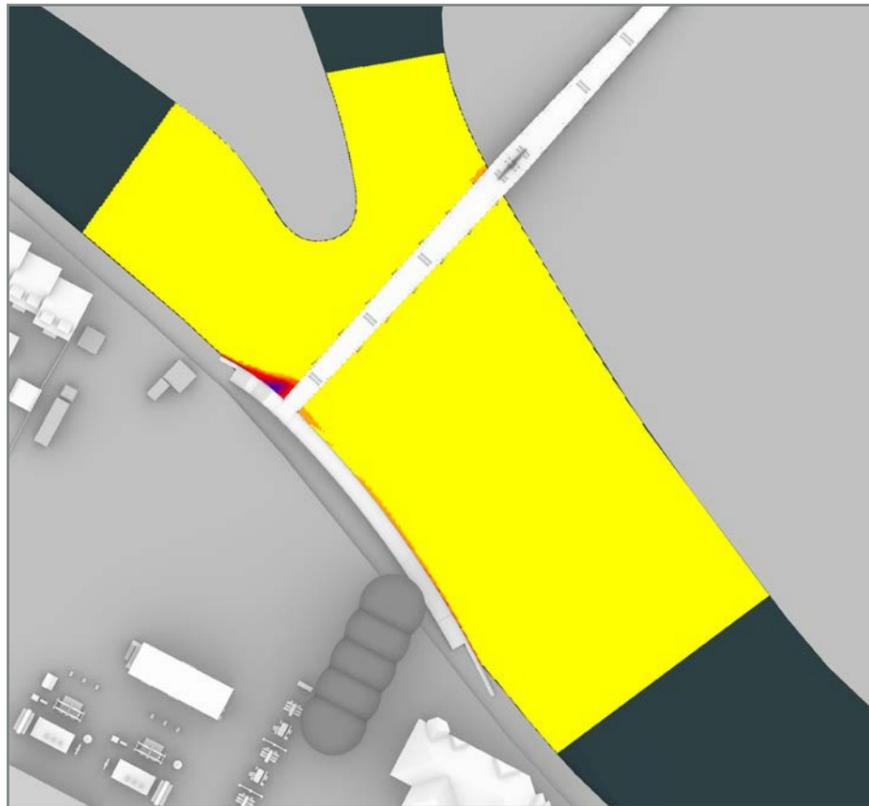


Fig. 13: Existing - 21s July

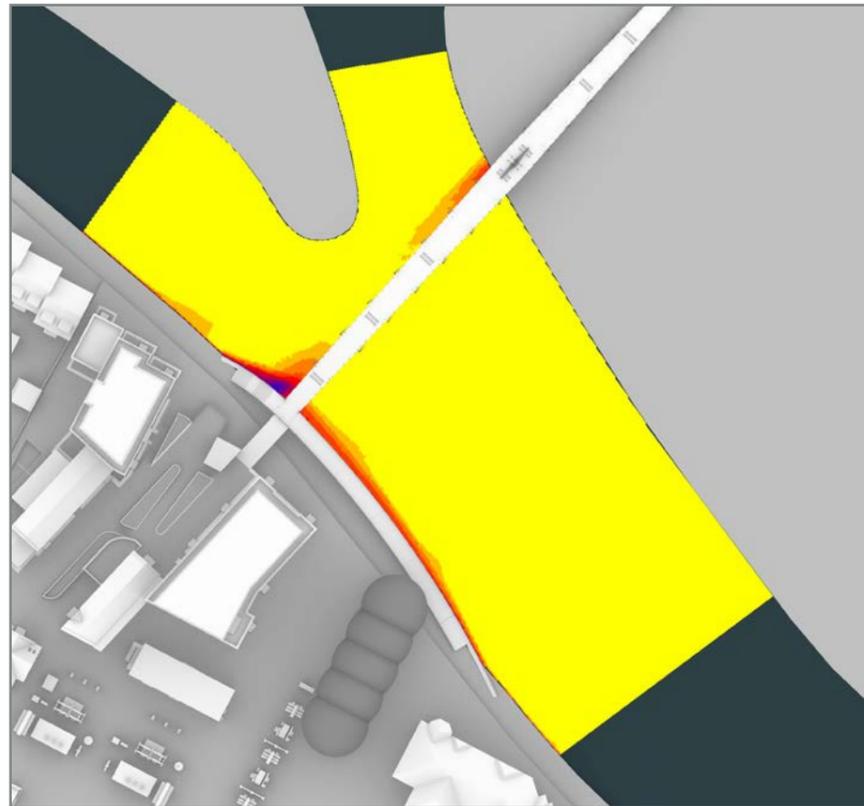


Fig. 14: Proposed - 21st July

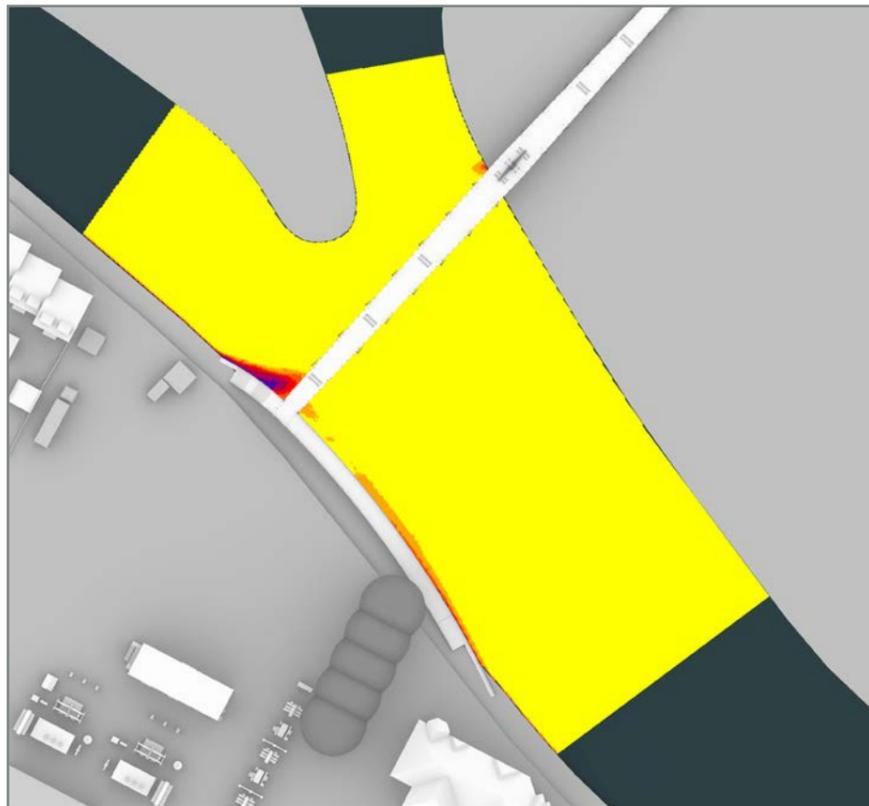


Fig. 15: Existing - 21st August

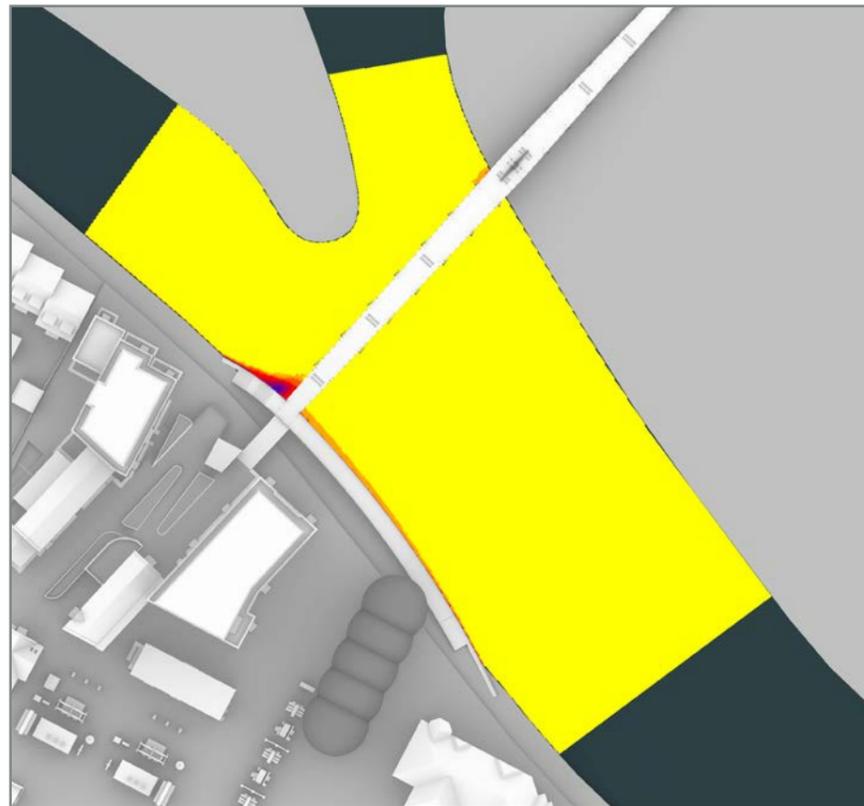
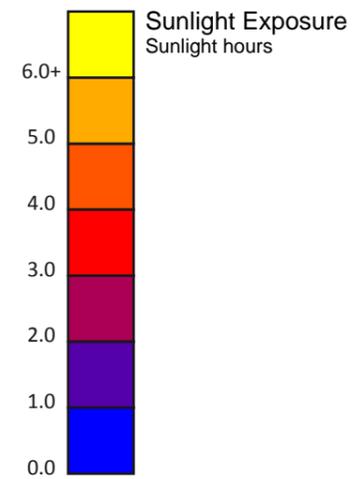


Fig. 16: Proposed - 21st August



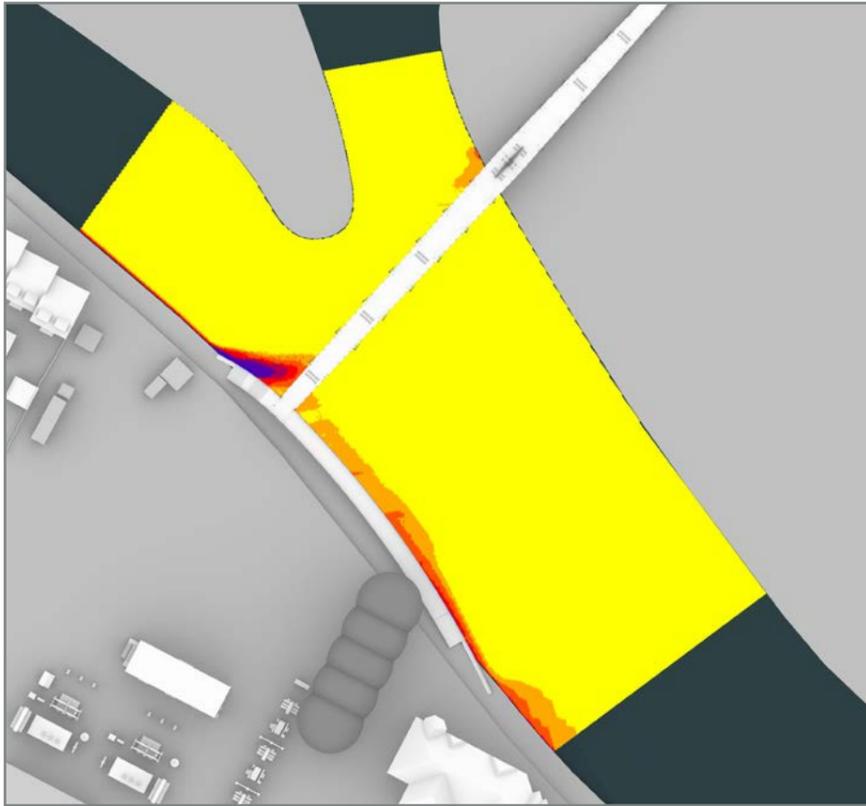


Fig. 17: Existing - 21s September

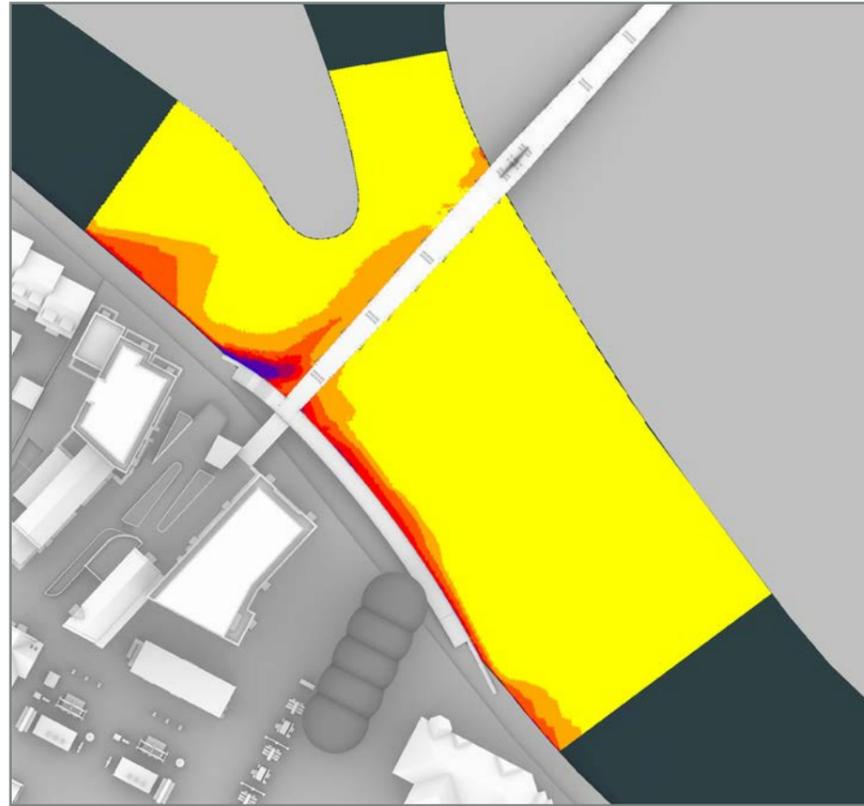


Fig. 18: Proposed - 21st September

