

2.8.7 Emerging Future Local Development

Aviva investors are currently developing proposals for a mixed use scheme on the site of the Vastern Retail Park. Similarly, Hermes are developing a scheme for the former Royal Mail site.



Right: Submitted illustrative masterplan for Caversham Road, located on the Royal Mail Sorting Office site

Below: Latest CGI Images of the proposed Aviva Scheme, located on the Vastern Court retail Park



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3.0 Masterplan Proposals

To understand the importance of this key development site in Reading, Berkeley Homes have positively engaged with Reading Borough Council via an extensive pre-application process.

Berkeley Homes has progressed through five pre-applications and has presented to the Design:South East (D:SE), Design Review Panel twice.

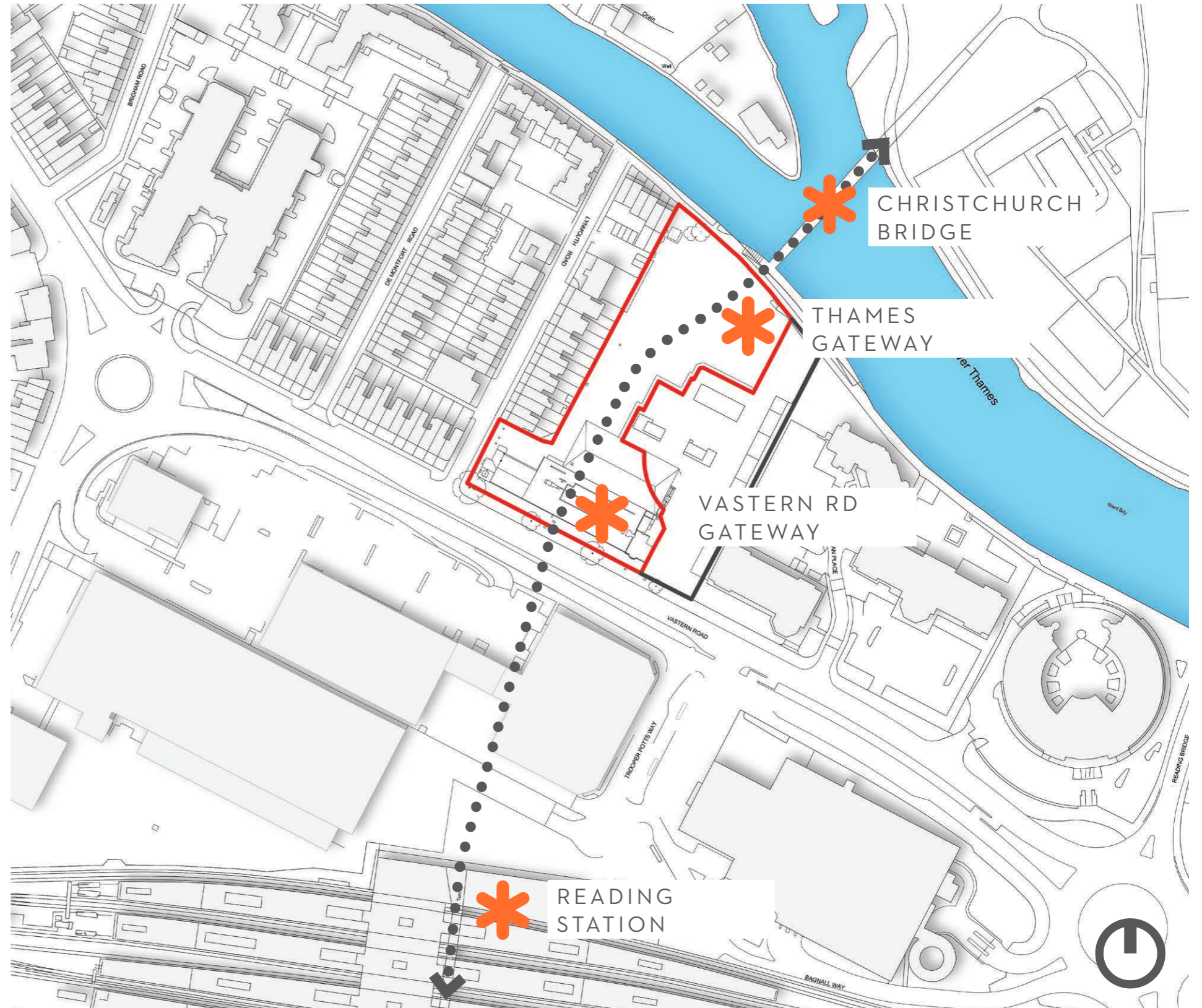
As such, the evolution of the scheme design has been undertaken collaboratively with engagement from a diverse range of local stakeholder groups and three public exhibitions. Therefore the content and comments from this presentation will form the basis of the overall design evolution section of this Design and Access Statement.

3.1 Design Principles

Following the change in the design team, the concept was revisited in light of the combined feedback from D:SE, Reading BC, and stakeholder engagement.

From the comments raised up to this point, we went back to the principles of the scheme to understand the key objectives which needed to be addressed. The first was to consider the key connection which this site would provide from the town centre and stations to the south, with Christchurch Bridge, Christchurch meadow and north Reading. The scheme could then provide a network of landmarks which would be bookended with the bridge and the station to the north and south respectively.

Developing on from this, a series of design principles were established, integrating the wider connectivity objective with smaller scale objectives including movement, existing constraints, and urban design principles, which developed in to a design framework as covered on the following page.



Movement

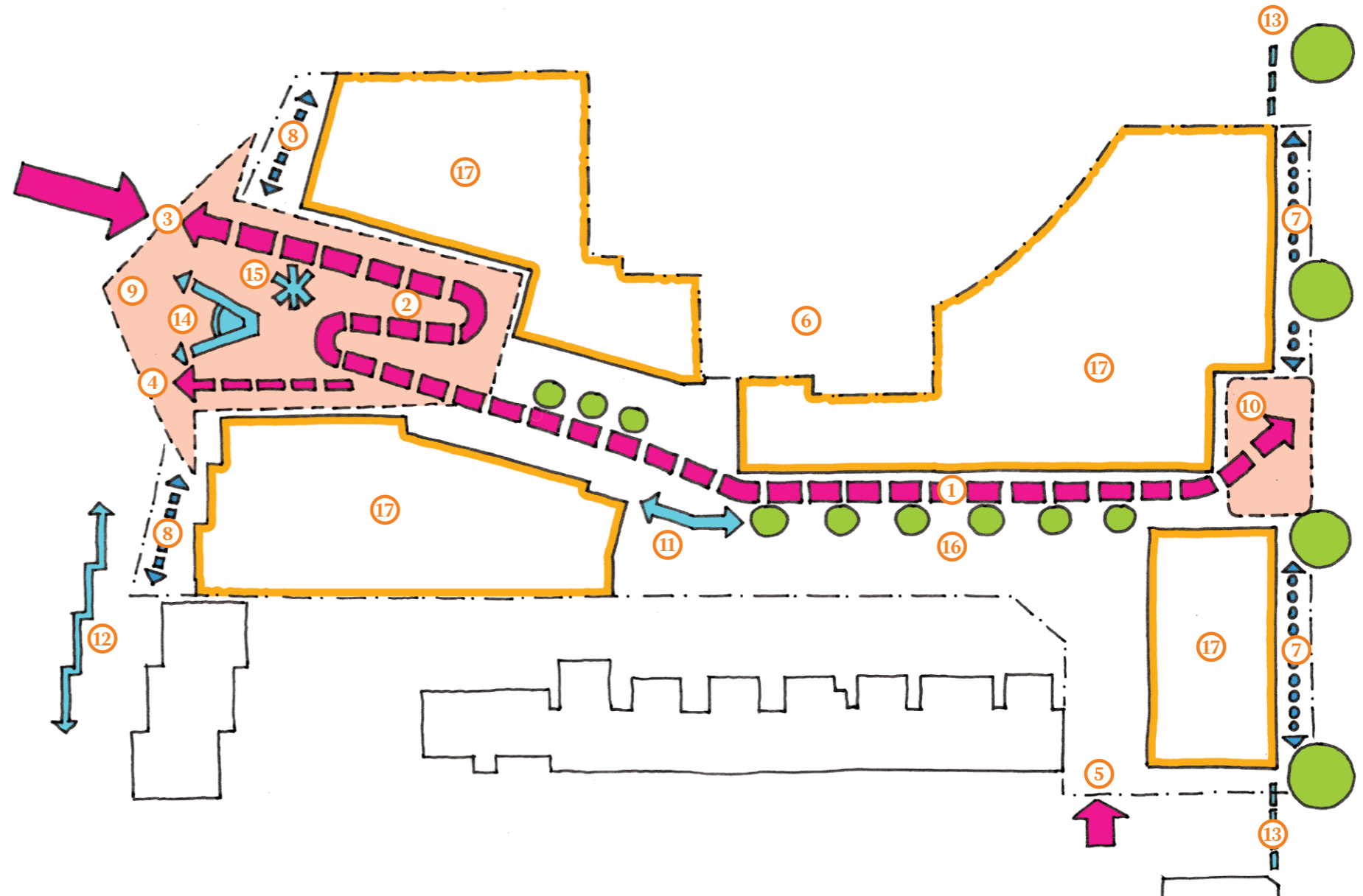
1. Providing a dedicated 3m wide foot and cycle way through the scheme, connecting Christchurch Bridge and Vastern Road
2. A gentle meandering approach to slow cyclists and provide an accessible route to and from the bridge
3. Connection to Christchurch bridge
4. Pedestrian access to the river frontage and towpath
5. Vehicular access to Lynmouth Road

Site Constraints

6. Use of built form to provide a buffer to the retained SSE equipment
7. Avoiding the existing, retained culvert to Vastern Road
8. Providing a landscaped buffer to the River Thames

Urban Design

9. Opening up views to the River and in to the site through the widening out of the built form
10. Push back the buildings to the frontage to signify the entrance and openness from Vastern Road
11. Use of buildings to deflect vistas and define the public route through the site
12. Continuation of the staggered building frontage of the adjacent properties along the river
13. Continuation of the linear building frontage line to Vaster Road
14. Providing a vantage point to enjoy views to the river and meadow
15. Introducing a landmark building as a way-marker along the pedestrian / cycle route
16. Strengthening the movement, and connecting Vastern Road and the River Thames through a tree-lined / landscaped route
17. Resultant development parcels



3.2 Our Proposed Layout

Key

- ① Christchurch Bridge
- ② New Bridge Link
- ③ Thames View Cafe
- ④ The Turbine Hall
- ⑤ Natural Riverside Planting
- ⑥ Towpath Connection
- ⑦ Thames View Cafe Platform
- ⑧ Coal Drop Building
- ⑨ Undercroft Parking Entrance
- ⑩ The Christchurch Way
- ⑪ Warehouse Building
- ⑫ The Sidings - Pedestrian Entrance
- ⑬ Lynmouth Road Vehicle Entrance
- ⑭ 3m Wide Dedicated Foot/Cycleway
- ⑮ Sculpture / Public Art



River Thames

1

2

6

3

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The Turbine Hall

The Generator

The Goods Office

The Goods Warehouse

Christchurch Wharf

The Coal Drop Building

The Railway Warehouse

Vestern Road

Lynmouth Road



3.3 Defining Character

The scheme takes cues from the history of the site, with the original power station characterised by three differing areas.

The architecture and landscape will take inspiration from each of these zones knitted together with a Victorian theme of architecture, with a Power Station and Water influence to the River Thames frontage; storage and ancillary buildings within the middle; and a rail / sidings inspiration along Vastern Road.

The images highlight how this character from the photo taken in 1948 translates in to the proposed site plan.



This Page:
Historic photo, 1948
Character Location Plan, NTS

Opposite Page:
Precedent images



3.4 The Sidings: Character Area

3.4.1 Previous Proposals

The previous proposals featured a pair of red brick buildings, stepped in height along the frontage, with sawtooth roof forms. These buildings were linked with a 4-storey bridged section over the pedestrian and cycle entrance in to the site.

3.4.2 Architectural Precedent

Drawing on the railway heritage to Vastern Road, the elevations take cues from Victorian railway and warehouse buildings, predominantly in a red brick, with stone and blue brick detailing. Painted or face-fixed names would be applied to the elevations at high level.

In reference to the locally listed building, blue brick quoining, slender stone string courses, and the brick and stone arched header are introduced on the eastern-most part of the facade.



3.4.3 Materials

Fronting on to Vastern Road, the predominant facing material will be a red brick. Subtle variations in texture and hues add character to the buildings.

Blue brick quoining, contrasting red brick details, along with stone string courses and heads pick up on the character of Victorian railway and industrial buildings.

3.4.4 Design Concept

The frontage to Vastern Road serves as the gateway in to the development for pedestrians and cyclists, connecting the town to the River Thames and Christchurch Bridge to the north.

The concept looks to signify the entrance through the introduction of a single, taller building - acting as a wayfinding element along the new route.

Buildings will be arranged to present a layered opening to the site, with staggered heights and frontages forming a defined square with space for a large tree to draw the character of the existing trees along Vastern Road in to the site.

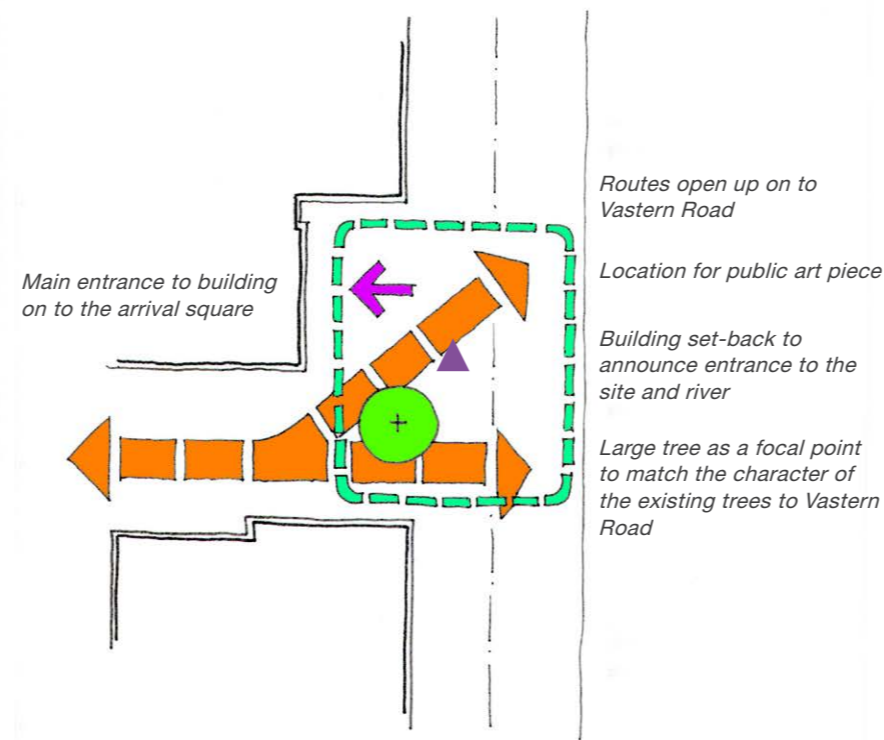
The historic links to the railway will be brought in to the landscape character through the use of inset "tracks" which will also define the route in to the scheme, suggesting at the connection to features beyond the site as well as emphasising the public route.

This gateway location will contain a piece of public art that becomes part of the schemes way finding strategy. An opportunity to begin the journey towards Christchurch Bridge and The River Thames.

Main Facing Materials



Secondary Facing Materials



3.4.5 Vastern Road Context Elevation



Southern Streetscene Elevation along Vastern Road

3.4.6 Vastern Road Context Visuals

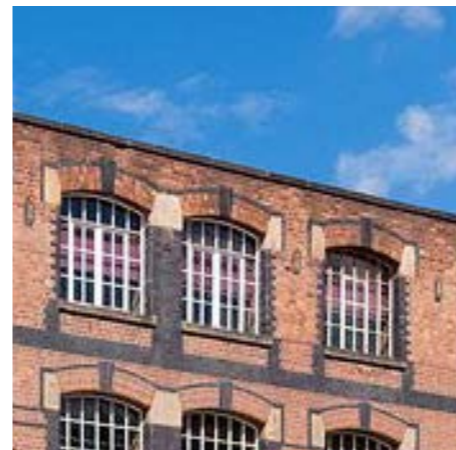
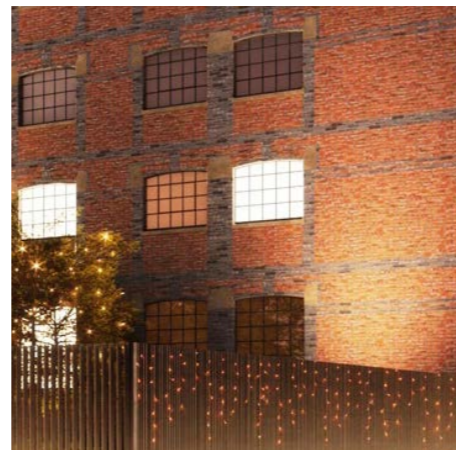


Verified view looking east along Vastern Road



Verified view looking west along Vastern Road

3.4.7 Appearance: The Railway Warehouse (Block A)



THE RAILWAY WAREHOUSE



↑
A

↑
B

3.4.8 Appearance: The Goods Warehouse (Block B)

