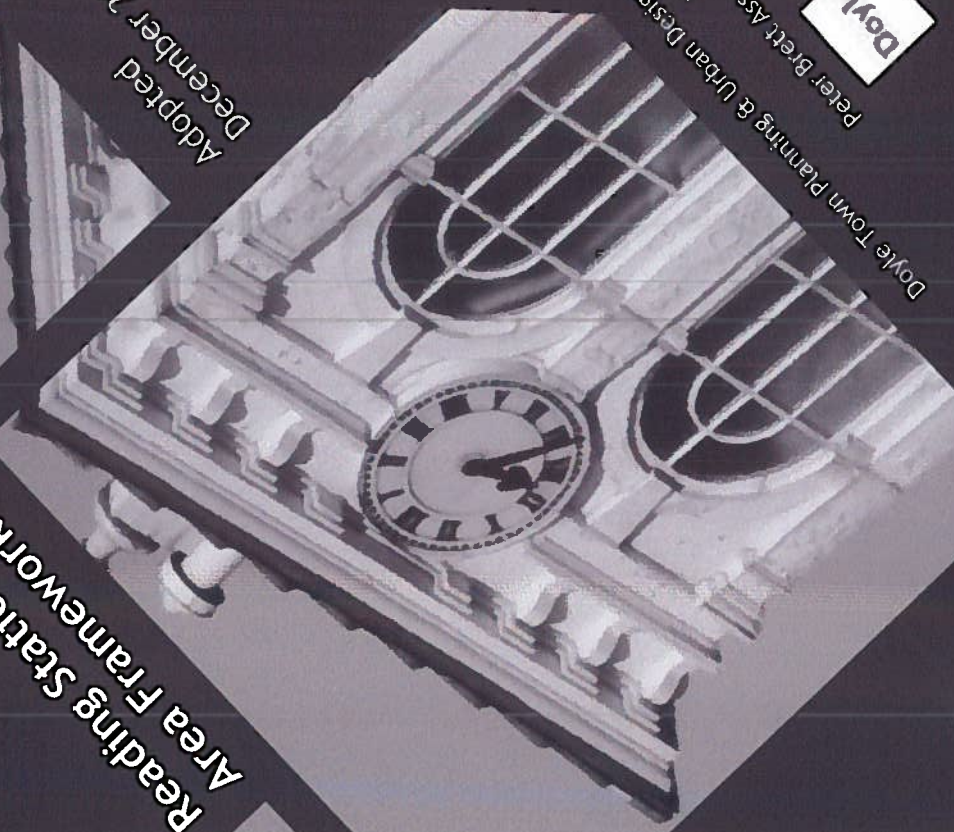


Adopted  
December 2010

Reading Station  
Area Framework

**Doyle**  
Peter Brett Associates  
with  
**ppa**  
Peter Brett Associates  
Doyle Town Planning & Urban Design

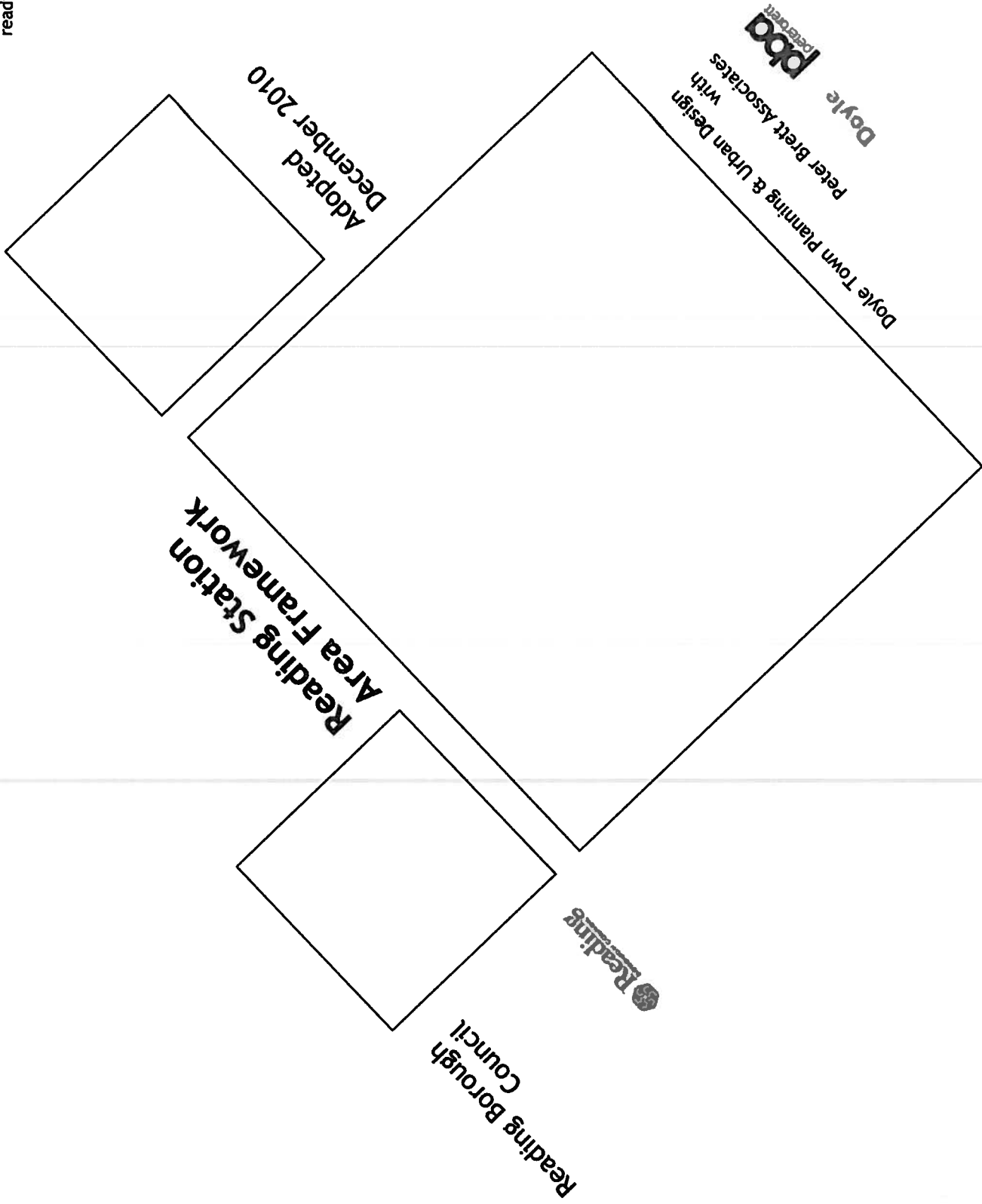
**Reading**  
Reading Borough  
Council



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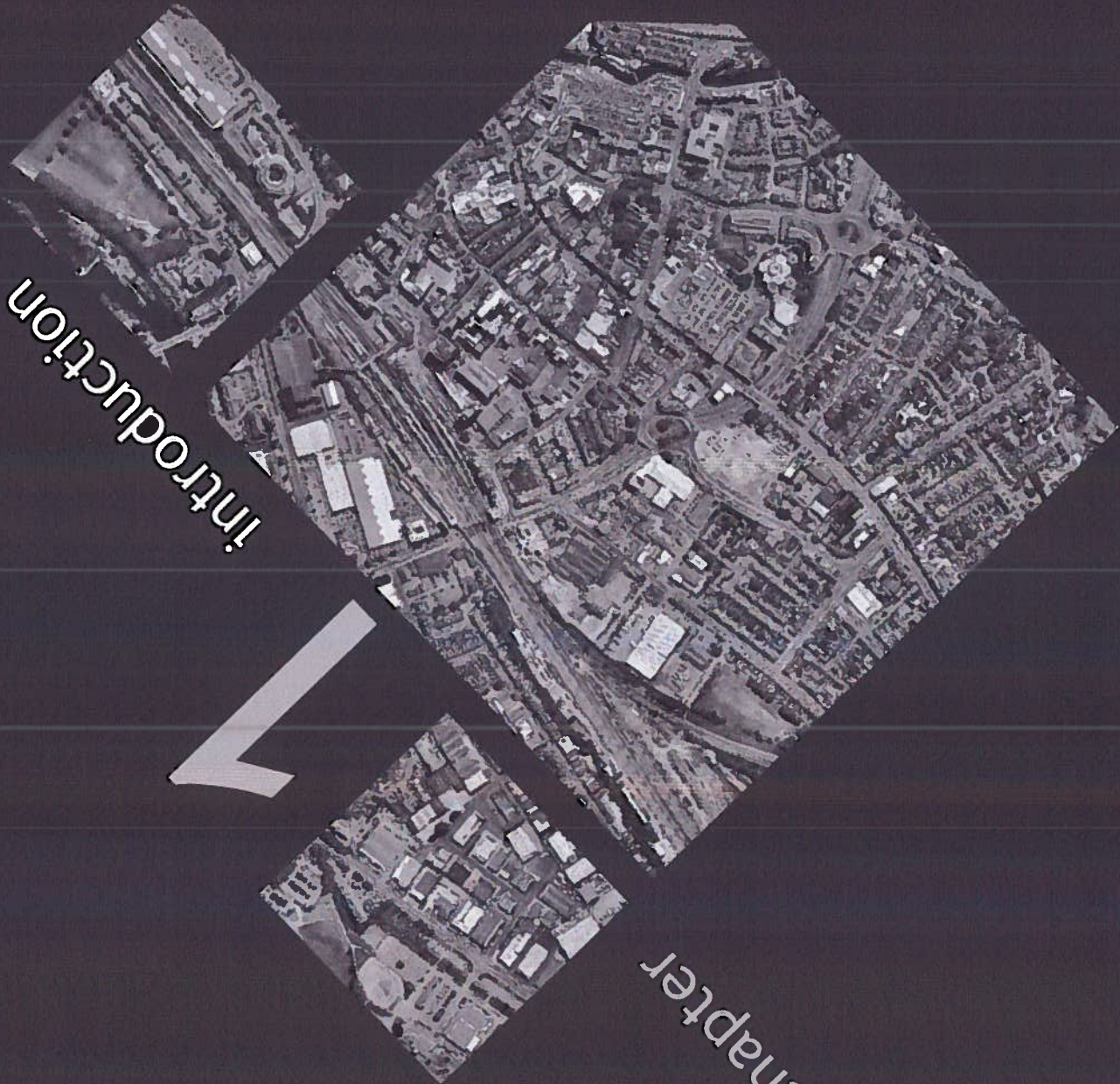




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Introduction

Chapter

## introduction

1.1 Reading Station Area lies immediately adjacent to the railway station at the northern edge of Reading town centre. It represents one of the most significant comprehensive redevelopment opportunities in the country, and is of unique importance in delivering the strategy for how Reading will develop in the future. It is one of the most accessible development opportunities in South East England, and offers a genuine chance to deliver an area of which Reading can be proud. It provides the potential to secure a major mixed-use sustainable development of a scale and quality to both complement the town centre and contribute to the economic development of the Thames Valley.

1.2 The Council has promoted redevelopment of the Station and Station Area for more than six years. A Station Partnership Board was formed in 2004 in order to progress the redevelopment. During this period, various policy documents and guides have been produced by the Council as Planning and Transport Authority and in partnership with other key players: Network Rail, the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), the Regional Assembly, transport operators, etc.

1.3 The Station Area is now the subject of development pressures, and potentially rapid change is indicated by a series of events:

- The High Level Output Specification (HLOS) Station funding announcement (2007) with the new Station opening in late 2012.
- The Station Hill planning application, SH2 (resolution to grant permission in September 2009, with a final decision due shortly).
- The publication of the Local Transport Plan in March 2006 and development of the major funded projects for example, through the Regional Funding Allocation and Community Infrastructure Fund.

- Adoption of local planning policy documents: the Core Strategy, the Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP), and the Station Hill Planning Brief.

1.4 In recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach to the area's future redevelopment, Reading Borough Council has prepared this development framework assisted by Peter Brett Associates and Doyle Town Planning and Urban Design.

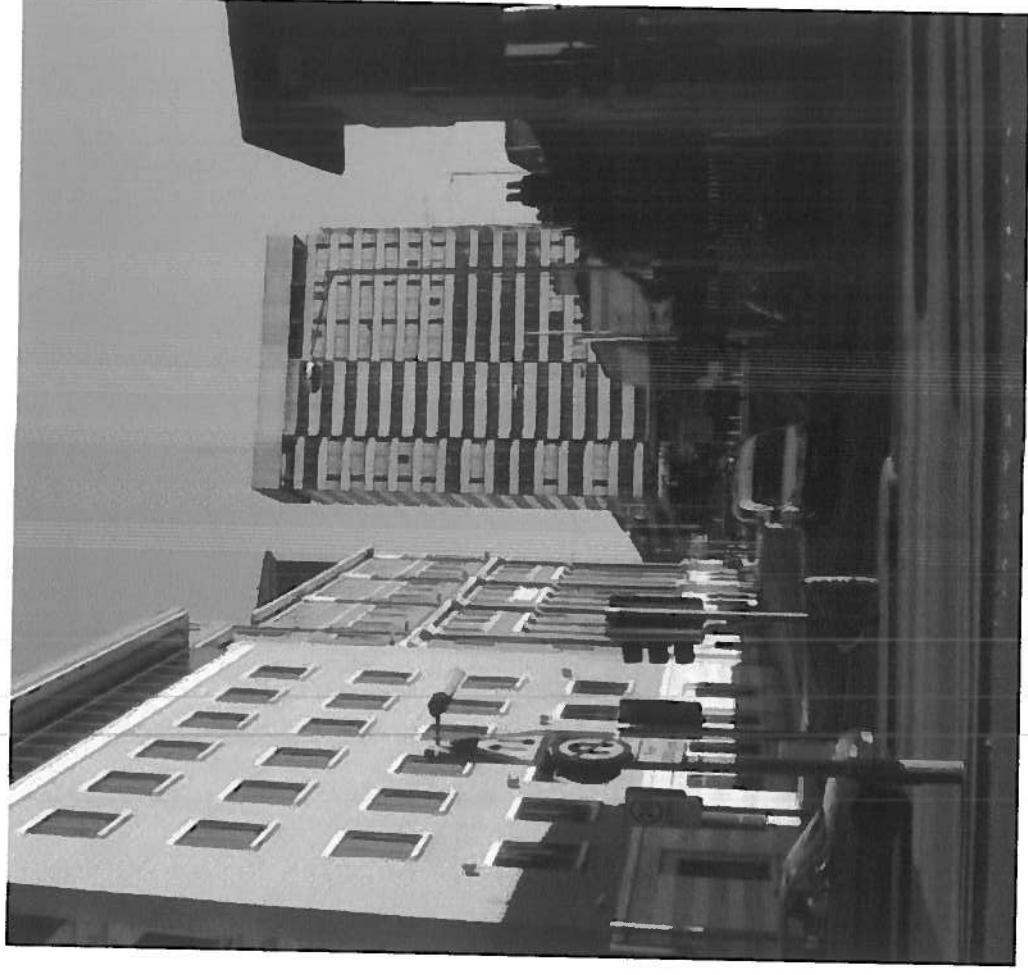


Figure 1.1 Aerial photography of Reading Town Centre and Station Area



## The role of the framework

- 1.5 The purpose of the framework is to outline broad development principles in a supplementary planning document to guide the planned redevelopment of the area, individual sites, the public realm, and new transport infrastructure.
- 1.6 The framework has been prepared with regard to existing and emerging national policy. It interprets the relevant LDF policies and supplementary planning guidance adopted by RBC, as well as all relevant material planning considerations.
- 1.7 The framework should be considered to be a bridge between the provisions of the Core Strategy and RCAAP, and the more specific requirements of individual site briefs for key sites in the area - see chapter 4 for more information.
- 1.8 The framework has the status of a Supplementary Planning Document, supplementing policy RC1 of the RCAAP, and as such it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for developments in the area.





# Chapter

# 2

the area today  
and yesterday



## the area today and yesterday

### Location and setting

- 2.1 The Station Area site extends to some 21 hectares (52 acres) and lies at the northern edge of Reading town centre. It is transected from east to west by the Great Western Railway (GWR), with Reading Railway Station at its centre.
- 2.2 The River Thames defines the northern boundary of the area and Friar Street forms the southern boundary. Some of the area north of the railway is in the floodplain, which will influence design and development in the area.

### History

- 2.3 The nineteenth and twentieth century history of the area is closely associated with the development of the GWR, which mirrored the rapid growth of Reading in this period. The rail station gradually expanded from a modest 'twin station' development of 1840 with the historic station entrance building (the Three Guineas public house) constructed during 1865-7. By the early 1900's an extensive station complex had developed, reflecting the growth of Reading. The area to the north of the tracks was historically used for the GWR signalling works. These closed in the 1960's.

### Archaeology

- 2.4 The Station Area lies at the edge of the Saxon, medieval and early postmedieval town of Reading. However, it is possible that fortifications of Viking age are present in the vicinity and may extend into the Station Area.
- 2.5 The southern part of the Station Area is situated in an area of high archaeological potential, with strong scope for encountering significant archaeological remains.

### Reading's recent growth

- 2.6 Central Reading has experienced rapid growth in the last 20 years. Development activity has been focused on the Oracle Shopping Centre and the banks of the Kennet, and at the Forbury, where a new office area has been developed. Phase One of the Chatham Place development has recently been completed to the west. Central area redevelopment has been complemented by residential and office development in outer areas such as at Green Park and Kennet Island.
- 2.7 In addition to the Station Area, future planned central area growth will be focused on Chatham Place, the Cattle Market and the Civic Centre (West Side), and the Kenavon Drive area (East Side).



Figure 2.1 Station Area boundary

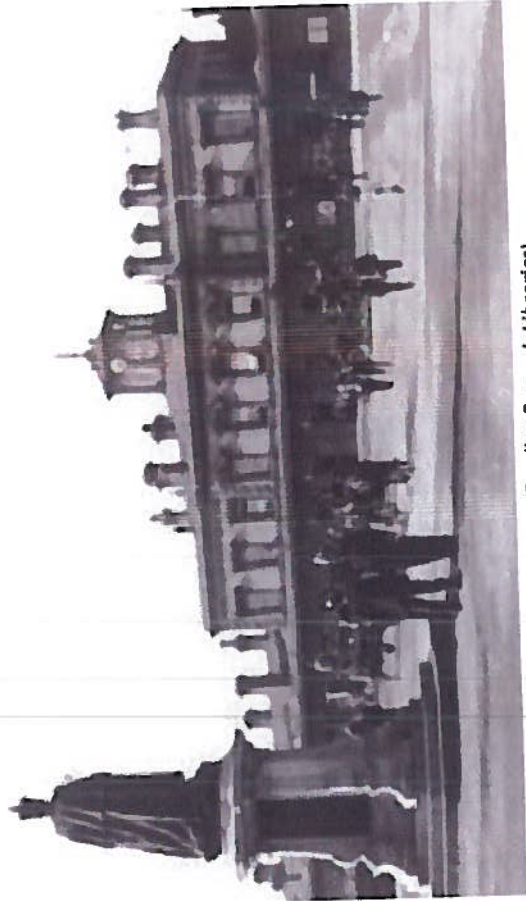


Figure 2.2 View of the Station circa 1900 (Reading Borough Libraries)

## Consents and proposals

- 2.10 The Council resolved to grant outline planning permission for the Station Hill site in 2009. The scheme comprises high rise and mixed use development (retail, leisure/culture/community, office and residential), with basement car parking.
- 2.11 The Royal Mail has now vacated the sorting office site. Part of the land is required temporarily to construct the new station but the site will then become available for redevelopment in the medium term.
- 2.12 The Station Retail Park in the ownership of Aviva has recently been refurbished, although a number of units remain, at least temporarily, unoccupied.
- 2.13 An application for prior approval for the Station redevelopment was approved by the Council in October 2010.
- 2.14 First Great Western, the lessee of the Station and car park, is preparing plans to extend the station car park.
- 2.15 Consent was granted in 2005 for the redevelopment of Number 35 Station Road to provide a twenty two storey residential building.
- 2.16 A planning permission for a three-storey extension to Thames Tower has now lapsed, and the owners are preparing plans for the redevelopment of the site.

## Land use

- 2.8 The area is dominated by four existing developments:
  - i. The station itself extends to over ten hectares comprising tracks, platforms, bridges and signal boxes, current and former station entrances.
  - ii. Station Hill is currently a largely vacant high rise commercial development characteristic of the 1970's with office towers, retail, leisure and a multi-storey car park.
  - iii. North of the rail tracks is the main Station car park rising to six storeys with a retail park, and the Royal Mail sorting office to the west.
  - iv. Southern Electric occupies a 2 hectare site between Vastern Road and the Thames comprising offices and electricity transmission equipment. A large part of the site is open and is used as a car park/lorry depot.
- 2.9 The surrounding areas include a broad mix of uses. To the south is the main shopping core of Reading, whilst the south east and east include a significant amount of offices as part of the mix. To the north and west, the area is more residential in character, comprising both traditional terracing and more recent developments.



Figure 2.3 Annotated aerial photograph of the Station Area



Figure 2.4 Recent development



Figure 2.5 Images of the area today



## Movement and transport

### Pedestrian access

2.18 The area is currently quite readily accessible to pedestrians from all directions. However, pedestrian routes across the Station Area itself are fewer and more tortuous or are terminated. The major barriers to pedestrian movement include the rail tracks and the limited number of rail crossings, the Station Hill site, the large retail and post office sheds to the north of the tracks, the significant level differences across the area, and the enclosed electricity board site which blocks direct access from the Station to the riverside footpath and cycle way.

### Ownership

- 2.17 There are a variety of ownerships within the area, but 85% of the area excluding highways land is within five ownerships:
- Station and station car park (Network Rail);
  - Station Hill and Friars Walk (Sackville Developments);
  - Sorting office (Royal Mail);
  - Station Retail Park (Aviva); and
  - Southern Electric site (Scottish and Southern Energy).

### Cycling

2.19 There are a number of cycle routes in Central Reading which converge on the Station Area.

2.20 Some of these are good quality, but the large road junctions, especially north of the railway, adversely effect the cycling experience. The Thames Riverside path (National Cycle Networks) provides a better quality and safer environment for cycling, but does not cater for north-south linkages.

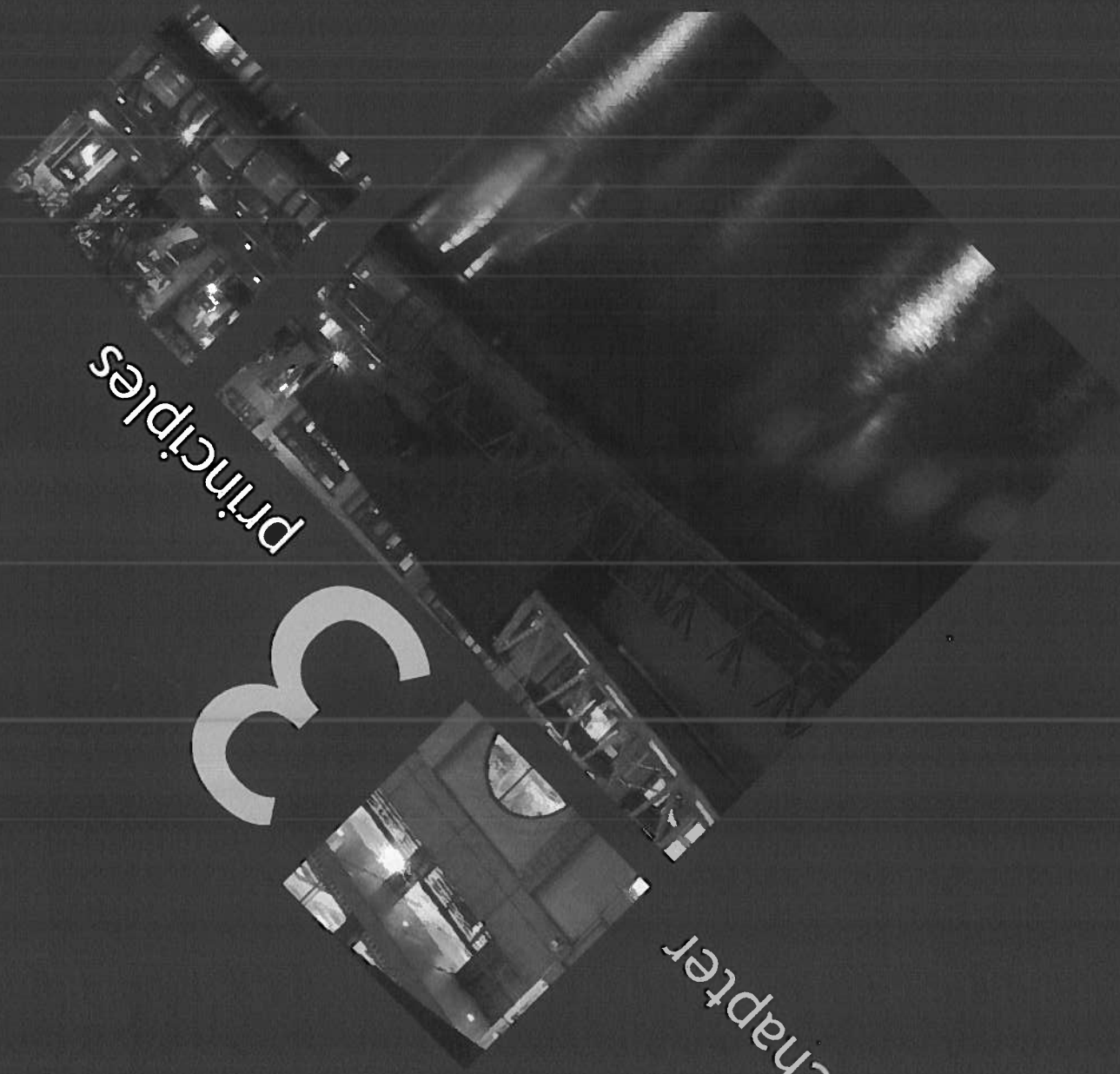
### Bus routes and stops

2.21 Existing bus services are extensive and of a high quality in terms of the number of destinations that are directly accessible and the frequency of buses. Bus patronage is high, especially in the south.

2.22 The existing bus interchanges to the south of the Station serve local routes, regional bus services and dedicated buses serving Heathrow Airport.

### Highways

2.23 The area is well served by the Inner Distribution Road (IDR) with many sites directly accessible from the IDR.



Principles

3

Chapter

# principles

## RCAAP Key Principles

3.1 The RCAAP sets out a series of principles for the development of the central area:

1. The centre will contain a broad range of different but complementary uses within an area easily accessed by foot.
2. The centre will appeal to all sectors of Reading's population as a place to live in, work in, study in and visit.
3. New development will exhibit an excellent, safe and sustainable quality of design that contributes to the attraction of the centre.
4. The centre will make the most of its waterside areas as a destination for leisure and recreation, and protect and enhance wildlife habitats.
5. Areas of designated open space within the centre will be protected and new opportunities will be sought.
6. Access to the centre by foot, cycle and public transport will be improved.

7. Access within the centre by foot and cycle will be improved and barriers to this improved access will be overcome, particularly in a north-south direction through the core.
8. Development in the centre will benefit from and contribute towards forthcoming major transport improvements.
9. Areas and features that positively contribute to the unique and historic character of central Reading will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced.



Figure 3.1 Oracle Shopping Centre



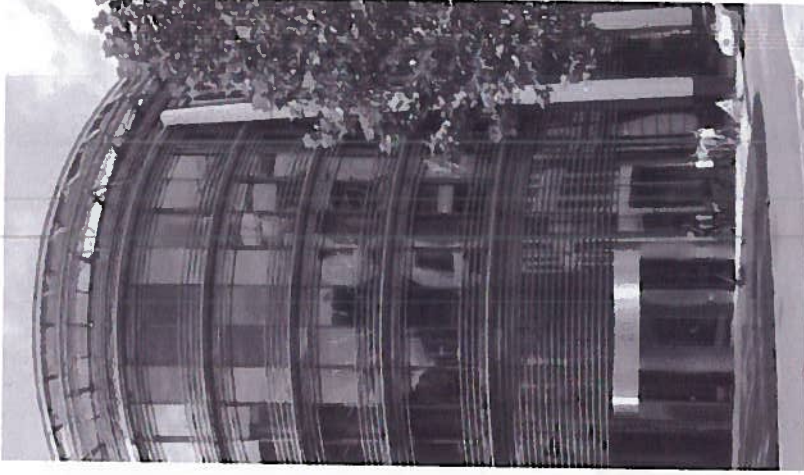


### Station Area Framework Principles

3.2 The central area principles have been condensed and applied to the particular context of the Station Area in order to arrive at a series of framework principles.

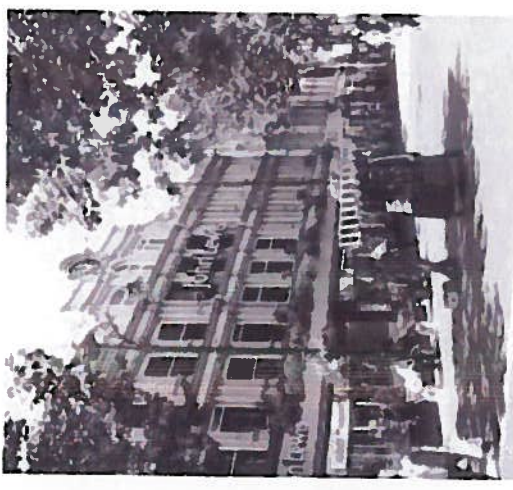
#### A vital and enjoyable place

3.3 Redevelopment provides the opportunity to secure vibrant retail and leisure uses, to help make the Station Area an enjoyable place to work and live in and to visit. Street level retail, hotels, cafes, bars and restaurants and other sport, leisure and recreational uses will provide activity throughout the day and evening.



#### A place to work

3.4 The strategic location of the Station Area and its direct proximity to the town centre and the Station represents a unique opportunity to build upon the success of the town centre and create a substantial commercial development of new high-quality flexible office space. Business and employment development will make a significant contribution towards Reading's established position as the 'Capital of the Thames Valley'.



#### A place to live

3.5 The creation of a mixed-use quarter which incorporates a substantial element of new housing is fundamental to the development of a sustainable mixed use area. The area can accommodate a significant level of new homes of mixed tenure, responsive to local housing needs. The proximity to public transport facilities makes it an ideal location for high-density living, not dependent on car travel. New community facilities can benefit existing residents as well as future occupiers.



**A well connected and accessible place**

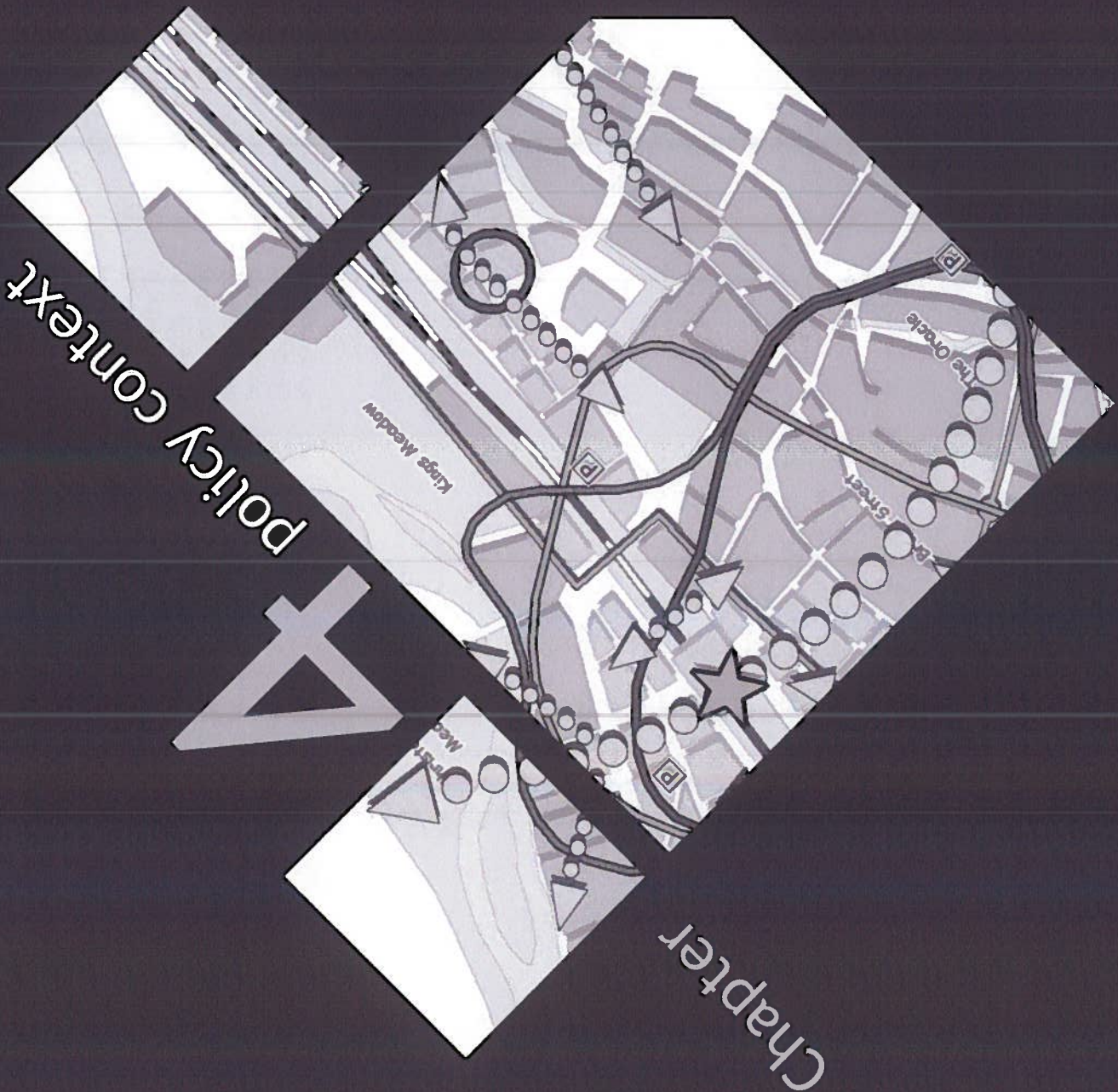
3.6 The redevelopment of large sites provides the opportunity to secure landscaped public space and to extend public access. The layout of these will incorporate east-west and north-south routes to enhance movement and linkages across the area, whilst the construction of a pedestrian/cycle bridge linking the Area to Christchurch Meadows will further integrate and ensure good accessibility to adjoining open spaces.

**A place to value**

3.7 The Station Area will contain buildings and development of outstanding architectural merit and design innovation, creating a unique sense of place which responds to the character of the historic town centre and adjoining residential areas.

**A highly sustainable place**

3.8 New development should address the growing need for sustainable design, construction and lifestyles briefly outlined in this framework and in more detail in the LDF sustainability policies and the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD.



Chapter  
policy context

Chapter



## Core Strategy

4.5 Reading's Core Strategy sets the context for regeneration of central Reading based around major changes to the station, and identifies some of the areas where this may occur, including the Station/River area. The RCAAP was written to implement the Core Strategy aims for the central area. Although much of the policy in the Core Strategy is high level, most of it will be relevant to any development in this area, e.g. CS1 (Sustainable Design and Construction), CS7 (Design and the Public Realm), CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities) and CS16 (Affordable Housing).



## Sustainable Community Strategy

4.7 Reading's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011 'Shaping Reading's Future' has been produced by the Local Strategic Partnership, including the Council, the Police, the Primary Care Trust, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the voluntary and community sector, with the purpose of improving quality of life for Reading's communities. It is based around nine themes:

- A Fairer Reading for All
- Children and Young People
- Cleaner and Greener Environments
- Culture, Leisure and Sport
- Decent and Affordable Housing
- Healthy People and Lifestyles
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Thriving Economy and Skills
- Transport and Accessible Spaces

4.8 All are relevant, and the Local Development Framework, including this document, is specified as a key delivery mechanism for some of these themes.



## Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief (2007)

4.6 This document is a planning brief covering one part of the Station Area Framework area (Station Hill) in more detail. Although it predates both the RCAAP and this Framework, the RCAAP clarifies that the Brief is in conformity with the new policy and continues to be relevant. It is also entirely consistent with this Framework, albeit that it is at a more detailed level. The document sets out a vision for a 'thriving, safe, and high quality landmark development' with tall buildings at strategic gateways framing a network of open spaces.



## Local Transport Plan

4.9 The second Reading Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) focuses upon long-term transport measures and promotes an integrated and balanced transport environment. The plan aims to develop Reading's role as a regional transport hub. The plan anticipates and supports the creation of an additional 20,000 jobs in Reading by 2016.

4.10 The Plan promotes a series of Area Action plans and the Station Area lies within the 'Access for Central Reading' Plan.

4.11 Consultation on a draft Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 ended in November 2010.





**RCAAP Policy RC1: DEVELOPMENT IN THE STATION/RIVER MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA**

Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area will:

- i) Contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself - the areas that also make up part of the primary shopping area and central core will have a particular emphasis on delivering much of the identified retail and leisure need;
  - ii) Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly on the key movement corridors. North-south links through the centre and across the railway line, IDR and River Thames centred on the new station are of particular importance;
  - iii) Provide developments that front onto and provide visual interest to existing and future pedestrian routes and open spaces;
  - iv) Safeguard land which is needed for:
    - Improvements to Reading station;
    - Reading station interchange;
    - Mass rapid transit routes and stops;
  - v) Provide additional areas of open space where possible, including a direct green link between the station and the River Thames;
  - vi) Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and protect and, where appropriate, enhance the setting of listed buildings;
  - vii) Be laid out in a way that allows the area to come forward in parcels - for instance, single developments should not be solely inwards-facing, ignoring the links with other potential future development areas.
- Development will be in line with the following provisions for each sub-area:

**RC1a, FRIAR STREET & STATION ROAD**

There will be active retail and leisure uses on the ground floor along Friar Street and Station Road, with a mix of uses on higher floors. Development should enhance linkages in a north-south direction to link to the Station Hill area. The setting of listed buildings in the area will be preserved, and opportunities to improve the environment of Merchants Place will be sought.

**RC1b, FRIARS WALK & GREYFRIARS ROAD**

Development in this area will be of a mixed use with a significant leisure element. Active retail and leisure uses will be on the ground floor, particularly along Friar Street, with a mix of uses on higher floors. Development should enhance linkages in a north-south direction at a single level into the Station Hill area and through to the station. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road will require careful design treatment.

**RC1c, STATION HILL**

This area will be developed for a mix of uses at a high density, including retail and leisure on the ground and lower floors and residential and offices on higher floors. There will be enhanced links through the sites, and a network of streets and spaces. Frontages on key routes through the site should have active uses. The edge of the site nearest to the areas of traditional terracing west of Greyfriars Road will require careful design treatment.

**RC1d, STATION & INTERCHANGE**

The station will be improved, and an enhanced multi-modal interchange provided. New and improved links across the railway will be provided, including visual links. There may be scope for additional development for other uses within the site. The listed station building should be retained and its setting enhanced. Areas of civic open space will be provided at the northern and southern entrances to the station.

**RC1e, NORTH OF STATION**

There will be retail and leisure development on the ground floor with other uses including residential and offices on upper floors. Provision of retail development is contingent on improved links across the railway. Public car parking will be provided. An area of civic open space will be provided at the northern entrance to the station, and a green link provided to the Thames. An acceptable dry access scheme from across the site must be part of any development.

**RC1g, RIVERSIDE**

Development should maintain and enhance public access along and to the Thames, and should continue the green link from the north of the station, with potential for an area of open space at the riverside. The main use of the site should be residential, although some small-scale offices and leisure will also be appropriate.

A new pedestrian and cycle crossing over the River Thames will be provided at a point between Frys Island and Reading Bridge.

**RC1h, NAPIER ROAD JUNCTION**

A landmark building, containing residential and/or offices is appropriate for this site, which may contain an active commercial use on the ground floor. An acceptable dry access scheme must be part of any development on this site.

# Chapter

# 5

# public realm



## public realm

5.1 The creation of a quality public realm within the Station Area should be the foremost consideration in bringing forward development proposals in the area. This should be a key destination, integrated into the fabric of the centre, and the vision for the area is dependent on a high quality of public space.

### Policy

5.2 Core Strategy Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The components of development form include landscape and layout, urban structure and urban grain.

5.3 RCAA Policy RC14 (Public Realm) deals with the quality of public realm, and is reproduced in part on page 25. In addition, Policy RC5: Design in the Centre describes attributes of development and provides additional design advice specific to the Central Area, which should be read in conjunction with Core Strategy policy CS7.

### Aims

5.4 The overall aim is to improve the Station Area public realm by creating, improving and connecting public spaces. More detailed aims include:

- 'Stitching' together the various development sites within the Area, both visually and physically.
- Unifying the area through a coordinated design approach that utilises the best contemporary modern materials and street furniture.
- Creating an environment that is busy, overlooked and safe through its relationship with adjoining buildings ('passive surveillance').
- Contributing to the character and identity of the town centre, helping to instil a strong sense of place and underpinning investment.
- Creating more opportunities for sustainable forms of transport, particularly walking and cycling, by enhancing the connectivity and legibility of the area.

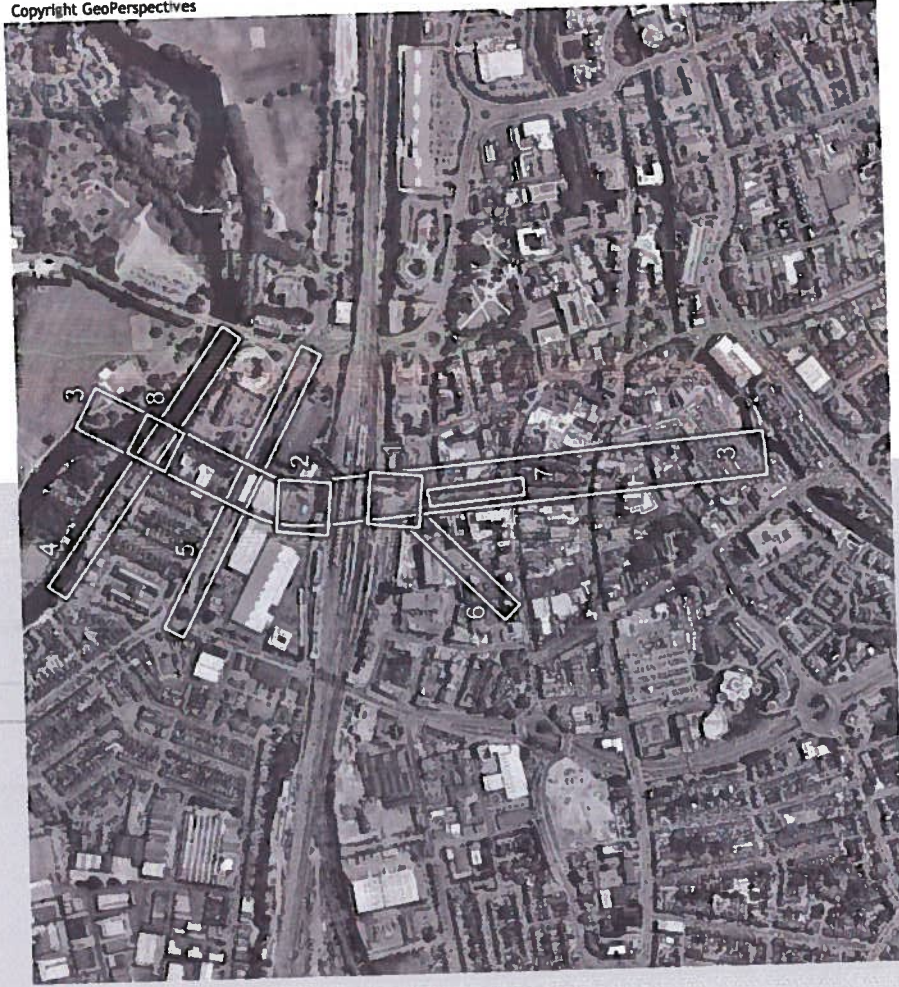


Figure 5.1 Public realm priorities

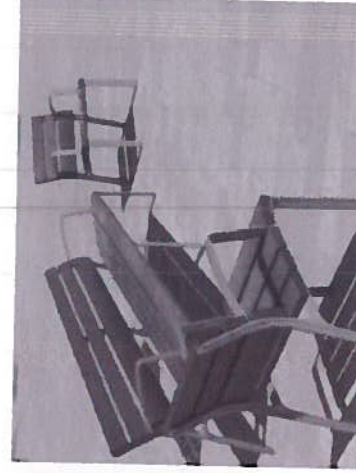
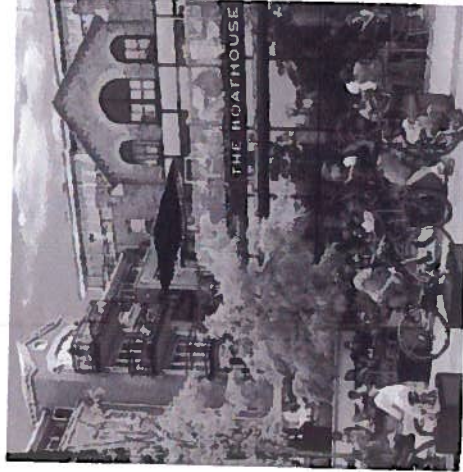
5.5 It is recognised that these aims may be difficult to achieve as a whole. Whilst it is possible for new developments to be carefully knitted into the existing street pattern, traversing the railway tracks and negotiating the many changes in level is a more challenging proposition. Nevertheless, development should seek to achieve this as far as is possible.



## Public realm priorities

5.6 Ten key public realm priority projects are proposed which will provide a network of streets and spaces providing the context within which individual developments can be brought forward:

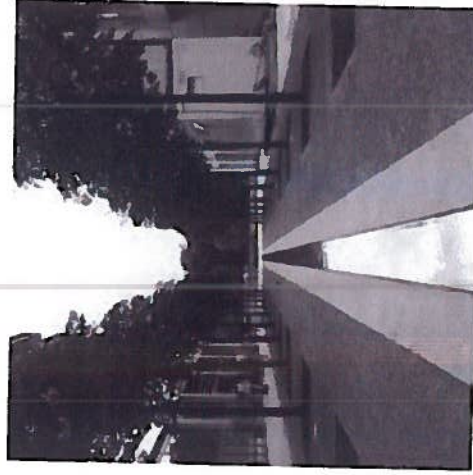
- Station Square South (1)
- Station Square North (2)
- Kennet-Thames Spine (3)
- Riverside Path and Water Spines (4)
- Vastern Road (5)
- Friar Street Link and central piazza (6)
- Station Road Enhancement (7)
- Riverside open space (8)
- Pedestrian grid
- Landscaping and public art



### Station square north and south

5.7 The two station entrances will lead out into high quality multi functional public spaces - new 'town squares' - one to the north and one to the south of the Station.

5.8 Although there will be great competition for space outside the station entrances (buses, taxis, cars etc.), public space and pedestrian movement should be prioritised.



### RCAAP Policy RC14: PUBLIC REALM (part)

Proposals for new development will need to make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm of the central area and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i. All proposals on sites of more than 1 hectare within the central area boundary will need to provide new public open space or civic squares integrated with surrounding development. Smaller developments will contribute towards improvements to the public realm;
- ii. Imaginative uses of open space and the public realm, which contribute to the offer of the centre, will be encouraged, and new open spaces should be of a size and shape to be flexible enough to accommodate such uses. The provision of water features, trees (including street trees) and other planting, as well as hard landscaping, to create high-quality spaces, will be encouraged;
- iii. Development proposals adjacent to or in close proximity to waterways will retain and not impede existing continuous public access to and along the waterways, and will provide legible continuous public access to and along the waterways where this does not currently exist;

- iv. The design of developments adjacent to a waterway, including the refurbishment of existing buildings, will be required to enhance the appearance of the waterways and to provide active elevations facing the waterways. Development that turns its back on the waterways and results in blank or mundane elevations facing the waterways will not be permitted.

Pedestrianisation, traffic management and/or environmental enhancements will continue to be implemented on appropriate streets. These will include Station Road, Station Approach, Bigrave Street, Town Hall Square, Friar Street (East), West Street, Gun Street and St Marys Butts.



### **Kennet-Thames spine, including Station Road**

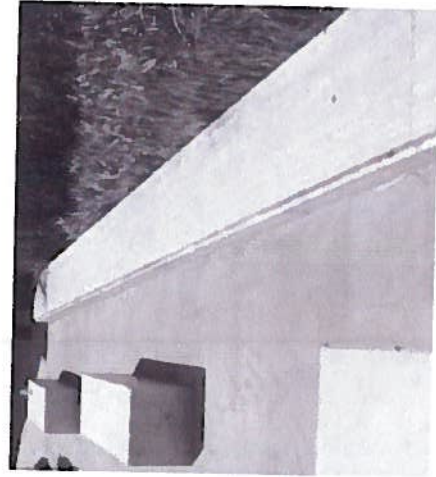
5.9 A major 'city spine' - a direct pedestrian route - is proposed through the historic core, the Station Area and through to the Thames. This spine is based on the north-south link which is the most significant movement corridor in the RCAAP, and is vital to the success of development in this area. 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.

### **Riverside path and water spines**

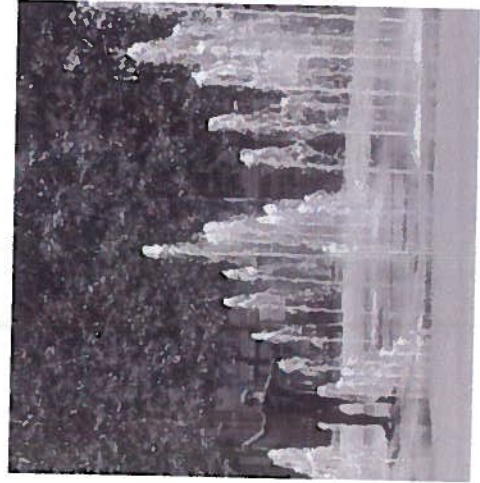
5.10 The extensive network of open spaces along the Thames and immediately adjacent to the Station Area are a valuable amenity which can act as counterpoint to the planned intensive urban development around the station. They will need to be closely linked through new and improved footpaths, river crossings etc.

5.11 Improvements to the riverside path along the south side of the Thames are proposed with the potential for 'pocket parks' to be opened up by negotiation with private land-owners. This will be combined with extension and enhancement of the routes leading from the river into the heart of the Station Area.



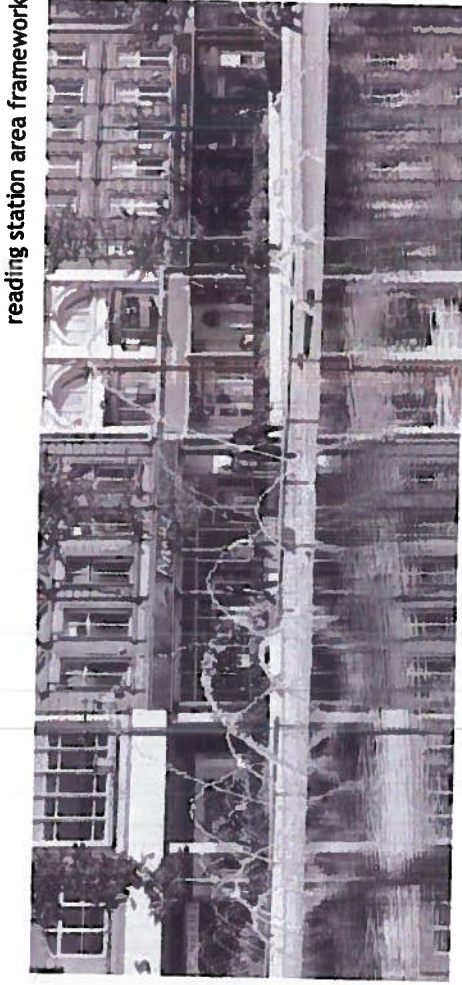
### Vastern Road

5.12 Potential changes to Vastern Road could reduce the dominance of speeding traffic and transform the character of the road from a by-pass at the edge of the town centre into a tree lined avenue as a central element of the town centre public realm, by planting in the central reservation and creating planted verges.



### Friar Street link and central piazza

5.13 A link from the station entrance to Friar Street including a new central piazza will be at the heart of the Station Hill development.



reading station area framework

### Station Road enhancement

5.14 Station Road is an essential element of the north-south link that is at the heart of the strategy for the area, and a high quality of public realm on Station Road is vital to integrate the Station Area with the existing shopping core.

5.15 A programme of highway works associated with the Station development began in 2010, and these include a number of works to Station Road. It will become one-way northwards, with the southbound bus lane being removed. This will allow substantial widening of the footpath on the western side. The buildings along the west of Station Road form part of the Friar Street and Station Road allocation in the RCAAAP (RC1a), where development will include ground floor active uses and the setting of listed buildings within the area (such as 13-15 Station Road) will be enhanced.

### Riverside open space

5.16 An area of high quality public realm will be created where the north-south spine meets the south bank of the Thames. This will not be of a large size, due to space constraints, but will be a high quality space to complement the tranquil nature of the Thames at this point.





Figure 5.2 The existing Central Area pedestrian route network or 'grid'

5.17 A grid of new or better-connected streets and other pedestrian routes is vital, and is a requirement of RCAAP policy RC5. The grid form is designed to both ensure the area as a whole is interconnected but also that paths converge upon the station 'nexus' in a broadly radial pattern. Figures 5.3 to 5.5 show how a new pedestrian grid can be created, taking account of where the area is accessed and the important north-south links. The final pedestrian grid shown in figure 5.5 compares favourably to the existing grid in figure 5.2, and enhances permeability through the Station area.

5.18 The approach to pedestrian priority will necessarily be incremental. It is dependent on the practicability of the types of measures proposed and the degree of disruption/displacement of vehicular traffic, particularly public transport, which can be accommodated in any particular time period.

5.19 A future pedestrian priority plan is needed to help accommodate the planned growth in the volume of people walking in the town centre, particularly around the station. Increases have already resulted from the success of Reading as a growth hub; from recent transport interventions (such as Market Place), and will continue with new developments coming forward (Chatham Place, Station Hill etc.). A future pedestrian priority plan should help to provide a better, dynamic, balance in the allocation of space between pedestrians and vehicles as development proceeds. Well handled, pedestrian priority will provide the key to a better quality public realm.



Figure 5.3 Ingress



Figure 5.4 North south links



Figure 5.5 Proposed pedestrian grid

## Landscaping

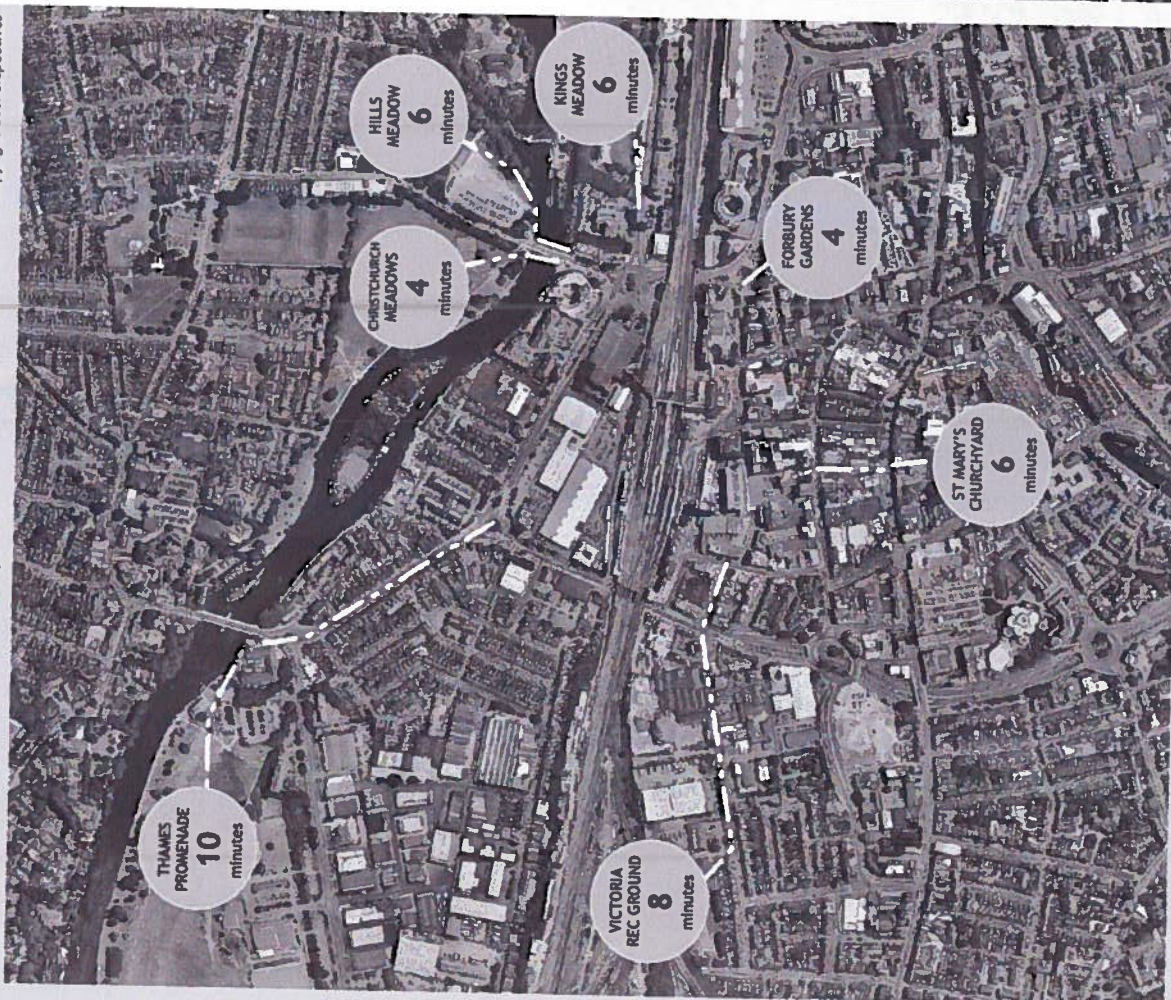
5.21 Although the development of the Station Area is unlikely to result in major new areas of green space, there will be a significant opportunity to provide new landscaping. Landscaping can perform a number of vital roles, such as softening the urban environment, providing for biodiversity, mitigating effects on climate change, and providing shade to help adapt to climate change.

5.22 In particular, the Council wishes to see new tree planting in the area. The Council's Tree Strategy (adopted 2010) states that the Council will seek to prioritise the protection, maintenance and planting of trees that enhance the appearance of central Reading, particularly its various public realm. There should be new tree planting along Vastern Road, for instance, including the central reservation. Landscaping may also incorporate green roofs, living walls and sustainable drainage systems (see Chapter 10). The biodiversity value of landscaping is particularly significant where the elements of landscaping form green corridors that connect with existing open spaces, waterspaces and areas of biodiversity significance.

5.20 Pedestrian priority measures are proposed for the following streets in or near to the Station Area:

- West Street
- Blgrave Street
- Greyfriars Road
- Friar Street
- Station Interchange/ Station Square South/Station Road
- North of Station / south of Vastern Road
- Station Hill
- Merchants Place/ Garrard Street
- Riverside

Figure 5.6 Walking distances to local open space



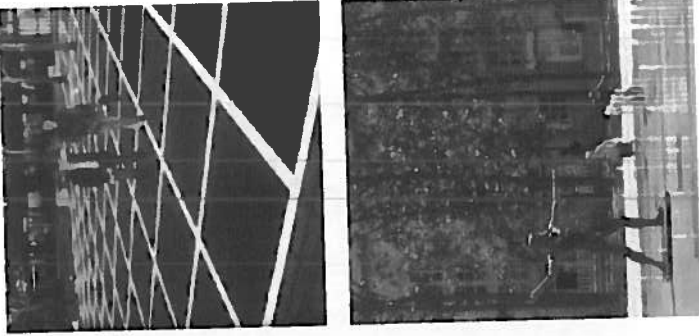


Figure 5.7 Public realm and public art exemplar images

## Public art

5.23 Public art installations and programmes can establish a sense of place and identity for the area, contribute to local distinctiveness, enhance the quality of the environment, improve people's experience and perception of the area and create new points of interest, especially after normal business hours and at weekends. Public art can also help to integrate the new mix of uses, it can help to connect the Station Area to its wider surroundings, and it can contribute to community safety, for example through improved and imaginative lighting and signing of the area.

5.24 The Station Area presents a major opportunity for a public art scheme or strategy with an overall design concept or theme within the designs for new open spaces and public realm. New art works could draw from the rich historical, archaeological and cultural heritage of the station and its surroundings, or from more recent associations with local industries, such as beer and biscuits. Artworks within the improved public spaces could become landmarks in their own right - though they should be successfully integrated within the overall design and landscaping.

5.25 To maximise the potential for art and artists to contribute to the high quality design of the public realm, onsite residencies could be considered, which will help to engage and reflect local aspirations and opinions.

5.26 Public art proposals should be in line with the Reading Public Art Strategy.