

Donna Williams

From: Eve Ladden Timbers
Sent: 12 June 2019 16:10
To: Markwell, Jonathan
Cc: Justin Kenworthy; Katy Walker
Subject: FW: Vastern Road - Meeting Prior to Submission
Attachments: 33440-1005-190611-Vastern Road Crime Prevention Design Advisor Meeting.pdf; Vastern Road -
DRP Response Tracker Final.pdf

Categories: Filed by Newforma

Jonathan,

Thank you for your most recent pre-application feedback (pre-app 4) and your time on the phone yesterday.

As discussed, we were somewhat taken aback and surprised by the overall tone of the pre-app 4 response which felt decidedly more negative than your previous pre-app 3 written response. I now understand from our phone call this morning that the written response was (in the main) written shortly after the DRP feedback was received and before our contact with you last week to arrange a further meeting. I understand that in the absence of any further scheme discussions prior to submission, your pre-app 4 response was written to set out those unresolved issues which had not yet been completely addressed during the pre-application engagement process.

As I am sure you understand, the design development process is an ongoing and iterative process. We are fully aware of those matters of contention raised by you to the scheme presented on the 27th March (and then subsequently displayed at the public exhibition on 8th May) and are actively working through all of your comments, together with responding to the feedback received by members, local groups and the local community. The scheme presented to you on the 27th March was a snapshot in time and we can assure you that all matters raised will be duly addressed within the forthcoming planning submission (either through direct changes or by providing a robust justification otherwise). To support the application, we will prepare a pre-app 3 and DRP response tracker (similar to that prepared for pre-app 2) which will include a full, detailed response to all of the comments.

We also note your comments to our Red Line Boundary Statement submitted to support the pre-app 3 submission and will attempt to build on the submitted statement (if possible), submitting this with the forthcoming planning application.

Notwithstanding the above, in the spirit of continuing our collaborative and proactive working arrangements, we would welcome a meeting with you next Friday 21st at 2pm to run through and discuss your pre-app 4 response and for us to explain how we intend on addressing those outstanding matters within the forthcoming submission.

In summary, the key changes (this is not an exhaustive list) incorporated into the final scheme since pre-app 3 are as follows:

Riverside Elevations – we have retained the warehouse/power station aesthetic (which is strongly supported by members/local community), but have sought to simplify the composition and detailing to present a softer and more unified visual appearance. Careful and considered landscaping has been introduced to further soften the massing along the riverside, with visual barriers at towpath level broken down to open up this part of the river. We are proposing lightweight (but secure) boundary treatments along the river's edge to showcase the significant ecological landscaped buffer which is proposed adjacent to the river. A robust TVIA assessment will also be submitted with the planning application to justify (using verified views) the proposed bulk, scale and massing of the development. In seeking to balance the massing across the site, we have revised the massing within the centre element of Block D. This makes no change to either the tallest or lowest element of the block.

Mews Houses – despite the DRP encouraging us to increase the heights of the mews building, we have sought to curtail the overall heights of the mews to ensure that neighbouring daylight/sunlight is protected and the visual impact of the development is minimised. Furthermore, the scheme presented at pre-app 3 has been amended to ensure that neighbouring properties continue to receive sufficient daylight/sunlight once the proposed scheme is introduced. The final scheme includes the reduction in length and foot print of the Mews (immediately adjacent to Nos 2 – 8 Lynmouth Road) which not only ensures sufficient D/S to all of the properties on Lynmouth Road, but

which in turn, further minimises the visual impact of the proposed scheme and introduces a further open space at the Southern end of The Avenue.

Pedestrian Link – we have introduced significantly more landscaping along the pedestrian route to ensure that a true 'green link' is delivered, utilising green walls, low level planting and an avenue of larger, evenly spaced trees lining the route within the scheme. A more lightweight railing treatment is now proposed, to allow for more visual permeability to avoid a physical or visual barrier when walking along the pedestrian route. Since pre-app 3, we have also met with Ian Carmichael (Crime Prevention Design Advisor) to discuss the scheme. Meeting notes attached. Ian welcomes the proposed extent of active frontage and passive surveillance created by the scheme, with the proposed pedestrian route and tow path improvements also supported. Ian provided comments to our proposed lighting strategy, which we are currently working into the final scheme.

Vastern Road Entrance - We have also re-thought the arrival square, amending the scheme to ensure that the entrance to the pedestrian route from Vastern road is better signified, by relocating the public art and water feature into this location and encouraging movement into the centre of the site. The proposed changes will help to activate the space and clearly signal the access route to the river, using water as a cue. We have also reviewed the massing on the Vastern Road elevation with regard to the Link element and the eastern boundary adjacent to the retained SSE access route.

To support our discussions, we have completed the DRP response tracker now (attached) which sets out how we intend on responding to each individual comment raised by the DRP within the forthcoming planning submission.

We trust that the above/attached acts as a useful pre-cursor to the meeting next week. As you know, I am on annual leave from this afternoon (returning on 1st July), therefore my director (Justin Kenworthy) will be attending the meeting in my absence, alongside Katy Walker from Berkeley Homes and Vince Prescott from Broadway Malyan.

Kind regards,

Eve

Eve Ladden Timbers

Planning Associate



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From: Eve Ladden Timbers

Sent: 12 June 2019 10:51

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

Subject: Vastern Road - Meeting Prior to Submission

Jonathan,

I will be sending you a summary of the key changes and a completed DRP checker later today. As discussed, please could we meet you next Friday 21st at 2pm? I will confirm attendees/agenda shortly, but this is likely to be 4 people from our side.

Many thanks

Eve

Eve Ladden Timbers

Planning Associate



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Minutes of meeting

Client: Berkeley Homes Western Limited
Project: Former SSE Site, Vastern Road Reading
Venue: Broadway Malyan, Thames Tower, Reading
Date of meeting: 10th June 2019

Present: Ian Carmichael – Crime Prevention Design Advisor
James Cook – Broadway Malyan
Vince Prescott – Broadway Malyan
Aleks Gutkowska – Broadway Malyan

Apologies:

Distribution: Katy Walker – Berkeley Homes – Client & Applicant
Eve Ladden Timber – Barton Wilmore – Planning Consultant
Adam Williams – McFarlane Associates – Landscape Architect
Johnathan Markwell – RBC Planning Officer

Item	Title	Action
1.00	IC noted that commitment to adopting 'Safer Places' principles in the draft Design and Access Statement was welcomed. Although this is approach is commended, and the principles remain the same, the SP document is no longer recognised as official guidance. Therefore IC would welcome a commitment to achieving Secured by Design accreditation.	
2.00	Client to advise whether Secure by Design application will be sought post submission. IC felt the development is perfectly able to achieve SBD accreditation and advised that the applicant review their commitment to SBD which would be met positively by TVP in any response to future planning consultations. Regardless, TVP is likely to request that conditions relating to lighting, physical security of dwellings access control etc. are placed on any approval. These requested conditions would reflect SBD standards anyway.	BHW
3.00	IC welcomed the proposed extent of active frontage and passive surveillance to be introduced to site boundaries, tow path and route though site.	

Item	Title	Action
4.00	IC welcomed designing out car ports from Mews Houses which would have provided potential hiding spaces.	
5.00	IC welcomed access control to apartments.	
6.00	IC requested that access control have no 'tradesman button' and that access is restricted to lobbies only. Therefore letter boxes would be integrated into lobby together with location for parcel drop. i.e. no access beyond lobbies for post/deliveries. BHW to confirm if acceptable. IC also requested that the access control be audio/visual and the system ensure that each block could be compartmented by floor.	BHW
7.00	IC welcomed provision of automatic shutter to under-croft car park. Requested this is be visually permeable and have access control. BHW to confirm if acceptable.	BHW
8.00	IC requested pedestrian pass door to undercroft car park with access control and visually permeable to provide access for cycle parking and reduce tail-gating if the larger vehicular door was used. BHW to confirm if acceptable.	BHW
9.00	IC welcome removal of wall on Tow path and visual permeability of railing and passive surveillance.	
10.00	IC requested additional line of protection on under-croft car-park spaces line to deter opportunist from gaining access to car parking. i.e. climb tow path fence, negotiate planting and then another line of security to be overcome. BHW to confirm if acceptable. This could be in the form of wires supporting climbing plants.	BHW
11.00	IC requested some thorny plant mix behind the current proposed fence on the tow path boundary to create a wider defensive boundary. Landscape Architect to confirm..	MCF
12.00	IC requested CCTV coverage to lobbies and undercroft car parking as a minimum. BHW to confirm if acceptable.	BHW
13.00	IC commented on draft lighting proposals within draft DAS. Further development is required comply with SBD recommendations. This included additional lamp posts rather than bollards (which create glare, pooling of light and hiding places). BM proposed lamp posts could be along avenue evenly spaced between trees and on the podium gardens. Lamp posts requested on podium gardens too.	MCF
14.00	Double headed lamp posts on Avenue would provide hierarchy of light. i.e. brighter on primary route long ramp and secondary on vehicular/shared surface of the Avenue.	MCF

Item	Title	Action
15.00	IC advised that lamp posts would provide future mounting flexibility should RBC wish to extend town centre CCTV system.	
16.00	IC requested lighting under new bridge link on tow path area if possible. BM noted bridge over residents garden would remain dark for bat box locations.	MCF
17.00	Agreement that meeting notes would provide basis of consultation with CPDA and that they would form the CPDA response to the pre-app consultation requested of Anne Chalmers by RBC.	

Design Review Panel (DRP) Response Tracker - 53-55 Vastern Road, Reading**Dated: 12th June 2019**

No.	Section	DSE Pre-Application Responses	Scheme/Application Response
1	Summary	<p>This scheme shows a keen understanding of the disconnect between town and river – ‘finding the Thames’ - and sets out to resolve it, but has not yet found an effective way of doing so. In this, it is handicapped by having a site with a bite out, since part of the larger area originally allocated for housing is withheld from redevelopment, and as a result the straightforward link south from the new footbridge envisaged earlier is no longer possible.</p>	<p>The final scheme has been developed following extensive pre-application discussions between Reading Borough Council, ward members, local interest groups, and the local community. This considered exchange of information and has resulted in a scheme which truly reflects the character of Reading (designed by a local architect), sits comfortably within its local context and responds to the various site opportunities and constraints.</p> <p>The final proposal succinctly aligns with site allocation RC1g and that set out in draft policy CR11g. The site allocation requires any proposal on the site to continue the green link from the north of the station, with potential for an area of open space at the riverside. Both of which are provided within the scheme. The orientation of the new link is not specified in the policy, nor is the requirement to deliver the site in its entirety secured within the policy. The RCAAP provides an illustration of how the site/link could potentially come forward as a combined scheme, however there is no illustration of how the link should be delivered if the electrical infrastructure needed to be kept in situ (which it does).</p> <p>Despite the reduced site area available for redevelopment, Berkeley Homes have consistently prioritised the delivery of the pedestrian link in the scheme. The design solution proposed fully meets the requirements of the site allocations (s) by delivering a true ‘green link’, which is clear, welcoming and legible. The amplification text associated with draft site allocation CR11g states that achieving the north south link (Note: it does not specify that this needs to be direct) is the main priority for the Site, and this should be given ‘substantial weight’ in development management.</p> <p>The location and orientation of the pedestrian link is the result of an iterative design process, developed with Members and officers at RBC. The ‘straightforward link’ approach referred to by the DRP was previously encompassed within a scheme presented at Pre-app 01 which was subsequently discounted by RBC Members where it was explicitly stated that the pedestrian bridge ‘must land within the site’. As a result, the scheme was adapted at Pre-App 02 to respond to this requirement and remained in this form since this time. Amending the location of the pedestrian link now would undermine the engagement process that we have undertaken to date.</p>

2	Summary	<p>The panel seeks a rethink of the resultant compromised pedestrian/cycle link through the site to give a clearer and palpably public route to and from the footbridge. The scheme should offer a more legible gateway to the river from Vastern Road, and provide a more inviting route between the two. We see this as a street through the development. The scheme could also do more to relate to the river and should certainly offer a connection at towpath level.</p>	<p>We have re-thought the arrival square, amending the scheme to ensure that the entrance to the pedestrian route from Vastern Road is better signified. We have done this by relocating the public art and water feature into this location, to encouraging movement into the centre of the site. The proposed changes will help to activate the space and clearly signal the access route to the river, using water as a cue.</p> <p>We have also introduced significantly more landscaping along the pedestrian route to ensure that a true 'green link' is delivered, utilising green walls, low level planting and an avenue of trees lining the route within the scheme. A more lightweight structure and railing treatment is now proposed, to allow for more visual permeability to avoid a physical of visual barrier when walking along the pedestrian route.</p> <p>Careful and considered landscaping has been introduced to link the built form to the river, with visual barriers at towpath level broken down to open up this part of the river. We are proposing lightweight (but secure) boundary treatments along the river's edge to showcase the significant ecological landscaped buffer which is proposed adjacent to the river.</p>
3	Summary	<p>The height and massing are broadly acceptable.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
4	Summary	<p>The river frontage should be less dominant and more modelling north-south would be helpful, reassessing where the highest blocks are.</p>	<p>As outlined within the site analysis/constraints and opportunities section of the Design and Access Statement, the sensitive boundaries (residential) to the site are to the west and the less sensitive are to the east (commercial). It is therefore appropriate that the massing strategy for the site occurs in an east-west orientation rather than north-south. Furthermore, the tallest element on the site occurs on the south elevation which marks the entrance to the town-side of the site with the 11 storey tower element. The mast to the bridge marks the northern entrance to the site. The scheme has been developed through careful consideration of the various constraints including Daylight/ Sunlight. The areas of height and lower level development have been specifically designed with regards to the constraints of the site. Notwithstanding this, we strong feel that the scheme represents a positive design solution for the site.</p>
5	Summary	<p>We doubt that the warehouse typology is set to work well at the height and complexity envisaged; the scheme would better be honest about being residential.</p>	<p>The proposed architecture responds to the industrial heritage of the site. This approach has been welcomed throughout the pre-application process by members, officers, local interest groups and at public exhibitions. We have provided precedent examples of warehouse typologies working at similar heights within the draft Design and Access Statement. During Pre-App 01, there was a strong steer from a contemporary architectural approach towards a more heritage informed aesthetic. In response to DRP comments, we have however reviewed the composition of the facades and will be seeking to simplify them with</p>

			regard to the extent of architectural detailing to present a softer and more unified visual appearance.
6	Summary	It was good to see this scheme before planning application stage but a review earlier in the process would have made it easier for us to comment on strategic options before detailed work had been undertaken. The panel would be glad to see the scheme again if that was thought helpful.	Timing of presentation to the DRP has been agreed with RBC officers and there has been significant pre-application and stakeholder engagement undertaken prior to meeting which the design has benefitted from.
7	Background	This is a proposal for some 193 homes and a cafe. The residential consists of a range of 1, 2 and 3-bed accommodation in a mix of tenures including open market, rented affordable and shared ownership affordable. The application site area is 0.767 hectares resulting in a density of 252 dwellings per hectare.	The final scheme now delivers 200 new homes across a range of 1,2 and 3-bed accommodation in a mix of tenures (exact tenure split TBC).
8	Background	The site is located to the north of Reading town centre, between Vastern Road to the south and the River Thames to the north. There are two-storey traditional houses to the west and a recent low-rise development of flats facing the river at the north-eastern corner of the site.	No comment required
9	Background	Christchurch Bridge, a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Thames, has recently been constructed. It connects to Christchurch Meadows and Caversham beyond. Its southern landings, steps and ramp to the towpath, lie immediately north of the centre of the site.	No comment required
10	Background	The site is part of the Scottish and Southern Electric (SSE) landholding that derives from the power station here until the mid-20th century. SSE still occupy the eastern part with electrical equipment. The site for development thus has something of a dumbbell shape, with substantial frontages to the river and Vastern Road, but a much narrower neck connecting them – the whole flanked to the east by the retained operational equipment.	No comment required
11	Background	The Reading Station Area Framework and the Reading Central Area Action Plan assumed the entire SSE site would come forward at the same time. The location of the bridge was presumably predicated accordingly and an avenue offering a straight connection south was envisaged. However, it has become clear that part of the site needs to be retained by SSE and such a visibly direct link is frustrated.	The RCAAP provides an illustration of how the site/link could potentially come forward as a combined scheme, however there is no illustration of how the link should be delivered if the electrical infrastructure needed to be kept in situ (which it does). Adopted planning policy does not specify that a visually direct link is required. Despite the reduced site area available for development, Berkeley Homes Western (BHW) have consistently prioritised the delivery of the pedestrian link in the scheme. The design solution proposed fully meets the requirements of the site allocations (s) by delivering a true 'green link', which is clear, welcoming and legible.

12	Background	The site is allocated by Reading Borough Council for residential use. Requirements include maintaining and enhancing public access along and to the Thames; a high-quality green link from north of the station to the Christchurch Bridge; and development to take account of mitigation required as a result of a Flood Risk Assessment.	All of these priorities are delivered within the final scheme.
13	Background	There have been no planning applications for this site or the wider landholding in the recent past. The scheme is at pre-planning application stage. Pre-application discussions began in October 2018.	No comment required
14	Link from Christchurch Bridge	The panel shares the Council's disappointment that the larger site allocation is not coming forward for redevelopment. We support their insistence on a high-quality link through the site connecting Christchurch Bridge to pedestrian routes to and through the railway station but appreciate the challenge of making this successful on the site currently available.	BHW equally share the DRPs and Council's disappointed that the whole SSE site is not available for redevelopment, however despite the reduced site area, the final proposal still delivers the requirements of the site allocations (s) by incorporating a high-quality 'green link' through the site, which is clear, welcoming and legible.
15	Link from Christchurch Bridge	Even so, we consider the scheme has further to go to meet the need in (a) providing a link legible from Vastern Road; and (b) forming a route that is as attractive and safe as possible within the scheme.	Please see response below.
16	Link from Christchurch Bridge	On (a), for someone walking or cycling from the station and reaching Vastern Road, it would be hard to work out where to go next, as the scheme stands. The analysis and aspiration in the scheme to connect the town centre to the river has not yet translated into an effective solution. We call for a bolder approach with a more obvious opening leading into the scheme and on to the footbridge. It should read as a street from Vastern Road, not a minor opening to a courtyard as it appears now. Removing the oversailing units would open views into the scheme and give the route more of a street character.	<p>The design team have reviewed this comment and have proposed to relocate the public art and water feature elements which were previously proposed within the Avenue, to the front of the site on Vastern Road. These elements will now further activate the new public space on Vastern Road (created by setting the tower back from the street) and signal access and the route to the River, encouraging movement into the centre of the site. Curved geometries in the floorspace and material choice, create directional qualities to further encourage movement into the site.</p> <p>The oversailing element creates a gateway into the site, marking the entrances to Blocks A & B and the site as a whole. An approach welcomed by members and not contested by RBC at pre-app 3 stage. The recessed Link element is set back from the tower, reading as subservient to the main elevation providing relief to the facade. The combined elements of the Tower (at the urban scale), the new public square, the public art, water feature and the Link will serve to define a clear and legible access point to the Thames from Vastern Road and the town and in contrast to other elements on Vastern Road, form a hierarchy which will draw footfall.</p>

17	Link from Christchurch Bridge	Bolder use of landscaping especially creating a street-scale volume of trees would give a clue that here is the street/route to take to get to the river. Such a powerful landscaping gesture could continue south to accentuate the route and to fulfil the Council's aspiration for a green route from river to station. The opening on Vastern Road should be seen as a gathering point for people, drawing them in and onward.	<p>We have introduced significantly more landscaping along the pedestrian route to ensure that a true 'green link' is delivered, utilising green walls, low level planting and an avenue of larger, evenly spaced trees lining the route within the scheme. A more lightweight structure and railing treatment is now proposed, to allow for more visual permeability to avoid a physical of visual barrier when walking along the pedestrian route.</p> <p>We have also re-thought the arrival square, amending the scheme to ensure that the entrance to the pedestrian route from Vastern road is better signified, by relocating the public art and water feature into this location and encouraging movement into the centre of the site. The proposed changes will help to activate the space and clearly signal the access route to the river, using water as a cue</p>
18	Link from Christchurch Bridge	On (b), the bifurcation into two parts - one level, one ascending, neither generous - is questionable. The service road tends to recall schemes of the 60s and 70s where vehicular and pedestrian movements were rigorously separated – a concept both outdated and inappropriate here. Safety is pertinent, since a ramped route running south looks likely to encourage cyclists to excessive speed.	<p>Negotiating the level change to the bridge in an open, legible, welcoming and accessible manner is a fundamental part of the scheme. There is clear routing as to the primary public path through the site compared to the secondary vehicular/resident access element forming the shared surface of the mews. The Mews is a shared surface, i.e. pedestrian and vehicular. There is a priority of pedestrian over vehicular throughout the scheme. The Avenue benefits from passive surveillance and active frontage on ground and first floor levels along the length of the Avenue. Safety is of paramount concern, hence there are clear views along the route for pedestrians and cyclists alike. The overall width of the route is similar to the width of the adjoining Lynmouth Road.</p> <p>Changes in material and banding in the floorscape alert users to a change in surface and encourage motorists/cyclists to reduce speed.</p>
19	Link from Christchurch Bridge	We ask for investigation of ways to bring pedestrians and cyclists down to ground level near to the bridge, allowing for a single, level and wider route southward. A single route could be a shared space; or at least its priority made clear.	Existing ramps and stairs taking you down to ground level are an integral part of the existing bridge and are to be retained. As discussed at point 2, the location and orientation of the pedestrian link is the result of a iterative design process, steered by members and RBC. The 'straightforward link' approach referred to by the DRP was previously encompassed within a scheme presented at Pre-app 01 which was subsequently discounted by RBC Members as it was explicitly stated that the pedestrian bridge 'must land within the site'. As a result, the scheme was adapted at Pre-App 02 to respond to this requirement and has remained in this form since this time.
20	Link from Christchurch Bridge	Servicing of the café would also be somewhat compromised, as delivery vehicles would be required to drop off within the proposed car park, and deliveries transported on foot via the proposed ramp to the café frontage.	Given the size, location and non-institutional nature of the café, servicing the café by foot via the ramp is considered entirely appropriate considering the minimal deliveries required to service the space.

21	Link from Christchurch Bridge	The route should offer at least a glimpse of the river for orientation, not be hemmed in by buildings on the riverside. A direct line of sight to the bridge is not feasible but is to the river.	<p>Landing the bridge into the site in turn informs the developable area of the rest of the site and the associated layout of the built form. Notwithstanding this, given the length of the site, at approx. 150m from Vastern Road to the Thames, coupled with the level difference between the site and the tow path, even if the layout/massing changed, it is unlikely that glimpses of the river itself could be achieved from Vastern Road. Further opening up views in this location is therefore unlikely to positively assist with legibility given the distance and levels involved.</p> <p>Views towards the river are however opened up as user's reach the top of the proposed ramp at podium level, which adds interest at this point and acts as the next phase of experience, following the experience of the green link ramp element accessed from Vastern Road.</p>
22	Link from Christchurch Bridge	The way the bridge connection runs through a building tends to make the route seem private. If it ran between buildings, perhaps above riverside trees, with a glimpse of a street beyond, then it would be more legible and encouraging for those going south from the bridge.	We can confirm that the bridge connection does not run through a building. It runs alongside the proposed buildings as suggested by the DRP. A fully landscaped ecology buffer sits below the new bridge connection into the body of the site, landing into a new public square which is activated by a café/landscaping/seating etc. to encourage movement into the space and through the site.
23	Link from Christchurch Bridge	A single route could benefit from a stronger relationship to the mews housing. It would help the scheme to reflect the north-south grain of the residential streets to the east, countering the east-west emphasis of the blocks.	<p>The location and orientation of the pedestrian link is the result of an iterative design process, developed with Members and officers at RBC.</p> <p>As outlined within the site analysis/constraints and opportunities section of the Design and Access Statement, the sensitive boundaries (residential) to the site are to the west and the less sensitive are to the east (commercial). It is therefore appropriate that the massing strategy for the site occurs in an east-west orientation rather than north-south.</p>
24	Link from Christchurch Bridge	A ground-level route could have entrances to blocks on it and hence a more street feel (whereas the ramp shown seems lifeless). Views from the ramp into bedrooms would be avoided. Where undercroft areas persist, they should be given a use if possible, such as workspaces.	The ground level route benefits from the presence of entrances to blocks on it. The undercroft areas with usable head-height will include bin and bike stores. Areas lower than this will be secured and their edges planted with soft landscaping.
25	Link from Christchurch Bridge	Should a single route at ground level not be feasible then we'd seek replacing the heavy-handed ramp with a lightweight structure that as it were extends the bridge. It would need to be more than a ramp.	A more lightweight railing treatment is now proposed along the pedestrian link, to allow for more visual permeability to avoid a physical of visual barrier when walking along the pedestrian route.
26	Link from Christchurch Bridge	Where and whatever the route is it needs to have some combination of landscape design, art, active frontage, openings, places to linger and other devices to make it attractive and evidently a public, not a private, route. Water (using run off) could be deployed as an animating device bringing life and movement to the route. It could be coupled	A fully landscaped ecology buffer is proposed along the riverside with the new bridge connection landing into a new high-quality public square which is activated by a café/landscaping/seating etc. The proposed public spaces provide the space and function to pause, relax and dwell.

		to a lighting scheme to aid way-finding at night. And a ground-level route could benefit from a bolder landscape design strategy than a ramp, with substantial trees.	<p>We have introduced significantly more landscaping along the pedestrian route to ensure that a true 'green link' is delivered, utilising green walls, low level planting and an avenue of larger, evenly spaced trees lining the route within the scheme.</p> <p>Public art, lighting and water is deployed to animate the public spaces and pedestrian route to encourage movement into the centre of the site.</p> <p>Since pre-app 3, we have also met with Ian Carmichael (Crime Prevention Design Advisor) to discuss the scheme whose comments have fed into the final lighting strategy.</p>
27	Link from Christchurch Bridge	The public realm issues could be analysed and explained better with some wider site connectivity drawings.	We will include further analysis on the public realm and landscape within the final Design and Access Statement.
28	Riverside Place	The relationship between scheme and river, we suggest, misses the full potential of the site.	Please see our response to the detailed comments on this below.
29	Riverside Place	We are aware that ground-level access between riverside and scheme is hindered by the change of level, but ask that ways are found for the two to connect, without having to ascend to the bridge and down again.	The critical need to land the bridge into the site informs the layout of the remainder of the proposal and doesn't allow for ground-level access from the tow path (unless there is a reversion to the pre-app 1 scheme which is not supported by members, RBC etc). Furthermore, there are competing needs at plan, with the requirement to provide a landscaped ecology buffer along the front of the site at tow path level and to mitigate any flooding issues. The ecological buffer is successful as it will remain largely undisturbed, with minimal hardstanding. Introducing a pedestrian footpath in this location would directly conflict with the need to improve the biodiversity value of the site. Furthermore, due to the site falling within an area at risk of flooding, the level of the site must be higher than the tow path, which further precludes the ability to introduce ground-level access in this location.
30	Riverside Place	The scheme could enjoy the river by engaging more with the water, giving places where people could watch the activity on the river and enjoy the views – celebrating the glorious Thames-side setting.	The scheme provides an elevated publicly accessible large landscaped square with café looking directly out over the Thames. Furthermore, the ecological/landscaped buffer space at tow path level has a small pocket space for the residents of the scheme to enjoy the riverscape.
31	Riverside Place	The café overlooking the river is a good step in this direction; but there is some way to go to make a place here at the conjunction of towpath, bridge and scheme.	The final scheme delivers a new high-quality public square which is activated by a café/landscaping/seating etc, designed to exploit its Thames-side setting. The proposed public spaces provide the space and function to pause, relax and dwell. This will be a fantastic place for all to enjoy.
32	Scale and Massing	Generally, the height, scale and massing of the scheme did not trouble the panel, but we have some comments nonetheless.	Noted.

33	Scale and Massing	<p>The way the scheme addresses the river – picking up the point just made – seems heavy and abrupt. It obliterates views south from the bridge. We’ve already mentioned a visual link north-south. We hope this frontage could be less cliff-like, and more relaxed and interactive with its setting.</p>	<p>The existing views south from the bridge terminate on the SSE electrical equipment within private inaccessible land set within a car park. The proposed scheme seeks to present a positive view, framed by taller buildings either side of the bridge, marking the gateway to the town from the River (as done elsewhere in Reading and the UK). The proposed view is then terminated by a public space featuring the cafe and a legible route to the town centre beyond. Therefore the design provides an enhancement to the view and is publicly accessible.</p> <p>We have sought to simplify the composition and detailing to present a softer and more unified visual appearance. Careful and considered landscaping has been introduced to further soften the massing along the riverside, with visual barriers at towpath level broken down to open up this part of the river. We are proposing lightweight (but secure) boundary treatments along the river’s edge to showcase the significant ecological landscaped buffer which is proposed adjacent to the river. A robust TVIA assessment will also be submitted with the planning application to justify (using verified views) the proposed bulk, scale and massing of the development.</p>
34	Scale and Massing	<p>Arranging the substantial quantum in a series of blocks makes sense but we felt the modelling was predominantly east-west, and more variety north-south would be helpful. The tallest element might work better in the middle of the site. It should be given a coherent design approach, losing the box at the top (that makes it seem taller) in favour of something less heavy. Possibly, the tallest tower could exceed 11 storeys, provided the design was of very high quality, becoming a slender and elegant landmark, pre-eminent in the scheme, not peeping a mere storey or two above its neighbours. By increasing accommodation, this might offer relief to the riverside.</p>	<p>As outlined within the site analysis/constraints and opportunities section of the Design and Access Statement, the sensitive boundaries (residential) to the site are to the west and the less sensitive are to the east (commercial). It is therefore appropriate that the massing strategy for the site occurs in an east-west orientation rather than north-south.</p> <p>Due to policy constraints the tower cannot be taller. The tower is located in the most appropriate location. However, we have adopted the panel's advice to redesign the top of the tower to remove the 'box' element and make it more elegant.</p>
35	Scale and Massing	<p>The scheme will need to be assessed in terms of both short-range and long-range views. We would stress the views from the town centre, from Christchurch Meadows and obliquely along the river, including Reading bridge.</p>	<p>We are providing a TVIA as part of the application to fully assess these views.</p>
36	Architecture	<p>The panel was not wholly convinced by the warehouse typology. If reference is to be made to the site’s industrial past, then a power station has more logic (and the words are shown on the riverside front): at least the large brick blocks might be complemented by some smaller, lighter buildings with more glazing. If the warehouse reference is adhered to, then it would work best in lower blocks on the river frontage, with simpler detailing (currently it feels elaborate for warehousing) and more apt materials.</p>	<p>The proposed architecture responds to the industrial heritage of the site. This approach has been welcomed throughout the pre-application process by members, officers, local interest groups and at public exhibitions. We have provided precedent examples of warehouse typologies working at similar heights within the draft Design and Access Statement. During Pre-App 01, there was a strong steer from a contemporary architectural approach towards a more heritage informed aesthetic. In response to DRP comments, we have however reviewed the composition of the facades and will be seeking to simplify them with</p>

			regard to the extent of architectural detailing to present a softer and more unified visual appearance.
37	Architecture	On balance, it is probably better for the scheme to find its own language. It is very hard to make a typology that works at one level of scale to succeed at this complexity of heights. The extreme verticality of the blocks and the awkwardness of the pitches atop tall blocks make this point. These are apartments and might as well look like apartments.	The proposed scheme references the warehouse/power station aesthetic, but has its own language in terms of roof form, materiality, massing and composition. i.e. the vertical elements of the scheme temper the massing and provide the means for the gradual increase in scale on the river frontage to demark the landing of the bridge and the presence of the public square.
38	Architecture	We did not see elevations for the east of site which would be very visible from the town. This relates to consideration of the future incorporation of the SSE site if it ever becomes available, a possibility not really responded to in the scheme.	Eastern elevations of the scheme have been designed to allow for the remainder of the SSE site to be redevelopment (in the unlikely event that it becomes available) and will form part of the formal application.
39	Architecture	Sun and wind studies were not presented, but clearly these are important considerations. Among matters to ponder are the shading of the north-facing public space by the café, the impact of the mews on the existing terrace, and the mews itself from the blocks to the south.	The orientation of the site is fixed and active frontage to a public space on the Thames on a site on the south side of the River will unavoidably have a north facing aspect. Daylight/Sunlight and wind assessment have been undertaken with the results informing the final scheme. The findings of these assessments will form part of the formal planning submission.
40	Architecture	The mews are diminutive for a reason, but the internal elevational height of the mews buildings could potentially be slightly increased, to improve the balance of the site massing, subject to daylighting. We would favour a vigorous vertical rhythm that would help bind the mews into the rest of the scheme.	Despite the DRP encouraging us to increase the heights of the mews building, we have sought to curtail the overall heights of the mews to ensure that neighbouring daylight/sunlight is protected and the visual impact of the development is minimised. Furthermore, the scheme presented at pre-app 3 has been amended to ensure that neighbouring properties continue to receive enough daylight/sunlight once the proposed scheme is introduced. The final scheme includes the reduction in length and foot print of the Mews (immediately adjacent to Nos 2 – 8 Lynmouth Road) which not only ensures sufficient D/S to all of the properties on Lynmouth Road, but which in turn, further minimises the visual impact of the proposed scheme (in response to RBC comments) and introduces a further open space at the Southern end of The Avenue.
41	Architecture	The panel could accept the loss of the locally listed building: a remnant lacking meaning.	Noted.
42	Environmental Sustainability	The energy strategy was under-played in the presentation. We heard some suitable aspirations but would have hoped for low energy by design to be more prominent and integrated from the outset. Relying on experts to sort out issues later is not the ideal approach. It was not clear how over-heating of south facing units was to be tackled, for instance. We hope the issue of climate change will impinge on the design in many ways, including the selection of low-carbon materials. Water-source heat pumps would be worth examining.	The Energy strategy is being developed and integrated into the scheme and will form part of the final submission.
43	Environmental Sustainability	The number of north-facing units, especially when also single-aspect, is a concern – though we realise some of these will enjoy fine views.	Daylighting analysis to key apartments will form part of the formal planning submission, with single aspect units minimised.

44	Environmental Sustainability	We commend the low parking ratio and consider this to be appropriate for such a central and well-connected location, near to the railway station.	Noted.
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