

Reading Borough
Council



Reading Station Area Framework

Adopted
December 2010



Doyle Town Planning & Urban Design
Peter Brett Associates
with



Acknowledgements

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Council



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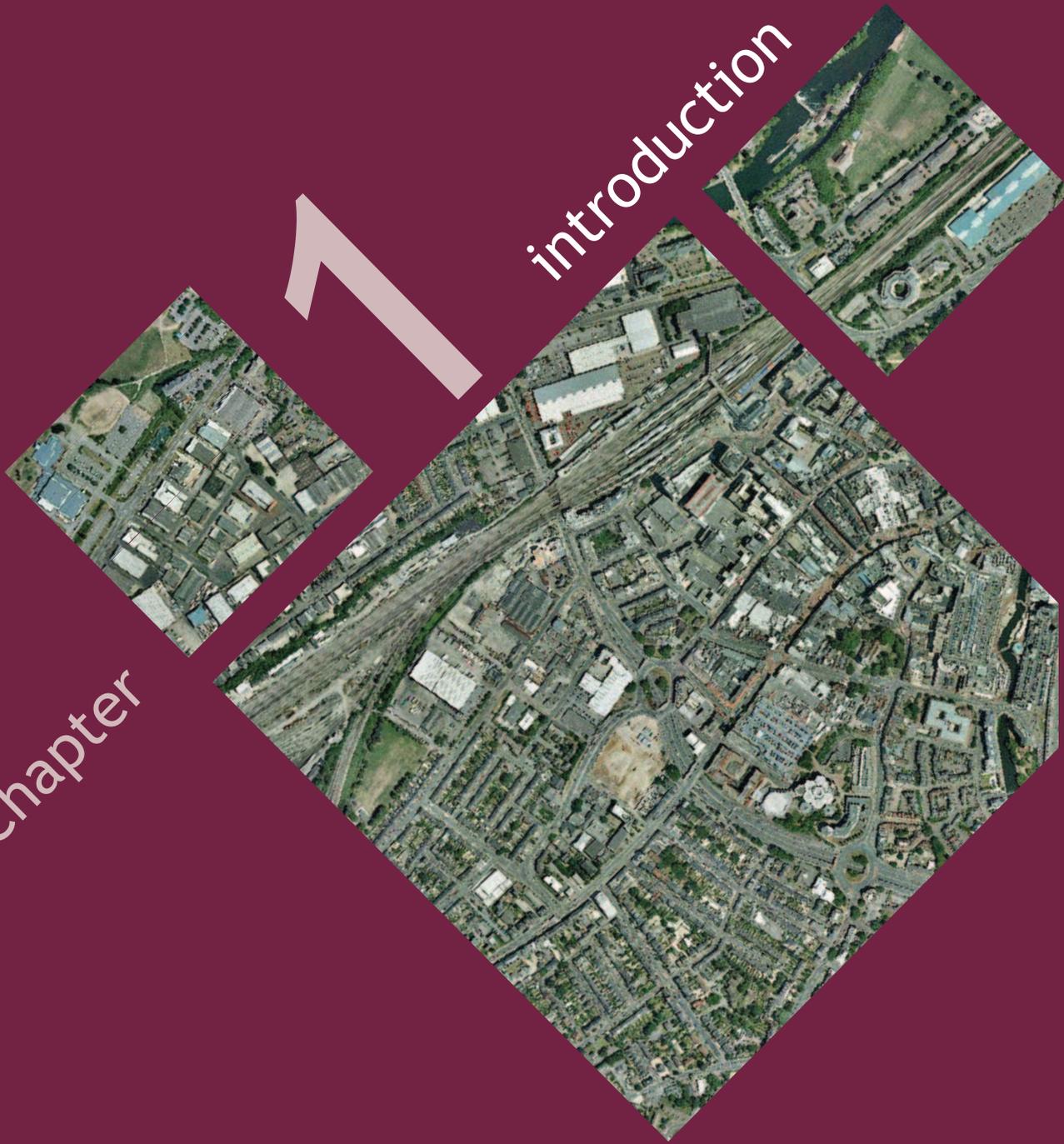
contents

chapter		page
01	Introduction	7
02	Area today and yesterday	11
03	Principles	15
04	Policy context	19
05	Public realm	23
06	Density, mass and height	31
07	Views	39
08	Urban design framework	43
09	Land use	51
10	Sustainability	55
11	Transport	61
12	Heritage	69
13	Implementation and phasing	73
14	Illustrative proposals	79
1A	Appendix	83

Chapter

1

introduction



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

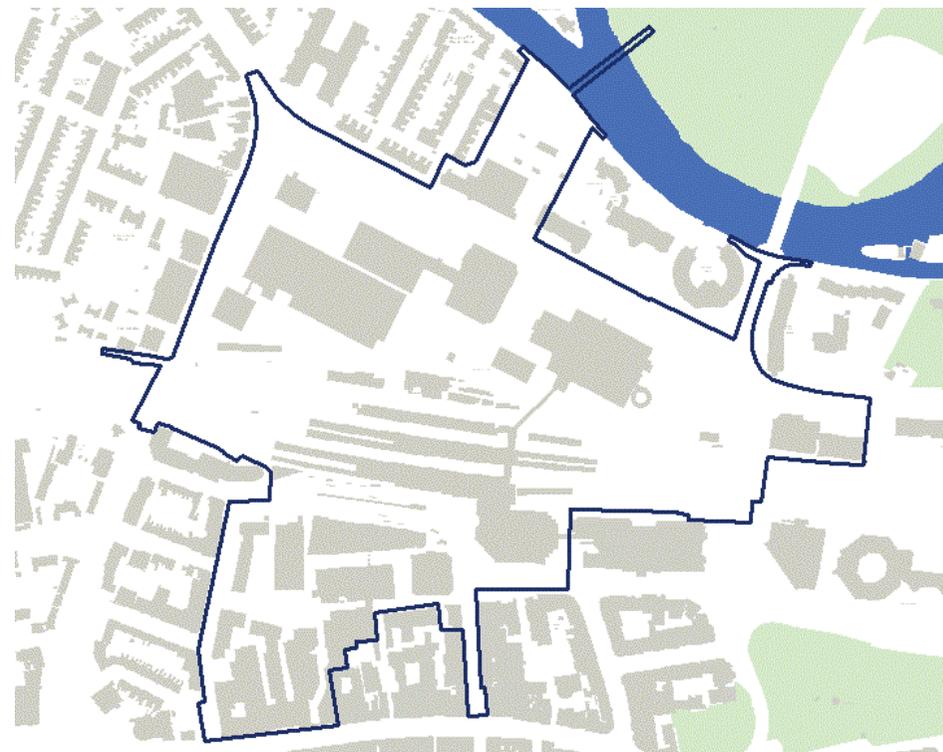
2.4 The Station Area lies at the edge of the Saxon, medieval and early postmedieval town of Reading. However, it is possible that fortifications of Viking age are present in the vicinity and may extend into the Station Area.

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).



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Figure 2.1 Station Area boundary



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

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.

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.

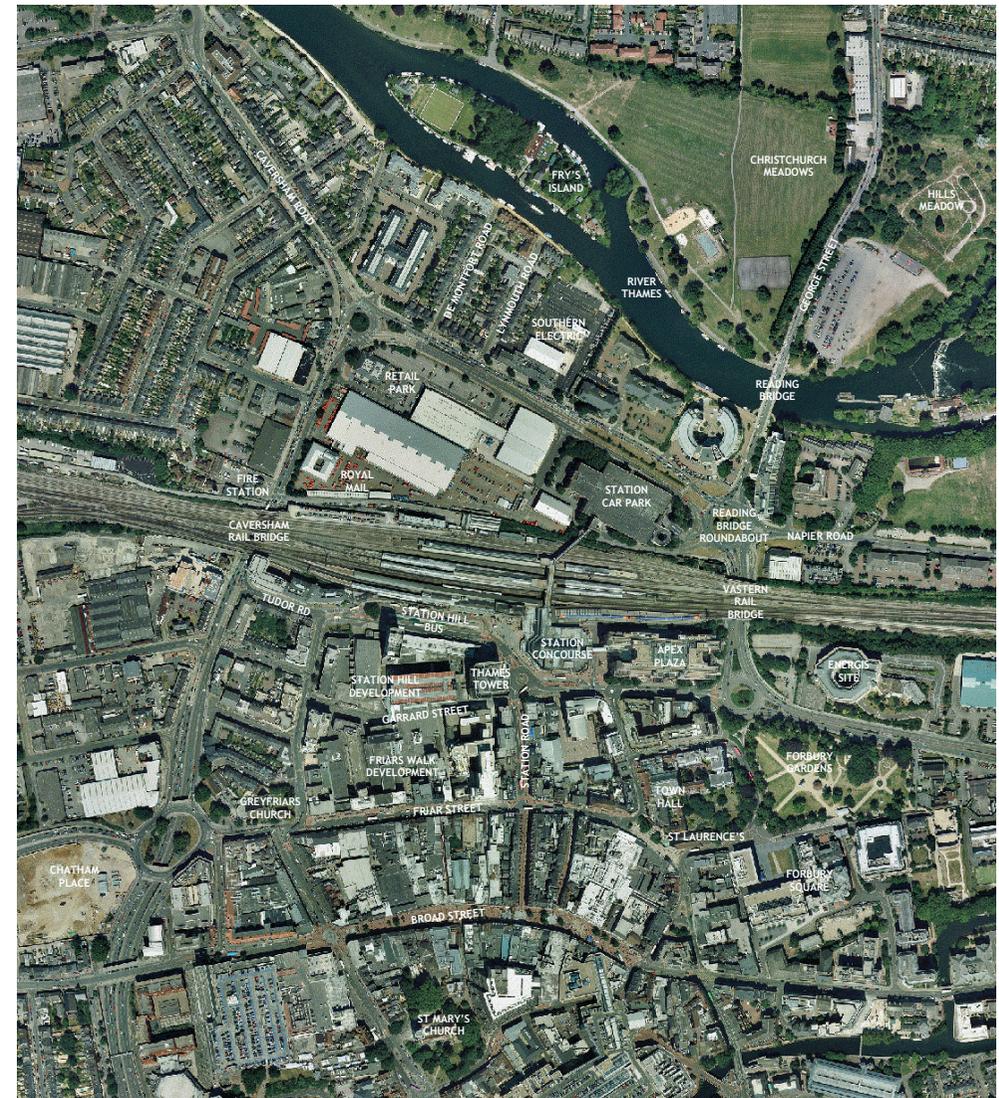


Figure 2.3 Annotated aerial photograph of the Station Area



Figure 2.4 Recent development



Figure 2.5 Images of the area today



Movement and transport

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).

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.

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.

Chapter

3

principles

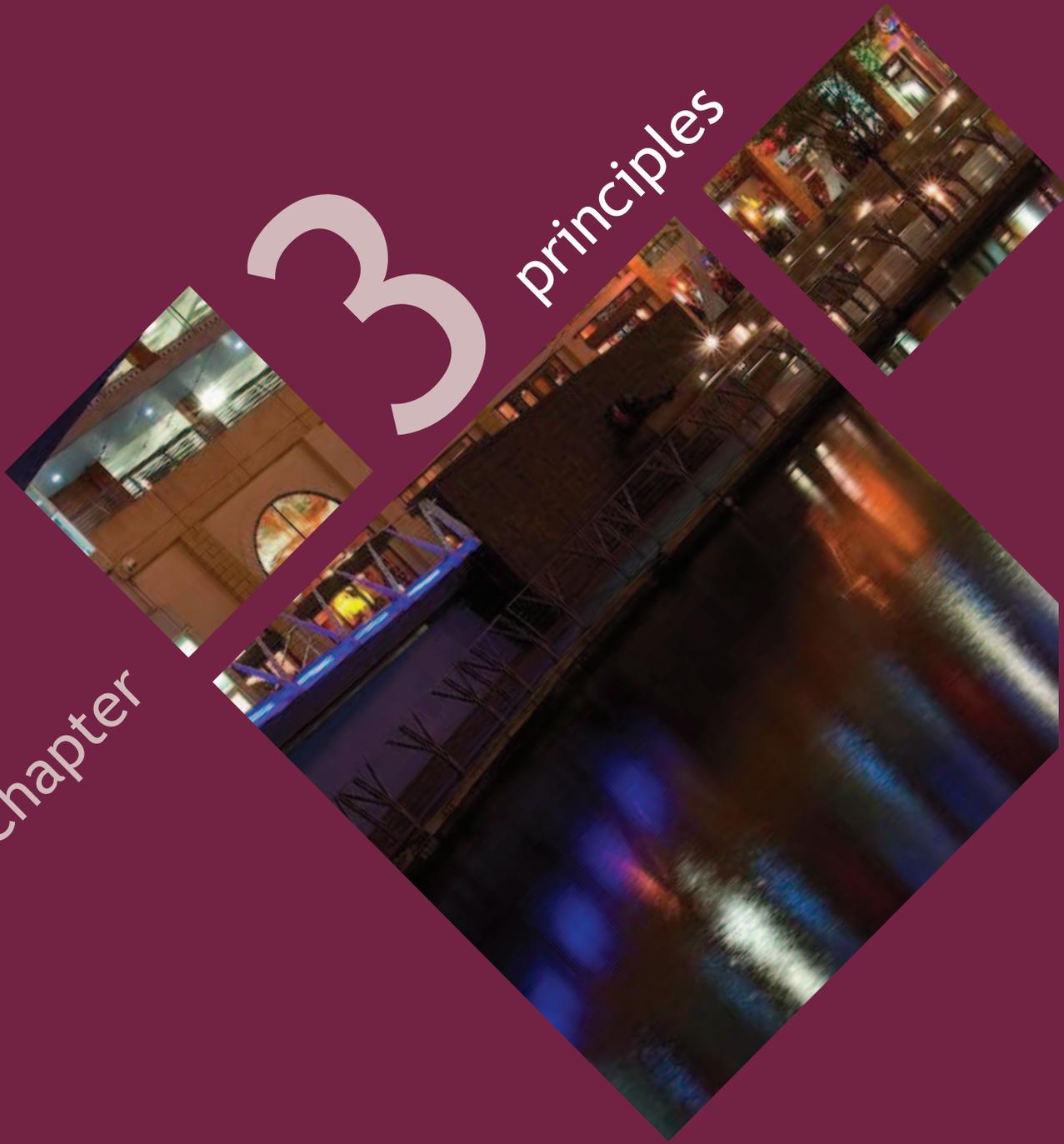




Figure 3.1 Oracle Shopping Centre

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.

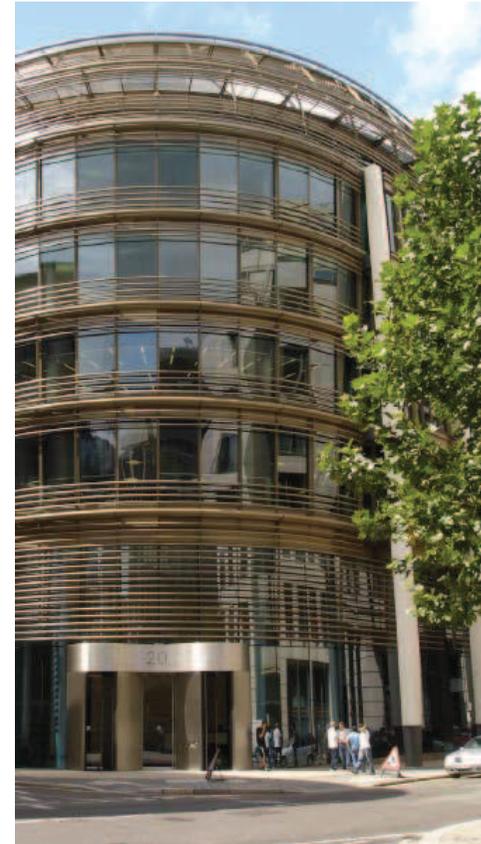


Station Area Framework Principles

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, cafés, 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.

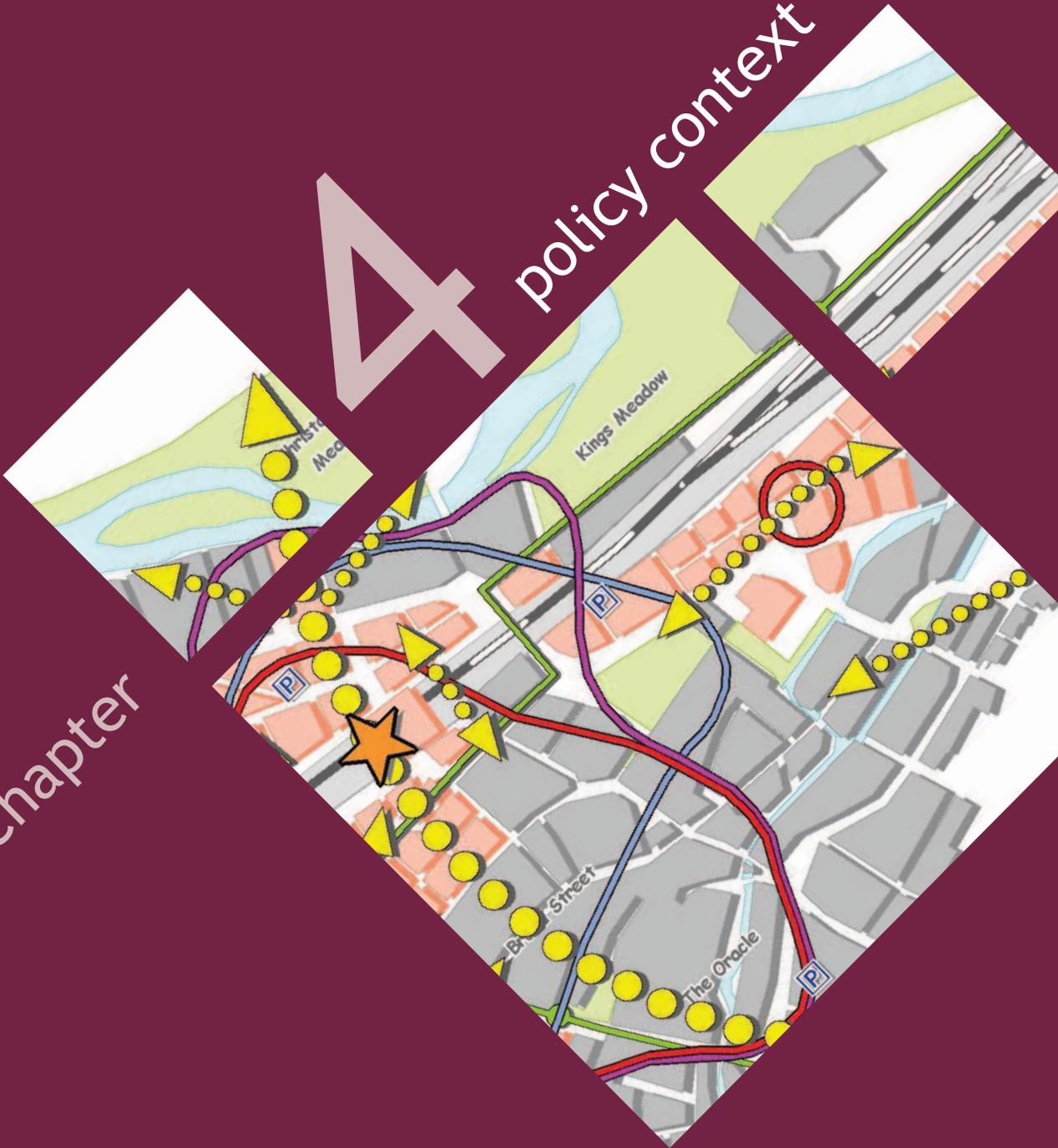
A highly sustainable place

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

4

policy context



policy context

Status of the Station Area Framework

4.1 The Station Area Framework is part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF can be thought of as a folder of documents that, together, form the planning strategy for Reading. This document is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which means it supplements and expands upon higher level planning policy. A SPD should therefore be linked to a 'parent' policy in an adopted higher-level Development Plan Document (DPD).

4.2 The Station Area Framework supplements Policy RC1 (Development in the Station/River Major Opportunity Area) in the Reading Central Area Action Plan (reproduced on page 22, and the strategy is illustrated in figure 4.1), and development management decisions should be made against that policy as supplemented by this Framework. However, many other policies and strategies will also be relevant.

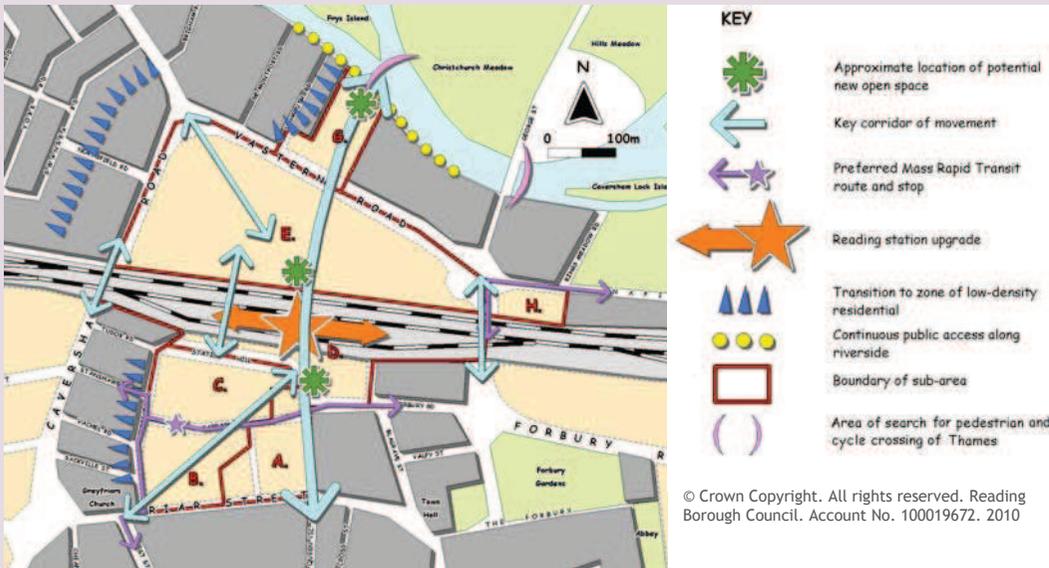


Figure 4.1 Station/River Major Opportunity Area Strategy

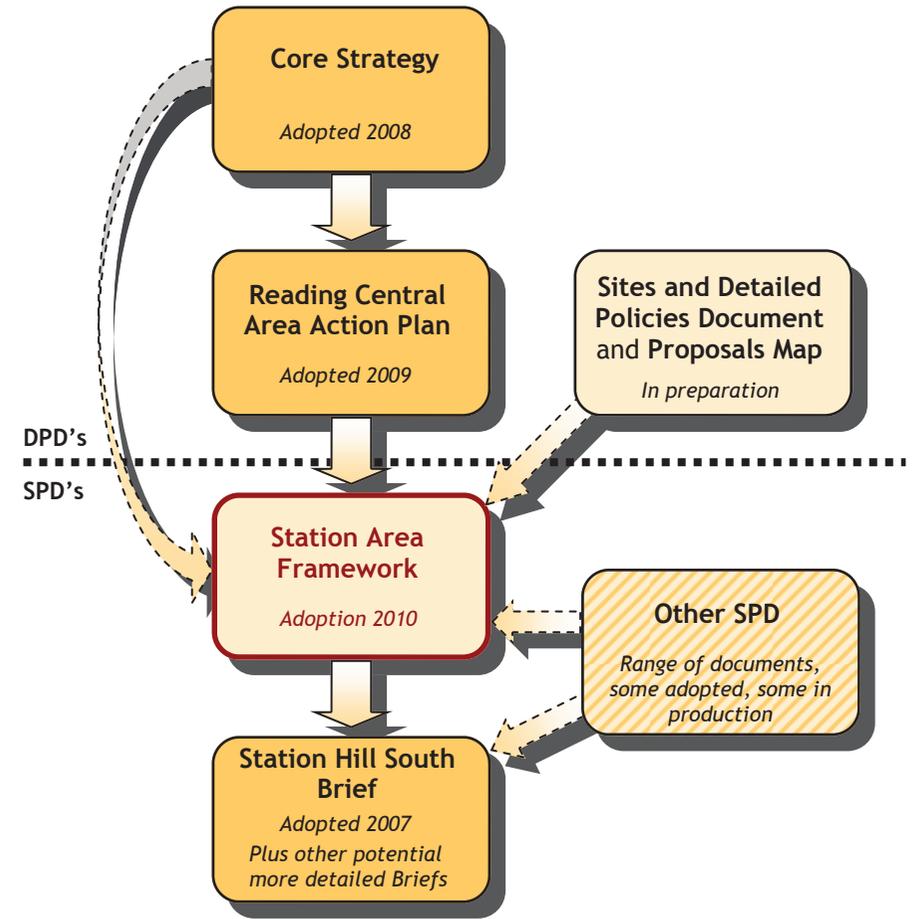


Figure 4.2 Relationship of the Station Area Framework with LDF documents

4.3 As well as supplementing the Reading Central Area Action Plan policy RC1, and helping to implement other policies within the RCAAP (e.g. RC5: Design in the Centre, RC13: Tall Buildings and RC14: Public Realm), the Framework is related to a number of other documents, both within the LDF and outside it.

4.4 Figure 4.2 shows where the Station Area Framework sits within the LDF.

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).



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.



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

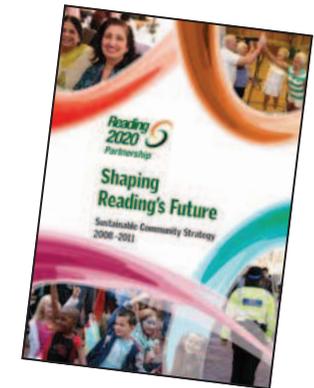
4.8 All are relevant, and the Local Development Framework, including this document, is specified as a key delivery mechanism for some of these themes.

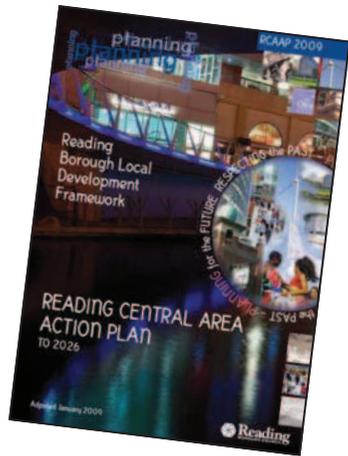
Local Transport Plan

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 RCAAP 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:

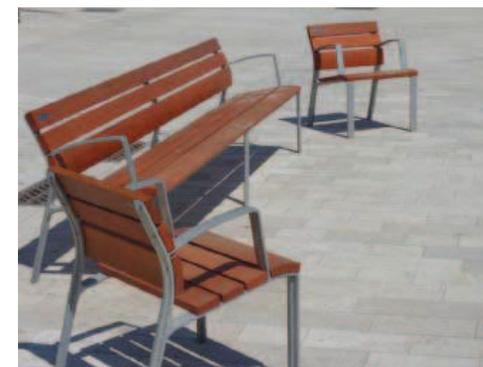
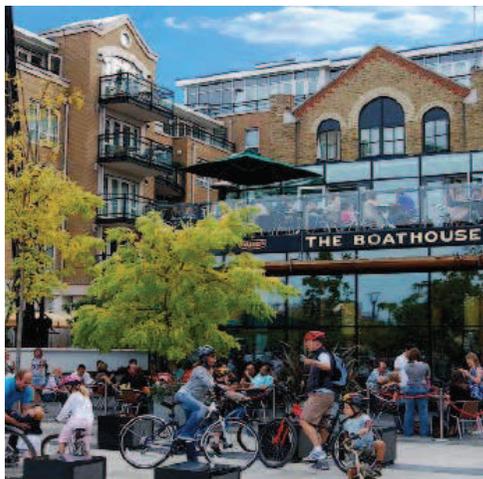
- Station Square South (1)
- Station Square North (2)
- Kennet-Thames Spine (3)
- Riverside Path and Water Spines (4)
- Vastern Road (5)
- Friar Street Link and central piazza (6)
- Station Road Enhancement (7)
- Riverside open space (8)
- Pedestrian grid
- Landscaping and public art



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, Blagrove 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.



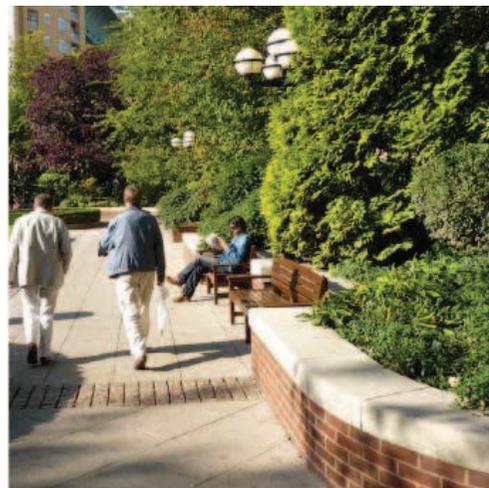
Vastern Road

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.



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 RCAAP (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'

Pedestrian 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.

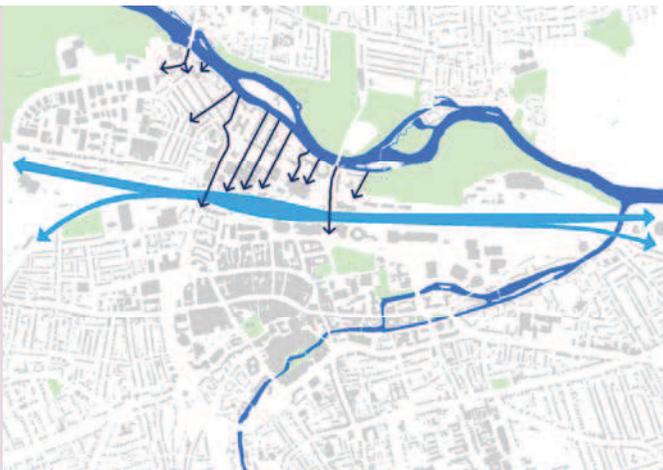


Figure 5.3 Ingress

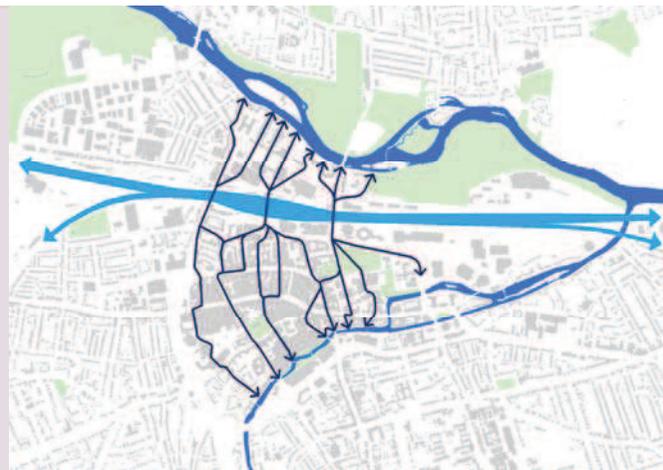


Figure 5.4 North south links

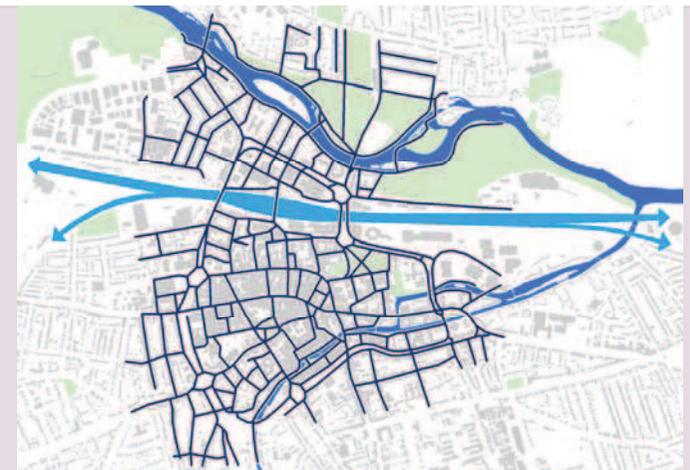


Figure 5.5 Proposed pedestrian grid

Figure 5.6 Walking distances to local open space

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

- West Street
- Blagrove 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

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.





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.

Chapter

6

density, mass
and height



RCAAP Policy RC13: TALL BUILDINGS

In Reading, tall buildings are defined as 10 storeys of commercial floorspace or 12 storeys of residential (equating to 36 metres tall) or above. Tall buildings will meet all the requirements below.

i) Within Reading Borough, tall buildings will only be appropriate within the 'areas of potential for tall buildings' as defined on the Proposals Map. These areas are as follows:

- RC13a Station Area Cluster
- RC13b Western Grouping
- RC13c Eastern Grouping

Figure 8.2* gives an 'at a glance' diagrammatic indication of the principles for each area set out in the following sections.

ii) RC13a, Station Area Cluster:

A new cluster of tall buildings with the station at its heart will signify the status of the station area as a major mixed-use destination and the main gateway to and most accessible part of Reading.

Tall buildings in this area should:

- Be located at the centre of the cluster, close to the station, and step down in height from that point towards the lower buildings at the fringes;
- Contribute to the creation of a coherent, attractive and sustainable cluster of buildings with a high quality of public realm;
- Ensure that adequate space is provided between the buildings to avoid the creation of an overly dense townscape and to allow buildings to be viewed as individual forms;
- Be designed to fit within a wider planning framework or master plan for the area, which allows separate parcels of land to come forward at different times in a co-ordinated manner.

iii) RC13b, Western Grouping:

A small number of tall buildings would be appropriate to create a distinctive grouping, focused along the line of the IDR, to mark the area as the civic heart of Reading and a gateway to the centre.

Tall buildings in this area should:

- Be distinctive landmarks of a complementary design;
- Be generally lower in height than the tallest buildings appropriate for the station cluster, as well as slimmer and spaced further apart;
- Be linked to the physical regeneration of a wider area and should not be proposed in isolation;
- Where buildings are to be integrated or front onto existing streets, include upper storeys of the taller structures that are set back from a base which is in line with the general surrounding building heights, particularly where the structure adjoins a conservation area;
- Not intrude on the key view between Greyfriars Church and St Giles Church, and a view from the open space in the Hosier Street development to St Mary's Church.

iv) RC13c, Eastern Grouping:

One or two landmark buildings situated at street corners or other gateway sites are appropriate to mark the extent of the business area.

Tall buildings in this area should:

- Be of a smaller scale than the tallest buildings around the station;
- Be slim in nature and avoid dominant massing;
- Avoid setting back upper storeys on Kings Road in order to align strategic views into and out of the centre;
- Not intrude on the view from Blakes Bridge towards Blakes Cottages.

One tall building is already under construction, and if the permitted tall building at 120 Kings Road is constructed, there will no longer be scope for additional tall buildings in this area.

v) In addition to the area-specific requirements, all tall building proposals should be of excellent design and architectural quality, and should:

- Enhance Reading's skyline, through a distinctive profile and careful design of the upper and middle sections of the building;
- Contribute to a human scale street environment, through paying careful attention to the lower section or base of the building, providing rich architectural detailing and reflecting their surroundings through the definition of any upper storey setback and reinforcing the articulation of the streetscape;
- Contribute to high-quality views from distance, views from middle-distance and local views;
- Take account of the context within which they sit, including the existing urban grain, streetscape and built form and local architectural style;
- Avoid bulky, over-dominant massing;
- Preserve and, where appropriate, enhance the setting of conservation areas and listed buildings;
- Use high quality materials and finishes;
- Create safe, pleasant and attractive spaces around them, and avoid detrimental impacts on the existing public realm;
- Locate any car parking or vehicular servicing within or below the development;
- Maximise the levels of energy efficiency in order to offset the generally energy intensive nature of such buildings;
- Mitigate any wind speed or turbulence or overshadowing effects through design and siting;
- Ensure adequate levels of daylighting and sunlighting are able to reach buildings and spaces within the development;
- Avoid significant negative impacts on existing residential properties and the public realm in terms of outlook, privacy, daylight, sunlight, noise, light glare and night-time lighting;
- Provide managed public access to an upper floor observatory and to ground floors where appropriate, and ensure that arrangements for access within the building are incorporated in the design stage;
- Incorporate appropriate maintenance arrangements at the design stage.

density, mass and height

Wider policy

6.1 The Council has produced a number of local development documents and evidence studies in respect of density, mass and height which relate to central Reading and the Station Area.

6.2 Building height and massing in the wider central area is addressed in the RCAAP, particularly policies RC1-3 and RC13. Guidance in this Station Framework interprets and applies the Plan policies.

6.3 Much of the Station Area is defined as an area of potential for tall buildings, where tall buildings can potentially contribute to and not harm the urban character. The framework therefore explores a series of organising principles to guide and control tall buildings in the Station Area.

6.4 A series of height, massing and sectional studies have been undertaken, particularly examining the inter-relationship of tall buildings immediately around the Station and beside the railway tracks. These studies form the basis of the following guidance on density, mass and scale.

* Reproduced as figure 6.1 in this document

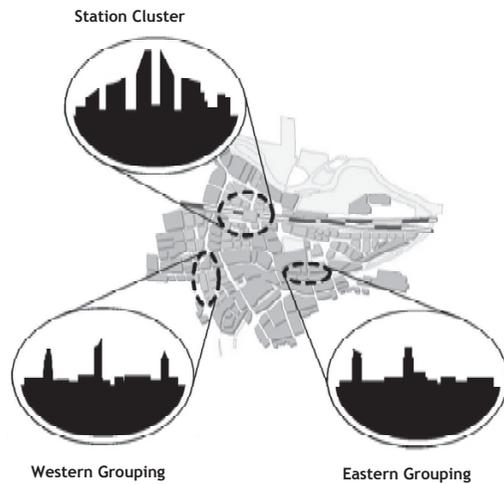


Figure 6.1 Diagrammatic indicative representation of the Station Cluster (Adopted RCAAP).

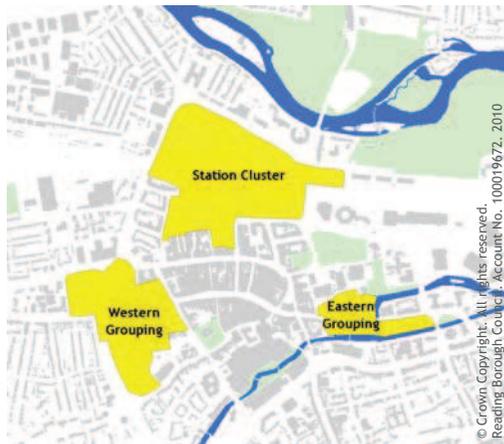


Figure 6.2 Locations potentially appropriate for tall buildings under RCAAP policy RC13

Perimeter blocks

6.5 One aim of the density, scale and massing guidance is to promote the formation of perimeter blocks wherever possible. Perimeter blocks are considered to be a particularly robust form of urban development capable of accommodating a mix of uses, providing amenity space within the centre of each block whilst framing and reinforcing the network of streets and the pedestrian grid.

Guidelines

6.6 Tall buildings and high density developments are an integral part of the vision for central Reading. The Framework therefore provides guidance on the density, mass and scale of new developments.

6.7 The guidance does not address the detailed design of tall buildings which should be individually assessed on their design merits and in the context of other policies and considerations, including those on design, amenity, sustainability and other matters.

6.8 The guidance is intended to accord with the Core Strategy, the RCAAP, and CABE and English Heritage’s ‘Guidance on Tall Buildings’.

Three-fold approach

6.9 A summary of the proposed measures relating to density, mass and scale/ height is given in figure 6.4. All of the measures are for general guidance purposes only and dependent upon the highest standards of design quality and amenity being achieved.

6.10 The specific guidelines on density, mass and scale described on the following pages are inter-dependent and are designed to combine into a coherent set of inter-related controls: a three-fold approach. This three-fold approach is illustrated in figure 6.3.

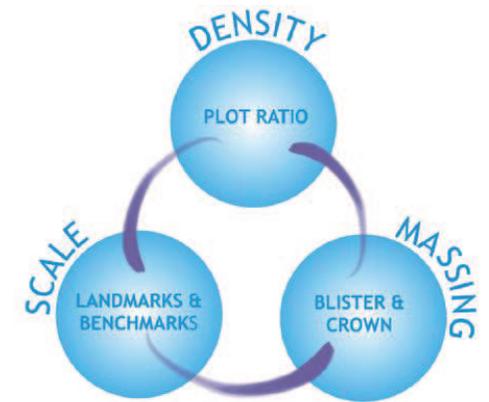


Figure 6.3 Combined density, mass and height controls

Density	<p>Plot ratio The ratio of the total floor area of buildings to the size of the parcel of land on which they are to be located. The Framework sets a range of indicative densities based upon an analysis of the capacity and constraints on individual plots, which can be translated into broad plot ratio ranges. The range is expressed as a percentage so that a ratio of 250% is equivalent to ratio of 2.5:1</p>
Height/ Scale	<p>Landmarks Individual or groups of tall or prominent buildings which can enable people to orientate themselves and recognise where they are, emphasise important places or districts and create a distinctive and memorable skyline. Landmark heights will often exceed benchmark height controls and may exceptionally breach the ‘blister’ massing control principle.</p>
	<p>District landmarks The very tallest and most prominent buildings visible and distinguishable from across the central Reading district.</p>
	<p>Local landmarks Tall or prominent buildings above ten storeys which are nevertheless clearly subordinate and therefore lower than district landmarks.</p>
Mass	<p>Benchmarks The benchmark height is the recommended height for each plot or parcel of land, apart from landmark buildings. A plot may have a relatively low benchmark height as well as a landmark designation permitting a taller building on one part of the plot. Benchmark heights do not exceed ten storeys because ten storeys automatically triggers tall building policies, design guidance and the landmark height controls. The Benchmark height is defined in storeys, not metres. Benchmark heights are not absolute limits and may be modified upwards in certain circumstances.</p>
	<p>Crown A cluster of district and local landmark buildings located in close proximity so that they coalesce visually into a single coherent urban form or composition. The crown denotes the railway Station as the gateway to the town centre and the central or focal point of the Station Area.</p> <p>Blister The general shape or silhouette of development formed by buildings in the Station Area where lower buildings at the periphery gradually rise higher towards the centre. The pattern may be varied but not irregular, with no sudden shifts in scale.</p>

Figure 6.4 Density, mass and height controls and definitions

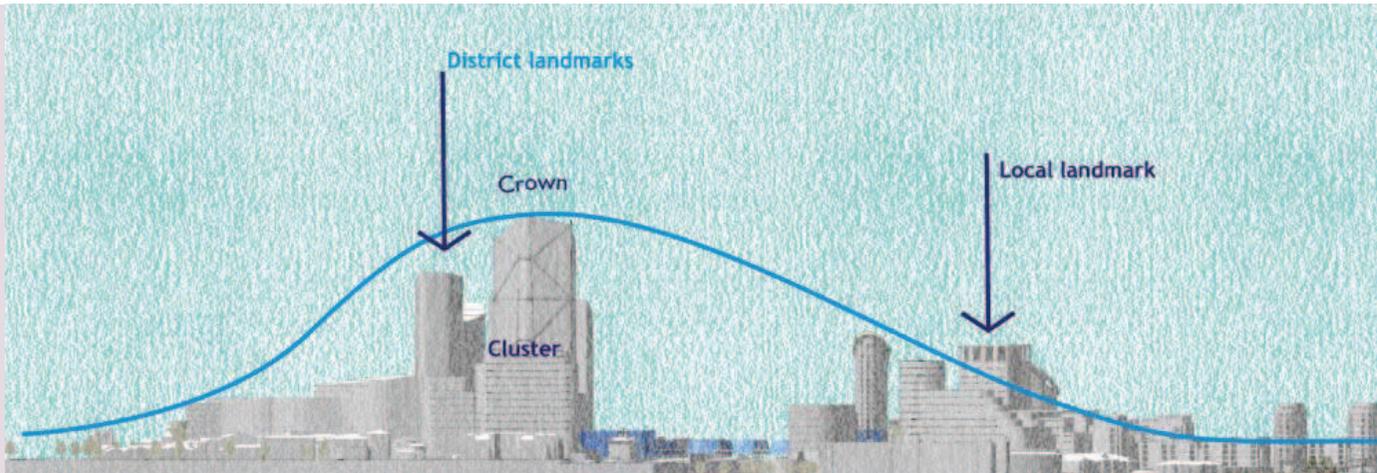


Figure 6.5 Massing strategy

Area massing principles

6.11 Development in the Station Area should be characterised by high density development with an intense, fine grained urban fabric framing flexible development plots capable of adaptation to many land uses, combinations of land uses (vertical and horizontal) and many building types and forms.

6.12 Tall buildings should rise up around the Station 'nexus'.

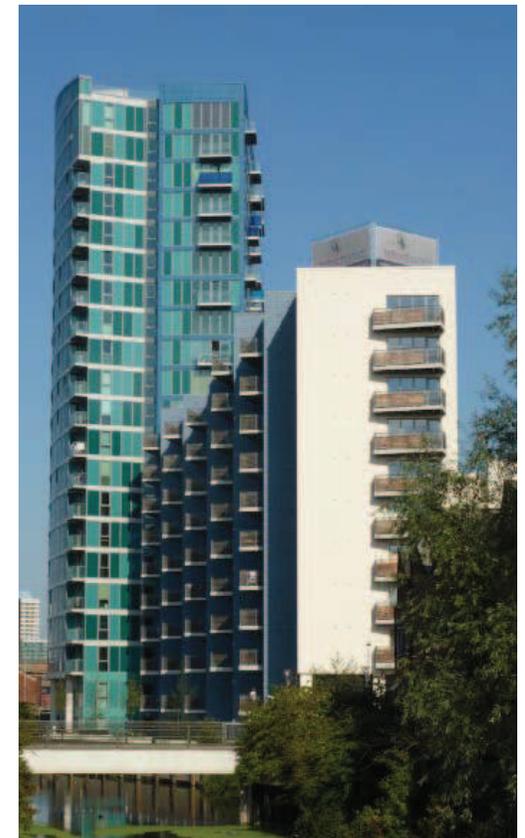
6.13 The approach to building massing should be dramatic with a new cluster of taller buildings forming a new and distinctive skyline for the Station Area as a centrepiece of the centre.

6.14 The 'dome' of development is identified with the 'crown', the area of greatest permissible height, immediately adjoining and to the south of the Station entrance.

Defining the 'crown'

6.15 The area close to the southern Station entrance has been selected as a suitable place for the tallest buildings and for a cluster of tall buildings for the following reasons:

- The Station entrance is a major transport node at the heart of the northward extension of the town centre.
- A cluster will mark the Station as an important place and landmark in itself.
- The area marks a bluff or low hill with the ground rising from the Thames flood plain to the east, north and west. Building heights can mirror this topography. Conversely, lower buildings are to be encouraged on the lower ground.
- The combination of proximity to the Station and the existing core of the town, the availability of suitable sites and current development interest.
- The area is suitable for the formation of a cluster of tall buildings which will form a dramatic skyline in views from higher ground and open space to the north and also in views from the south east and south west.
- There are appropriately sized sites available for development in the short and medium term so that the setting of tall buildings can be controlled and adapted in ways which may not be possible with small or confined sites.
- The Council has resolved to grant the Station Hill redevelopment scheme (SH2). The redevelopment of the area will change the character of the central area by introducing a tall building cluster.
- The relative lack of areas sensitive to tall buildings compared to other potential locations.
- RCAAAP policy RC13 requires that the tallest buildings will be located in the centre of the cluster, and gradually step down in height to the outer areas.





Density

6.16 Strategic and local development policies require that new developments make the best possible use of their sites to accommodate planned growth. The general aim for the Area is therefore to maximise densities provided this is compatible with the local context, urban and sustainable design principles and public transport capacity.

6.17 The purpose of the density ranges, outlined in figure 6.7, is to guide the intensity of development and enable assumptions to be made about the impact of development. They are not exact building controls but provide a general indication of the range of densities likely to be appropriate, subject to other considerations.

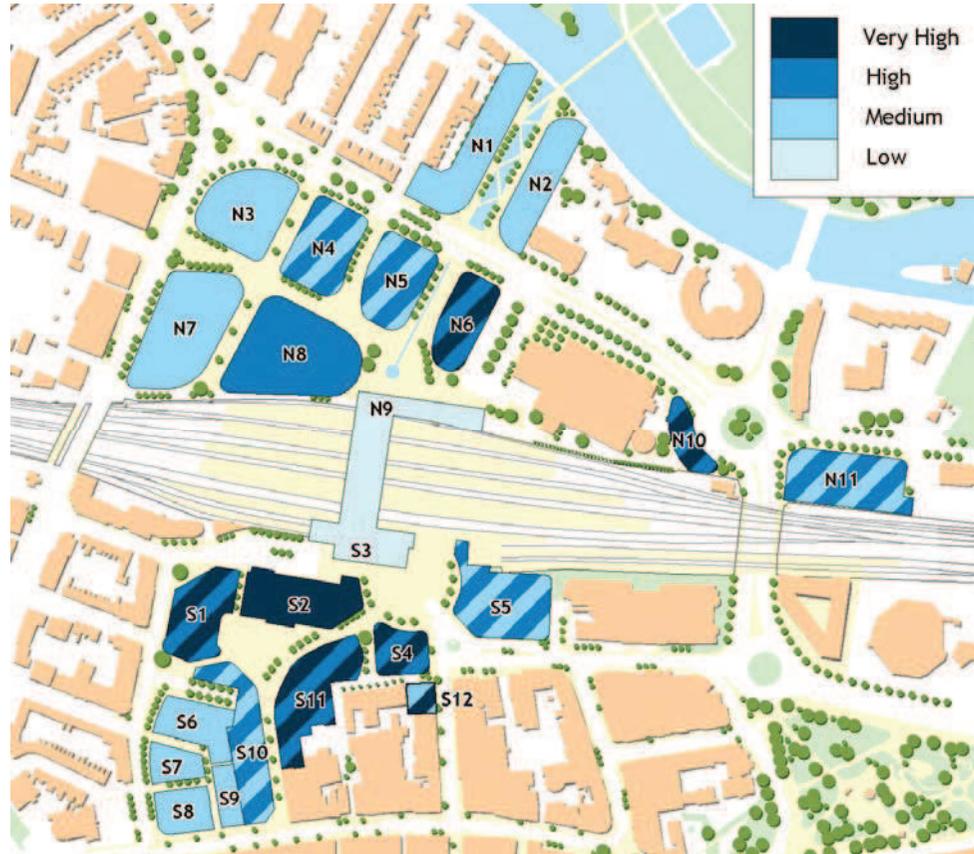


Figure 6.6 Indicative appropriate densities for individual development plots

6.18 The densities equate approximately to the following plot ratios:

- Low: Less than 200% (or 2:1)
- Medium: 200-500% (or 2:1 - 5:1)
- High: 500-1,000% (or 5:1 - 10:1)
- Very High: More than 1,000% (or 10:1)

6.19 Generally, low densities, e.g. those found in suburban areas, are not appropriate for the Central Area due to the levels of accessibility and high land values. The exception is the new station complex, as higher densities are not considered to be achievable (see paragraph 9.11).

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Plot reference	Density range
N1	Medium
N2	Medium
N3	Medium
N4	Medium - High
N5	Medium - High
N6	High - Very High
N7	Medium
N8	High
N9	Low
N10	High - Very High
N11	Medium - High
S1	High - Very High
S2	Very High
S3	Low
S4	High - Very High
S5	Medium - High
S6	Medium
S7	Medium
S8	Medium
S9	Medium
S10	Medium - High
S11	High - Very High
S12	Medium - Very High

Figure 6.7 Density guidance



Building heights

6.20 The approach to the height guidelines set out in figures 6.8 and 6.9 is a simple one. Two main measures, landmark heights and benchmark height, are applied to each main development area which may then be modified according to circumstances.

6.21 Benchmark and landmark heights are applied to areas broadly defined by the urban design and development analysis in this Framework which identifies the major development sites and the main blocks of development between the existing and proposed pattern of streets and public spaces.

6.22 The benchmark height is the general recommended height for each area. The benchmark height is defined in commercial storeys, not metres and does not exceed ten storeys because this is the point at which tall building controls and design guidance applies. As a general rule, 10 commercial storeys equate to 12 residential storeys.

6.23 Benchmark heights may be modified upwards in order to realise certain urban design or other major planning benefits, or where applicants have demonstrated convincingly that the potential impact of higher buildings on the surroundings can be mitigated.



6.24 Benchmark heights are not guarantees and may be modified downwards where it becomes clear that proposed buildings will harm residential amenity or affect the setting of listed buildings, important views or open spaces.

6.25 There is a general presumption that benchmark heights should grade back to the established heights in the surrounding areas.

6.26 Landmark buildings may exceptionally 'puncture' the benchmark heights and the general 'dome' massing pattern in order to create emphasis and to mark important places. It is not envisaged that every potential landmark location in figure 6.9 will necessarily provide a landmark building.

Plot reference	Benchmark	Landmark
N1	4	None
N2	6	None
N3	6	None
N4	7	Local
N5	8	Local
N6	*	Local
N7	6	None
N8	8	Local
N9	6	None
N10	8	Local
N11	8	Local
S1	*	Local
S2	*	District
S3	4	None
S4	*	Local
S5	6	Local
S6	6	None
S7	6	None
S8	6	None
S9	6	None
S10	8	Local**
S11	8	District**
S12	*	Local

* Benchmark height likely to be at least 10 storeys - refer to tall building policies and design guidance.

** Only parts of the plot within the Tall Buildings Clusters as defined by the RCAAP are appropriate for landmarks.

Figure 6.9 Scale/height guidelines



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Figure 6.8 Main development plots

6.27 The Station Area borders the attractive open spaces and nature areas of the Thames riverside. The area also has an exceptional built heritage, both archaeological and architectural. Building heights should have regard to the qualities of buildings and areas of architectural and historic interest and important views and prospects.

6.28 Whilst encouraging high density generally, the Framework does not necessarily advocate the provision of tall buildings across the Area. Much of the surrounding area consists of fairly low density, low rise residential areas. High-density development can also be achieved through lower-rise compact development forms and this will be particularly appropriate immediately adjoining low rise residential areas to the west of Caversham Road and the residential streets leading from Vastern Road northwards towards the Thames (e.g. Lynmouth Road).

6.29 A transition zone (buffer zone) should be formed towards adjacent areas (particularly the historic core of the town and low-rise residential areas to the west and north) with heights stepping down so that they relate appropriately to surrounding development and residential areas. Development should respect the amenity, privacy and light requirements of these properties, and not have significant detrimental effects on them in terms of noise and pollution.

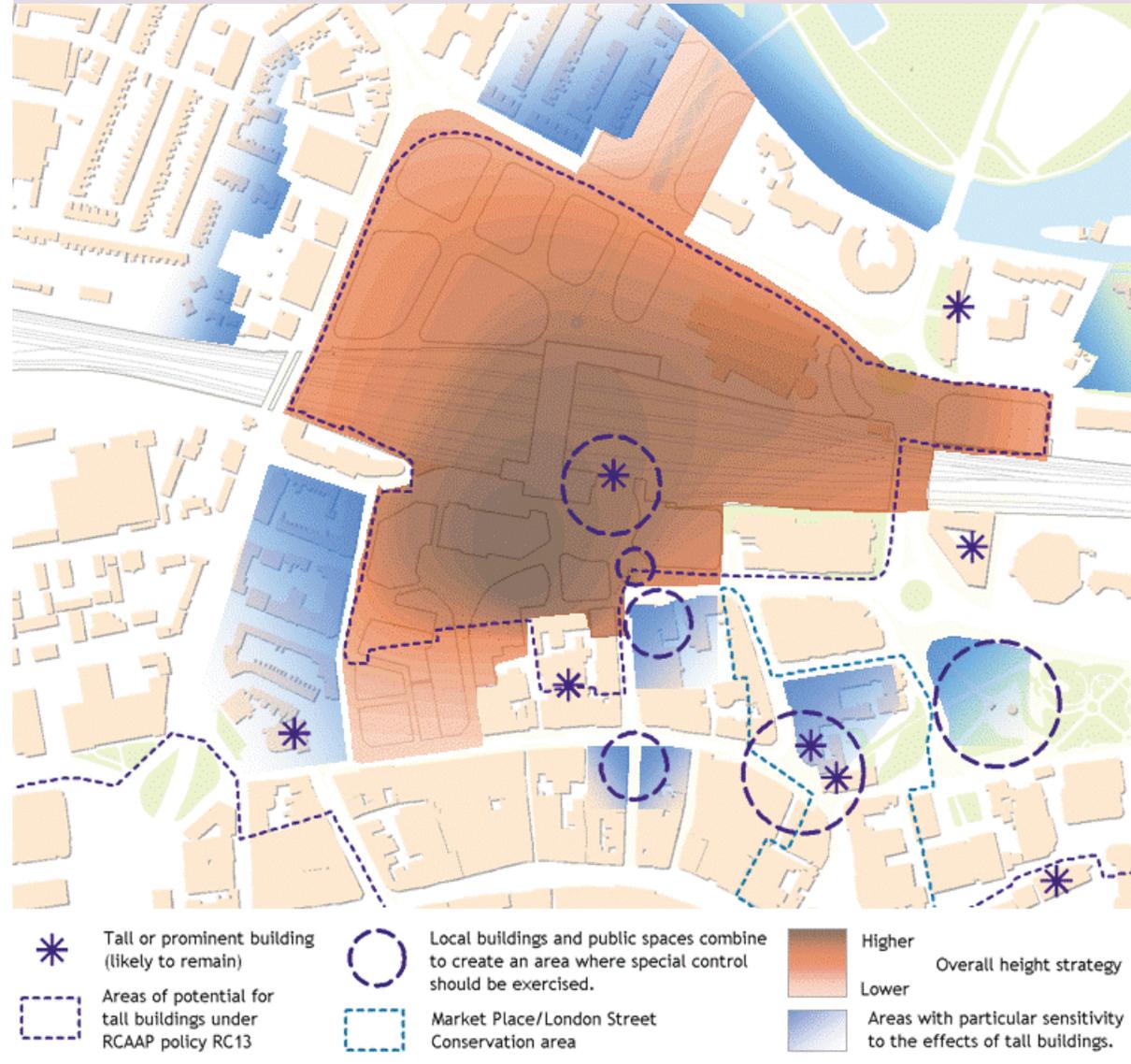
6.30 All plant on top of tall buildings will need to adequately screened from public view.

Sensitive receptors

6.31 A number of constraints impose limits on the densities that can realistically be achieved in some parts of the area. The Station Area is already well developed and most sites are already constructed to relatively high plot ratios. Parts of the area are 'sensitive' to intensification in terms of the established urban character or the need to safeguard residential amenity.

6.32 Areas which might be harmed by high density development ('sensitive receptors') are indicated in figure 6.10. It is important to ensure that new development in or near such areas does not harm local amenity or the established urban character. Figure 6.10 also shows the overall height strategy (the 'crown' and 'blister' concept).

6.33 New buildings, whether or not they lie within the boundaries of a Conservation Area, will be expected to make a positive contribution to the area and they should conserve and where appropriate enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas and conserve the setting of listed buildings.



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Figure 6.10 Tall building location guidance

Chapter

7

views

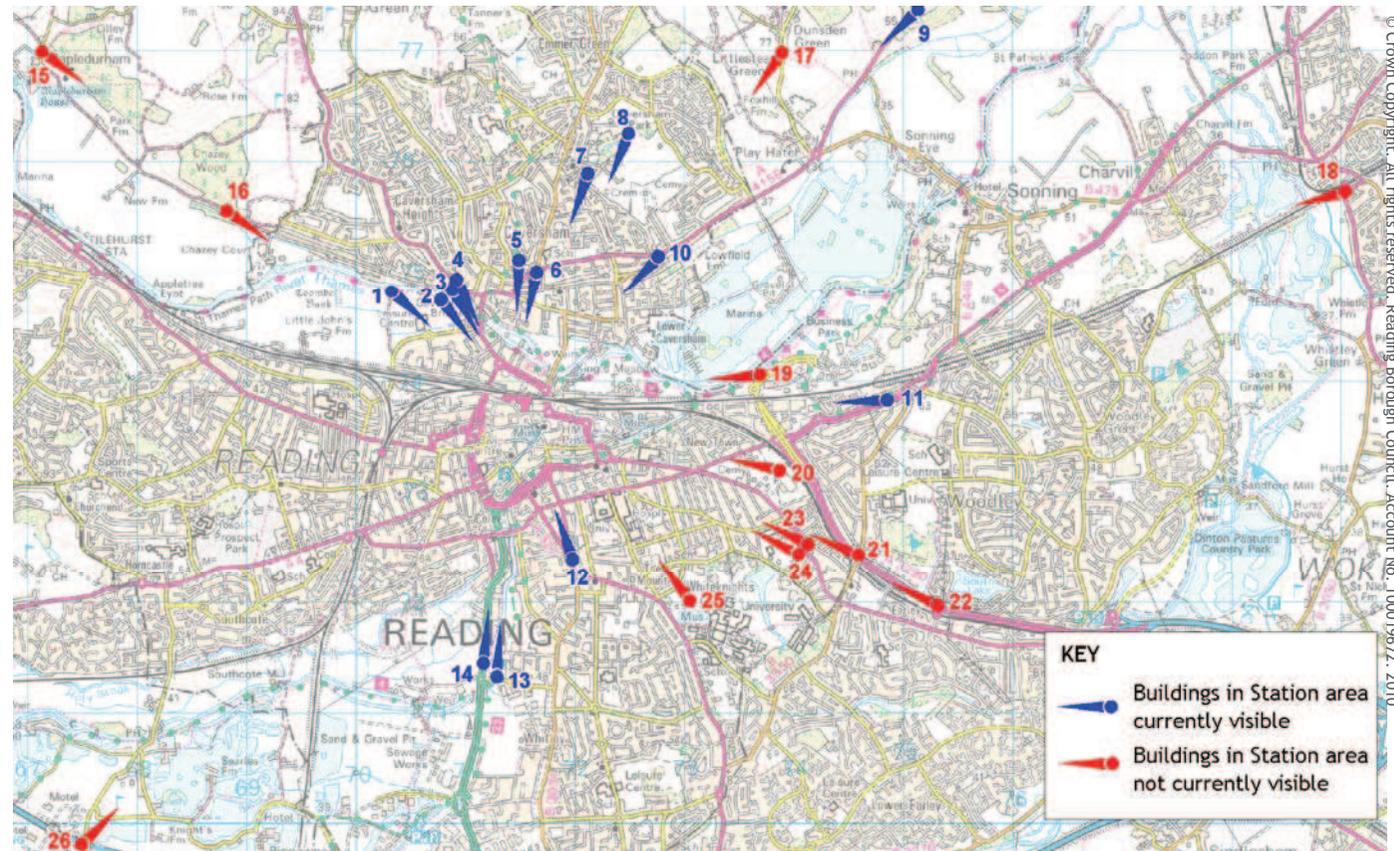




views

7.1 It is likely that the scale of development proposed will have a significant effect on views within the Station Area and the rest of the centre, and on views of the centre from further afield.

7.2 This section identifies key views, and potential views, of the Station Area. They have been derived from various sources, including the Tall Buildings Strategy and evidence for the Reading Central Area Action Plan, and detailed work relating to the Station Hill application. They should be taken into account in considering development proposals in the area.



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Figure 7.1 Longer-distance views

Longer distance views

7.3 Figure 7.1 identifies longer-distance views that should be considered, i.e. those over 0.5 km from the Station Area boundary.

7.4 Buildings within the Station Area are already visible from some viewpoints:

1	Thames Promenade at northern end of Cow Lane
2	Thames Promenade opposite canoe club
3	Caversham Court Gardens
4	St Peter's Churchyard
5	Balmore Walk
6	Junction of Prospect Street and Peppard Road
7	Horse Close
8	Caversham Park
9	Span Hill (A4155)
10	Junction of Henley Road and Lower Henley Road
11	A4 at Shepherds Hill, Earley
12	Junction of Mount Pleasant and Southampton Street
13	Rose Kiln Lane at bridge over River Kennet
14	A33 near water treatment works

7.5 Generally Western Tower, Thames Tower and the Ibis/Novotel hotels are the main buildings visible, although from some viewpoints, e.g. Balmore Walk, many of the lower-rise buildings are also evident. The emphasis from these points will be enhancement of the views, and on making a positive contribution to an overall skyline for Reading.

7.6 From other points, taller buildings may bring the Station Area into the view for the first time:

15	Unclassified road north of Mapledurham
16	The Warren footpath at Chazey Wood
17	Dunsden Way, south of Dunsden Green
18	Hurst Road, Twyford
19	Thames Path at Thames Valley Park
20	Palmer Park
21	Church Road, Earley at bridge over A3290
22	Footbridge at Earley station
23	Junction of Wokingham Road and Green Road
24	Green Road
25	Whiteknights Campus, University of Reading
26	Burghfield Road at bridge over M4

7.7 From these points, the emphasis will be on ensuring that, where development is visible, that it makes a positive contribution to the view.



Shorter-distance views

7.8 There are a number of important views within the central area which development in the Station Area has the potential to affect. Some of these are panoramic views of the centre, others are direct views of the Station Area, while others still are local views of individual streets or spaces where buildings in the Station Area may form a backdrop. Not all views will be applicable to all developments.

27	Chatham Street
28	Weldale Street
29	Great Knollys Street
30	Junction of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road looking along Friar Street
31	Junction of Friar Street and Greyfriars Road looking along Greyfriars Road
32	Vachel Road
33	Junction of Vachel Road and Greyfriars Road
34	Stanshawe Street
35	Tudor Road
36	Network Rail depot
37	Cardiff Road
38	Northfield Road
39	Caversham Road
40	Caversham Bridge
41	War memorial, Christchurch Meadows
42	Wolsey Road
43	Christchurch Meadows

44	De Montfort Road
45	Lynmouth Road
46	Reading Bridge looking west
47	Reading Bridge looking south west
48	Hills Meadow
49	Kings Meadow
50	Napier Road
51	Forbury Road near Reading Prison
52	Junction of Forbury Road and Vastern Road
53	Forbury Gardens
54	Blagrove Street
55	St Laurence's Church
56	Duke Street and Market Place
57	Queen Victoria Street
58	Station Road
59	Friar Street looking west
60	Union Street
61	Junction of Castle Street and St Mary's Butts

7.9 Views of particular sensitivity are those where historic assets form part of the composition of the view. These are marked in red on figure 7.2, and, in these cases, the effect any change to the view has on the historic asset should be taken into account. For other views, the emphasis will be on ensuring that, where development is visible, that it makes a positive contribution to the view.

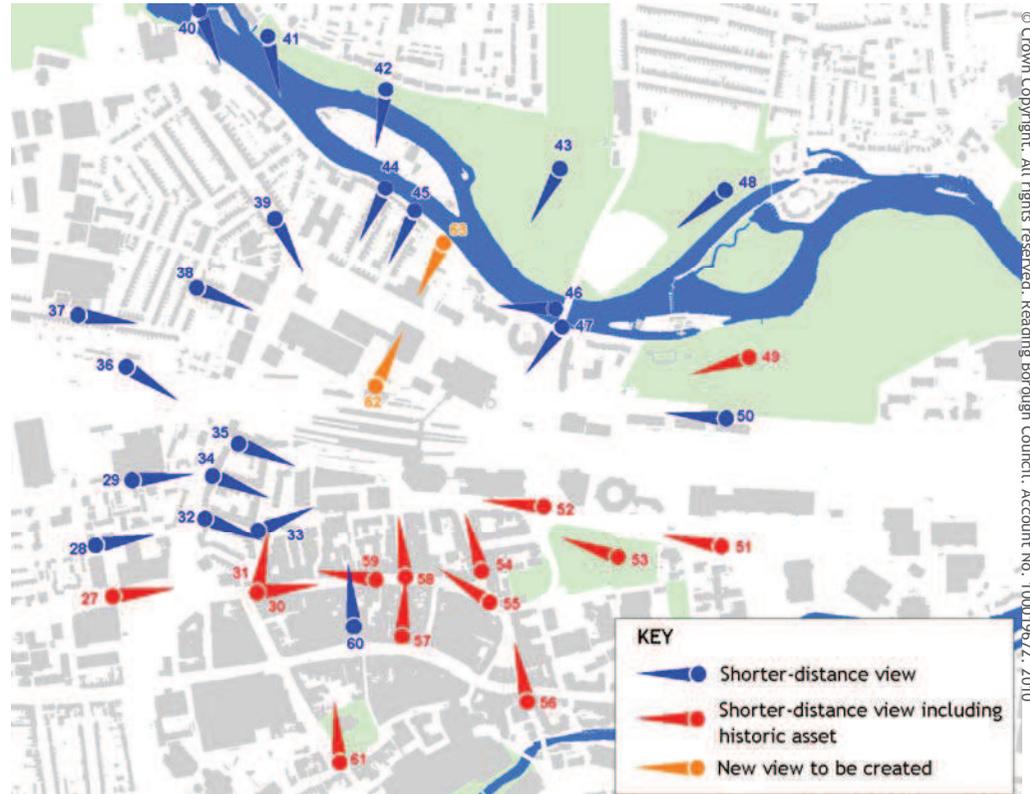


Figure 7.2 Shorter-distance views

7.10 The new development will result in new views being opened up within the Station Area itself. Of particular significance are views along the direct north-south link, between the Station and the Thames, where there should be an unbroken line of sight.

62	Station Square north looking north
63	New public space on Thames looking south



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Chapter

8

urban design
framework

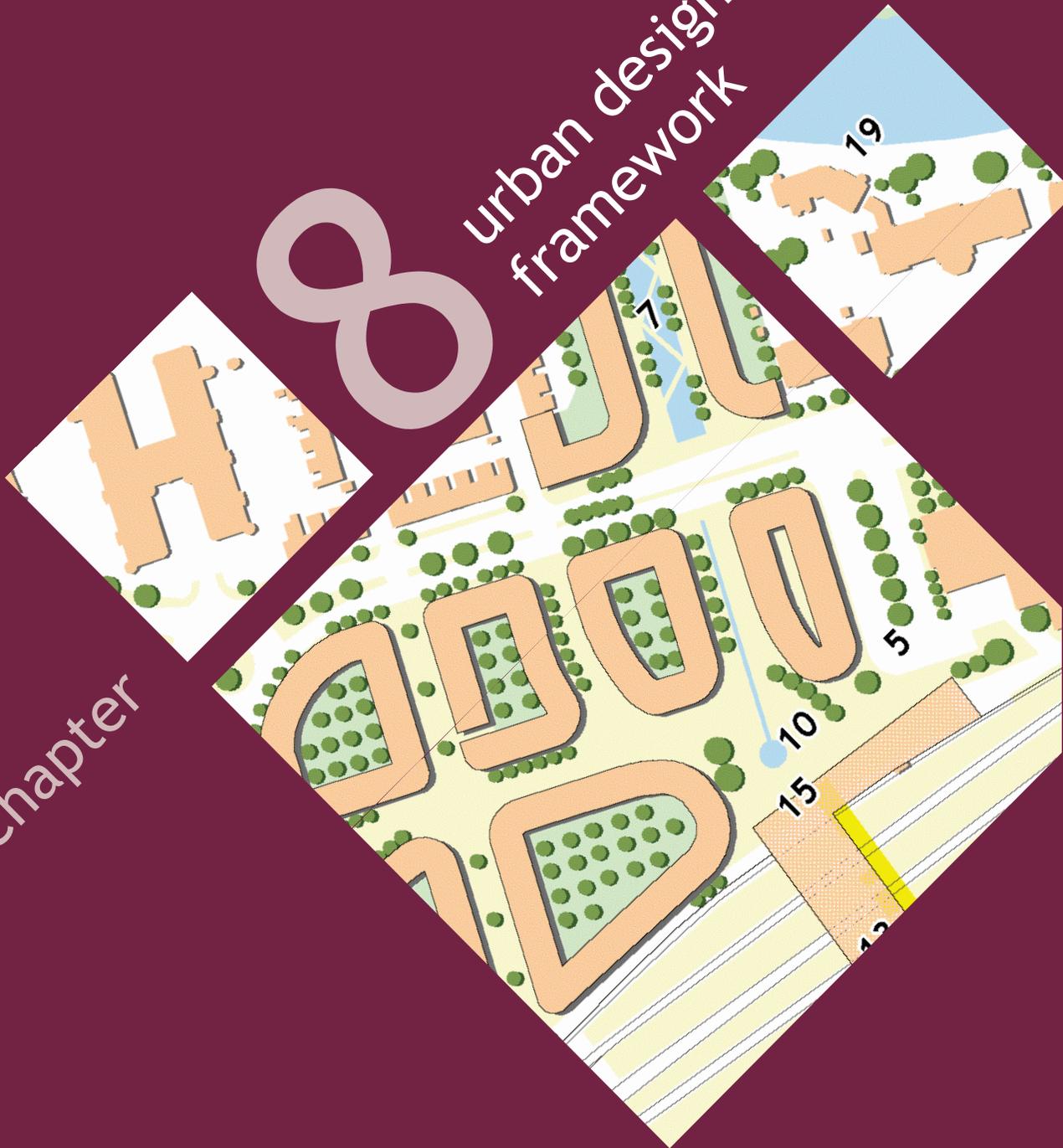


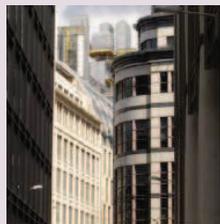
Figure 8.1 Exemplars



Potsdamer Platz, Berlin



City of London north fringe (City Wall and Broadgate)



Paddington Basin and Paddington Central, London



Brindley Place, Birmingham



urban design framework

8.1 This chapter sets out the Urban Design Framework based on an analysis of the planning policy context and the site. It outlines the principles that will underpin the successful transformation of this area by:

- Integrating transport infrastructure with development;
- Creating a mix of complementary land uses; and
- Promoting high quality buildings, streets and spaces.

8.2 The framework has been developed in the light of a long history of design work in this area, including the City Centre Framework, as well as a series of central area urban redevelopment schemes of a similar scale and mix. These are illustrated in figure 8.1. The Framework needs to be read in conjunction with design policies in the Core Strategy (CS7) and the RCAAP (RC5).

8.3 The framework is based upon five key concepts:

- Establishing a layout that maximises the potential of sites compatible with the local context;
- Creating permeable development that strengthens north-south links and improves connectivity across the area;
- Integrating public spaces and active frontages to establish vibrant, safe and enjoyable areas and create a focus to the sites;
- Incorporating gateway and landmark buildings and focal points that create a 'sense of place' and identity for the area; and
- Complementing the character and historical context of the Central Area.

A framework for development

8.4 Figure 8.2 illustrates the broad urban design structure that will guide the development and forms the foundation for this Framework.

8.5 The various diagrams aim to:

- Address infrastructure and connectivity, particularly the integration of the station and interchange with planned redevelopment;
- Resolve highways, servicing and car parking matters, highlighting potential conflicts/pressures;
- Describe a balance which has been struck, after testing, between routes, spaces and buildings. The development sites and parcels described in the diagrams result from site planning exercises which considered geometry and plot testing and found the approach to be robust. The overall framework is designed to be capable of accommodating a wide variety and many combinations of land uses at a range of densities;
- Describe a potentially high density central district which is compact and urban in character, connected to the existing town centre and which in turn connects to the surrounding inner suburbs;
- Specify the amount and distribution of open spaces and incorporate connections to adjoining spaces;
- Define parcels and plots in a way which works with the grain or pattern of land ownership so that development can progress in stages.

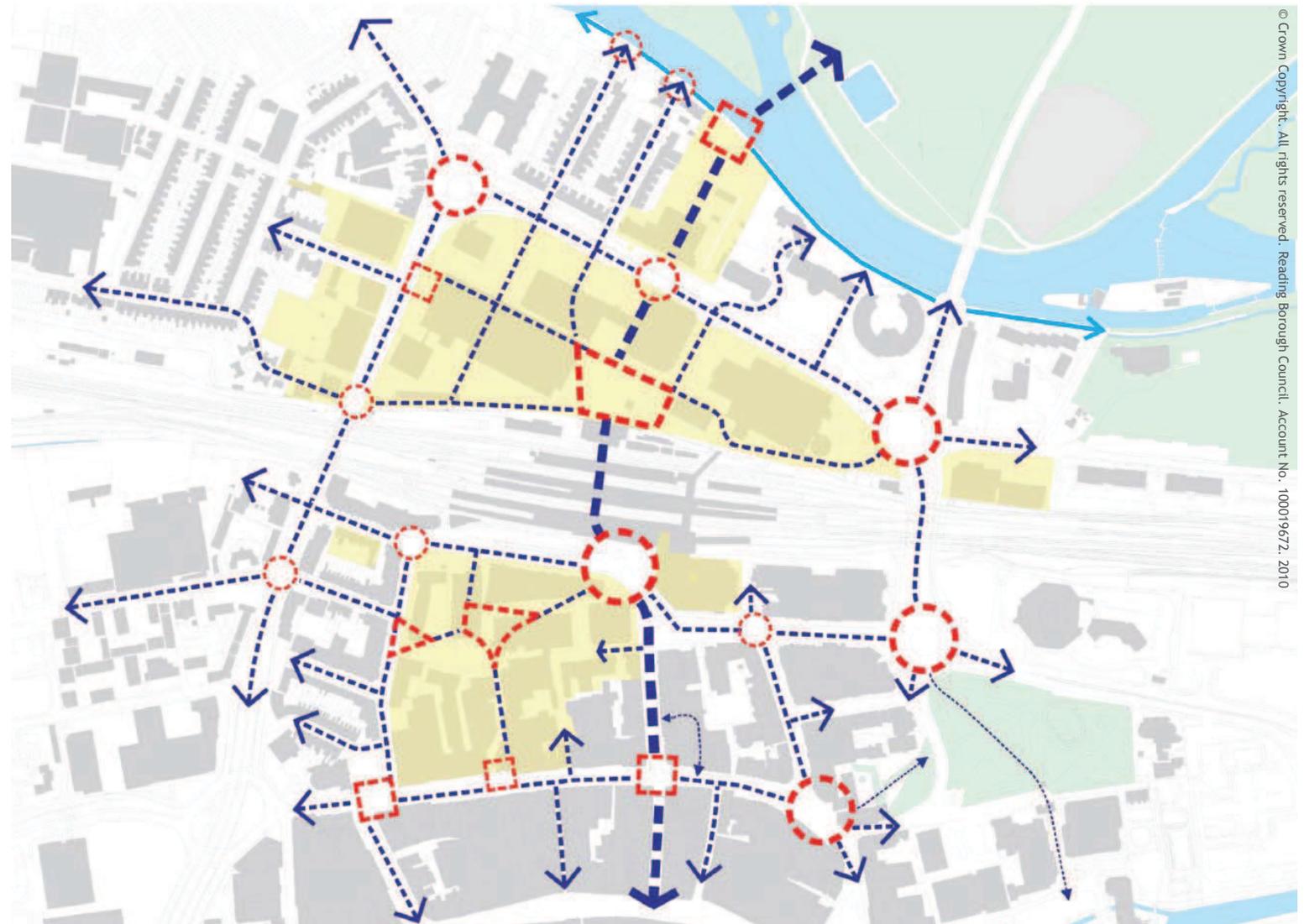
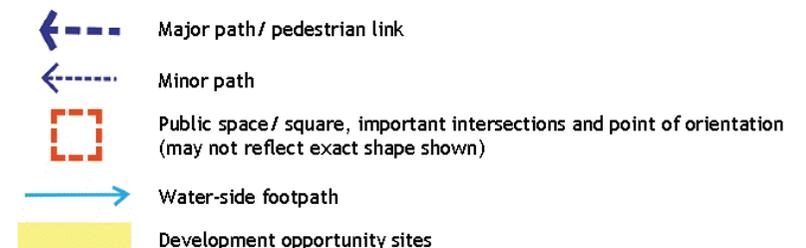


Figure 8.2 Framework structure



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chapter 08 urban design framework

Core Strategy Policy CS7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

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 various components of development form, including:

- Layout: urban structure and urban grain;
- Landscape;
- Density and mix;
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials.

will be assessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the following urban design objectives: -

- Character - a place with its own identity and sense of place
- Continuity and enclosure
- Quality of the public realm
- Ease of movement and permeability
- Legibility - clear image and easy to understand
- Adaptability - capable of adaptation over time

- Diversity - meets a wide range of needs.

Developments will also be assessed to ensure that they: -

- Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;
- Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;
- Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them; and
- Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping.

Applications for major and minor developments should be accompanied by a design and access statement that deal with all the above matters.

RCAAP Policy RC5: DESIGN IN THE CENTRE

Applications for development within the Reading central area should demonstrate the following attributes:

a. Development will build on and respect the existing grid layout structure of the central area, providing continuity and enclosure through appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces, and frontages that engage with the street at lower levels, and contributing towards enhanced ease of movement through and around the central area;

b. Development will provide appropriate, well designed public spaces and other public realm, including squares, open spaces, streetscape, utilising high quality and well-maintained hard and soft landscape, public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;

c. The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site;

d. Development and any associated public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of easy adaptation over time to meet changing circumstances, and be designed to enhance community safety.

What the framework diagrams describe or guide

Public Realm

8.6 In terms of the building plots identified, the Framework is a good indicator of the size and form of plots needed to achieve the level of permeability shown in figure 8.2. Plots of a slightly different size and shape, or sub-division of plots will be acceptable where the structure in figure 8.2 can still be achieved. Likewise, the building shapes identified in figure 8.3 are indicative of the appropriate type of building form, and deviation from these shapes that fulfils the aims of this Framework will be acceptable.

8.7 The Framework identifies the approximate location, extent and inter-connectivity of the public realm forming the context for all development. The scale and distribution of the principal and secondary public spaces and the connecting streets and paths are indicated.

Land Use

8.8 The Framework sets out a range of appropriate land uses in the area, and emphasises the principle of mixed use. The principal active and activity generating frontages are indicated.

Transport and Access

8.9 The Framework indicates how development can integrate with transport infrastructure, particularly the rail station, interchanges, and pedestrian routes but also car parking, bus routes, cycle routes, roads and service access. The main distribution routes and indicative site accesses are shown.

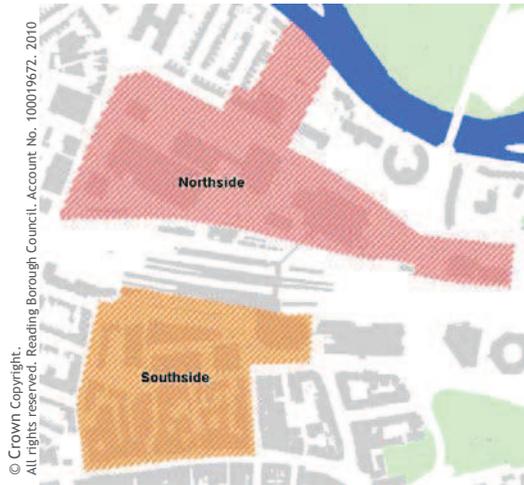
Railway

8.10 The Framework indicates the proposed railway 'footprint', the Station platform layout, concourse alignment and the Station entrances and potential connections across the railway.

Key	
1	Potential footbridge link across Garrard Street
2	Station Hill central piazza
3	Permeable network of lanes and alleyways, potentially connecting though to the Station Hill site
4	South west interchange
5	Northern interchange
6	South east interchange
7	Ingress of creek
8	Potential new foot and cycle bridge across the River Thames
9	Station square south
10	Station square north
11	Station Road pedestrian and bus priority scheme
12	Potential land mark building at Reading Bridge roundabout which masks the car park
13	Station overbridge
14	Station entrance south
15	Station entrance north
16	Widened and enhanced public subway link underneath the railway
17	Historic station entrance (the 'heritage building') in improved setting
18	Potential re-cladding with green walls or reinforced landscape buffers to car park
19	Riverside walk and strategic pedestrian route
20	Green walls to retaining wall adjoining the railway
21	Enhancements to pedestrian routes under the railway
22	Creation of a tree lined avenue along Vastern Road



Figure 8.3 Framework diagram



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Figure 8.4 Northside and Southside

Northside

8.11 The Framework portrays a grid of streets focusing upon the north side station entrance. The range and proportions of city blocks are such that they are able to incorporate a wide range of building forms and dimensions up to and including major new commercial and residential buildings (and also retail) with some scope for tall buildings as local landmarks. This area will incorporate car parking. A number of potential MRT corridors traverse the area, which should be protected.

8.12 There are three key elements of the public realm in the area: the north-south spine between the station and Thames (and across the river), and two public spaces along the spine - a new Station entrance square, and a public space on the southern bank of the Thames. In addition, high quality public realm will be created along new and existing streets, particularly the link to Caversham Road.

8.13 The new foot and cycle bridge across the Thames will improve access to the riverside open spaces and links between central Reading and Caversham, and will be a key element of the north-south spine.

8.14 Whilst new pedestrian links to the east are constrained by the existing station car park and proposed transport interchange, pedestrian routes that travel through to Reading Bridge/ Napier Road via the car park and interchange should nevertheless be provided.

8.15 The proposed new northern station entrance will connect into the station square. Potentially, commercial development can wrap around and over the station entrance. A new bus, taxi and vehicle set down will be located in front of the new entrance, around the existing station car park, and along Vastern Road.



Figure 8.5 Proposed Northern Station Entrance (Network Rail)



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Figure 8.6 Framework for the Northside area

Southside

8.16 Southside will contain a balanced mix of residential, commercial and retail development with leisure uses. The Framework portrays existing and proposed streets converging upon the new Southern Station entrance. The range and proportions of city blocks are more constrained than in Northside, due to the configuration of sites and ownerships and proximity to existing developments.

8.17 Some parcels are considered sub-optimal, but a balance has been struck with the need to provide routes and public spaces on the best alignments. Nevertheless, they are able to incorporate a wide range of building forms and dimensions up to and including major new commercial buildings (and also retail), with some scope for tall buildings including the buildings likely to be the tallest in central Reading.

8.18 The Framework illustrates a pedestrian route from Friar Street to the station passing through a new public space. This follows as direct a route as possible, given that an entirely direct diagonal path, when combined with the constrained dimensions of the site and land ownership boundaries, results in unnecessarily restricted development parcels. A second route travels northwards to a possible new second railway bridge/concourse, linking to the Northside development area. Routes through the area are aligned with surrounding streets to encourage better integration.

8.19 This area can incorporate a significant amount of undercroft car parking where the general ground plane is formed at the level of the station entrance, although active frontage and public routes will still be required at the lower level of the sites and connecting to the proposed subway link through the station. The northern edge of this area will share a boundary with the reconfigured bus interchange (the 'South West Interchange').



Figure 8.7 Proposed Southern Station Entrance (Network Rail)

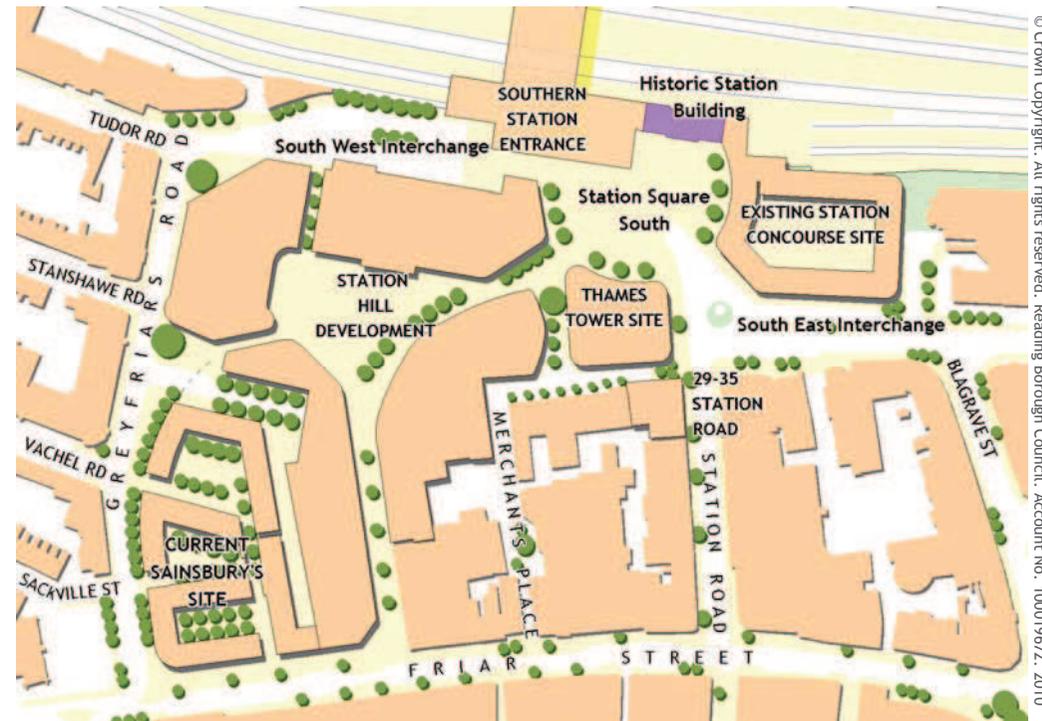


Figure 8.8 Framework for the Southside area

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Key opportunity sites

8.20 There are a total of fourteen potential development opportunity sites within the Station Area, the development of which may contribute to realising the objectives of this framework.

8.21 Seven sites in seven land ownerships are identified as key to the realisation of the framework objectives (RCAAP site references are given in brackets):

- Royal Mail and Vastern Road Retail Park and Station Car Park (RC1e);
- Rail station (RC1d);
- Riverside (SEB) (RC1g);
- Napier Road (RC1h);
- Station Hill and Friars Walk (RC1b and c);
- Thames Tower (RC1a); and
- Station concourse (RC1d).

8.22 The key sites have been selected for the following reasons:

- They cover the centre of the station area and immediately adjoin the station.
- They are affected by, or their development may help to facilitate, transport improvements (rail, interchange and roads) and other infrastructure such as public car parking.
- They are the largest opportunity sites with the greatest potential development capacity and therefore offer the major opportunities for crosssubsidy.
- There are indications that they may become available for redevelopment (although not necessarily in the short term).
- They are the locations for the principal public open spaces and links in the framework.

8.23 In addition to the key opportunity sites the remaining sites within the framework area and other adjoining sites may be redeveloped, in time, and integrated with the new district.

8.24 The opportunity sites are broad groupings of sites which together appear to require some degree of coordination or integrated development across existing property and ownership boundaries. They do not correspond exactly with the land ownerships pattern, although this has been taken into account.

8.25 In some cases proposals are already well advanced, with schemes that have been developed in detail, such as Station Hill. Other sites are in active economic use and represent only longer term development potential. Realisation of the principal components of the framework are not dependent upon these longer term prospects.

Designing for Safety

8.26 This Framework has been drawn up having regard to principles of designing for safety and crime prevention. Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy ensures that new developments create safe environments, and this will apply to the Station Area, since central Reading, as a focus for large gatherings of people, already experiences significant crime levels. Developments should have regard to the principles of Secured By Design, as well as other national guidance on designing for safer places, including:

- Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention;
- Crowded Places: The Planning System and Counter-Terrorism; and
- Protecting Crowded Places: Design and Technical Issues.

8.27 Planning for prevention of terrorism will have particular relevance for the design of the new public spaces, such as the Station Squares North and South, and transport interchange areas.

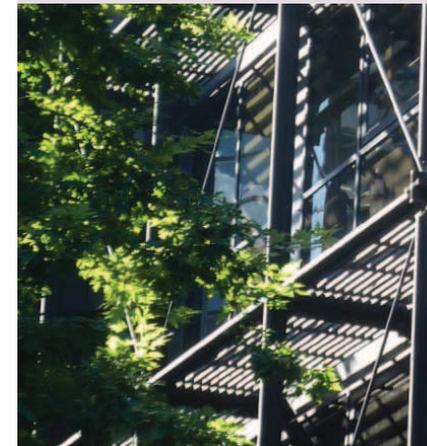
8.28 Crime prevention design advice should be sought from Thames Valley Police at the design stage. CCTV provision should link into the existing coverage. In terms of terrorism prevention, advice should also be sought from the Council's Emergency Planning Officer.

Chapter

19

land use





land use

9.1 The Station Area is highly appropriate for the development of a mixed use district, integrated with the rest of the centre by overcoming key barriers such as the railway and IDR. The RCAAP states that the key theme that underpins the strategy and the context in which it should be read, is of a mix of uses across the central area, both vertically and horizontally, although the emphasis will differ in different areas. Mixed use development should be encouraged within each site, each neighbourhood and across the district as a whole incorporating as great a multiplicity of uses as practicable.

9.2 Policy RC1 of the RCAAP states that development in the area will contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself. Although the policy sets out appropriate ranges of land uses in certain locations, it contains as little prescriptive detail as possible. Likewise, the Framework does not prescribe specific or rigid land uses, but encourages a flexible approach within the broad parameters of policy, recognising that developers and investors need, as far as reasonably possible, to be free to define the particular mix and content of individual schemes.

RCAAP Policy RC6: DEFINITION OF THE CENTRE

Retail development will take place in the Primary Shopping Area, as defined on the Proposals Map. The extension to the Primary Shopping Area (RC6b) will be in place once a new pedestrian link is operational across the railway between Caversham Road and Vastern Road.

Major office development of over 1,000 sq m will take place in the Office Core, as defined on the Proposals Map.

Other main town centre uses will take place in the Central Core, as defined on the Proposals Map.

N1, N2	Mainly residential, with small-scale offices and leisure (possibly food and drink)
N3, N4, N5, N6, N7, N8, N10	Retail and leisure (ground floor), mix of uses on higher floors including residential, offices. Retail contingent on improved links across railway.
N11	Residential, offices, active commercial use on ground floor.
N9, S3, S5	Station/transport interchange uses, potential for other mixed uses.
S1, S2, S4, S6-12, other sites on Station Road/Friar St	Retail and leisure (ground floor), mix of uses on higher floors including residential, offices.



Figure 9.2 Main development plots

Figure 9.1 Appropriate range of uses on plots

9.3 Figure 9.1 sets out the appropriate range of uses on each plot according to the RCAAP. Retail and leisure uses will bring ground floor activity to the key streets, whilst a range of uses including residential and business space will be spread across the area. Leisure uses include hotels, bars and restaurants, as well as larger format leisure uses. Community uses, although not specifically mentioned in figure 9.1, will be appropriate across the area. Leisure and community uses for which a particular need has been identified in central Reading include a swimming pool, ice rink and primary healthcare. In terms of retail, the RCAAP refers to the need for an offer complementing, rather than competing with, the rest of the centre.

9.4 The location, layout and design of new residential developments will be constrained by the need to mitigate flood impacts on sites to the north of the railway. This may require raised ground floors, or may restrict residential uses to upper storeys only in certain circumstances. There will also be a need to provide dry access. Please refer to the Sustainability chapter and the section on Flood Risk (10.10 onwards) for further guidance.

9.5 A critical mass of residential is needed on the area between Vastern Road and the railway in order to create a quality living environment. As a general indicator, at least one third of the floorspace in this area should be residential.



Active Frontages

9.6 The one area in which this Framework provides more detail in terms of land use is on the location of active frontages. It is essential that certain key areas of public realm and corridors of movement are enlivened by active, public uses at the ground floor, which bring activity and vitality. Without these uses, a successful public realm (which is the main concern of this Framework) is unlikely to be created.

9.7 The RCAAP Proposals Map (linked to policy RC10) showed the key routes where active frontages would be a requirement, including Station Road, Friar Street and four new routes emanating from the station. Figure 9.3 shows how these active frontages will be applied to individual development plots within the Station Area. The key message is that the key routes and areas of public realm must be fronted by active uses.

9.8 Active uses are defined in the RCAAP, and comprise use classes A1-5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui generis uses. For the purposes of this framework, that will also cover station entrance and passenger facilities. New developments will have a display window or glazed ground floor frontage.

Total developable area

9.9 Analysis indicates that there are around twelve hectares of land which may become available for redevelopment, either immediately or over the longer term. This sum assumes comprehensive redevelopment over time and includes parking areas.

9.10 The Framework diagrams define a series of development plots (excluding streets and spaces) amounting to some 7.5 hectares.

9.11 No development is proposed over the station concourse, tracks or platforms (air-rights development). This has been discounted by Network Rail on the grounds of both viability and practicability.

9.12 Urban design studies undertaken as part of the Framework planning process, together with the preparation of illustrative schemes have served to indicate the level of development that is achievable on the site. The Framework planning exercise indicates that the Station Area could physically accommodate up 450,000 sq m of floorspace in total (c.5 million sq ft).

Public space

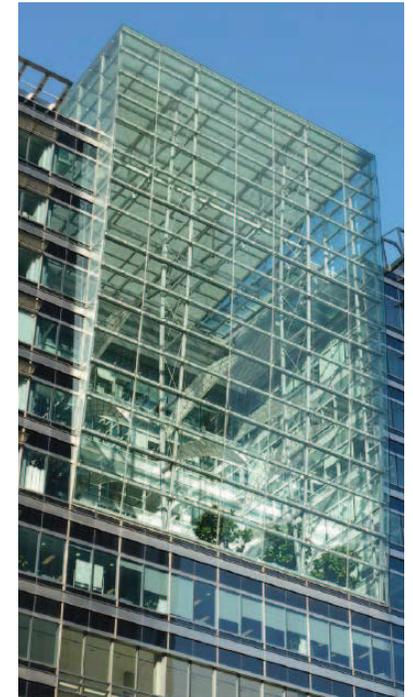
9.13 The Framework identifies approximately 4 hectares which should to be laid out as streets and squares, open space and new footpaths in order to create a setting for development; to facilitate pedestrian movement; to better connect the area together; to connect to the core of the town and to connect through to the Thames and surrounding residential districts.

9.14 The Council expects these to be taken into account in development proposals and will seek contributions from developers to assist in implementing new spaces, major improvements to existing open spaces and/or better links to them.

Figure 9.3 Active frontages



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Chapter

10

sustainability

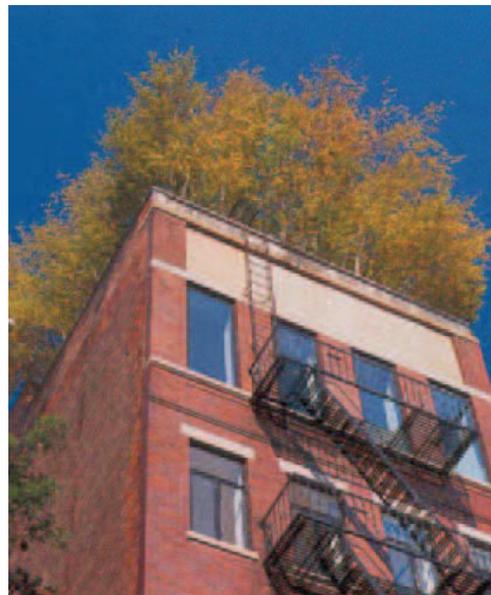


sustainability

Policy

10.1 The Station Area developments should address issues of sustainability and respond to current and emerging guidance. The Council's policies on sustainable design and construction (CS1, CS2 and the most up-to-date Sustainable Design and Construction SPD) should be the starting point for the development of any proposal.

10.2 The aim should be for developments to meet the highest standards of sustainable design and construction. The design of buildings and site layouts should use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change. Development should meet relevant BREEAM and Code for Sustainable Homes standards.



Decentralised energy

10.3 A decentralised system provides a more sustainable energy solution than the centralised system that currently dominates electricity production. A decentralised system helps to combat climate change and provides future generations with more security over energy provision than a centralised energy system.

10.4 Decentralised energy is a term that covers a variety of technologies, including various renewable technologies, and more efficient energy generation such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP). These technologies can locally serve an individual building, development or wider community and include heating and cooling energy.

10.5 Given the mixed nature plus scale and density of the development likely to come forward in the Station Area, decentralised energy should be considered for all developments in this area as part of the requirements of meeting policy CS1. Where there is an existing decentralised energy network, further developments should consider linking into these existing networks.

Green roofs

10.6 A green roof is a roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil, or a growing medium, planted over a waterproofing membrane.

10.7 Green roofs can serve several purposes for a building, such as absorbing rainwater, and contributing to reducing run-off, providing insulation, creating a habitat for wildlife and rare plant types, and helping to lower urban air temperatures and combat the heat island effect.

10.8 Green roofs should be considered for all developments with flat roofs in the Station Area. They may offer particular biodiversity benefits close to the river. The structural and drainage implications should be considered at an early building design stage.



Brown roofs

10.9 “Brown roofs” are designed to partly mitigate the loss of habitat from the redevelopment of brownfield sites by covering the flat roofs of new developments with a layer of locally sourced material, often a mix of brick rubble and some concrete rubble which is then seeded or sometimes left to self colonise. They can offer valuable ecosystems, supporting rare species of plants, animals and invertebrates. The roofs are colonised by spiders and insects (many of which are becoming extremely rare in the UK as such sites are developed) and provide a feeding site for insectivorous birds, particularly the nationally rare black redstart, which is known to forage in the Station Area.

10.10 Brown roofs should be considered for developments adjoining the River Thames and for sites where an ecological appraisal indicates the presence of foraging birds, particularly black redstarts. Other potentially appropriate biodiversity enhancements as part of a development include swift boxes.

Living Walls

10.11 Living walls are those covered in some form of vegetation. They offer environmental benefits by enhancing biodiversity, improving the thermal insulation and cooling properties of the building, helping to improve air quality, improving noise attenuation properties and improving visual amenity. High quality designs for ‘green walls’ incorporating vegetation over a majority of a building’s vertical surfaces should be considered, particularly where living roofs are difficult to achieve.

10.12 Opportunities for living walls in the Station Area include:

- Retaining walls to the railway embankments.
- Car parking structures and ramps.
- Ground floor walls where flood risk excludes occupation and active frontages are not required.



Figure 10.1 Image of green and brown roofs

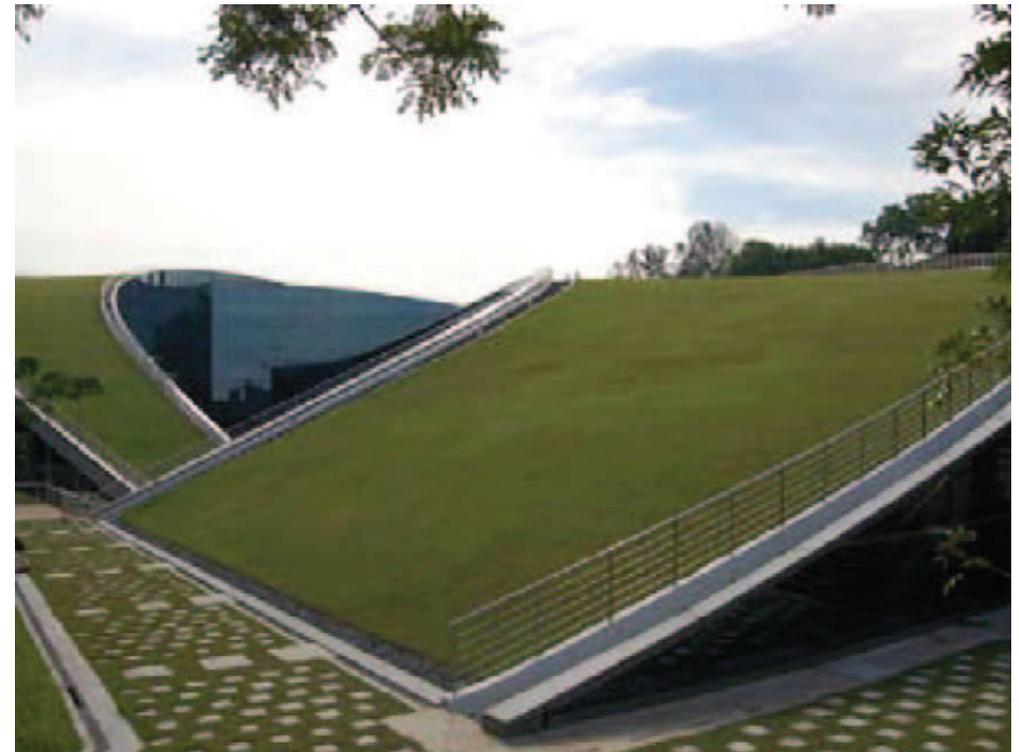
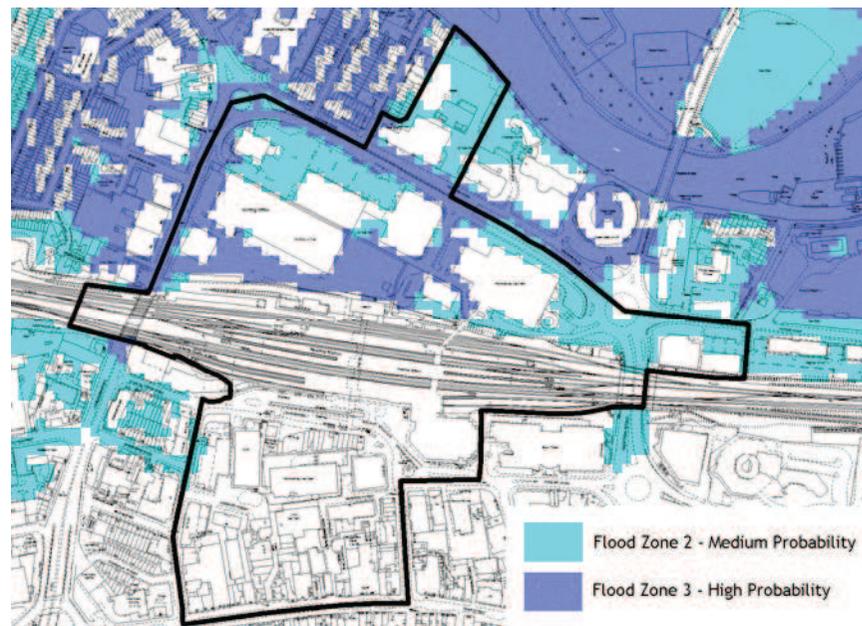




Figure 10.2 Risk of flooding from rivers
(Source: Environment Agency, November 2010 - please contact EA for information on latest flood zone maps)



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Core Strategy Policy CS35: FLOODING

Planning permission will not be permitted for development in an area identified as being at high risk of flooding, where development would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.

Flood Risk

10.13 The degree of river and sea flood risk according to the Environment Agency flood zones, which were updated in November 2010 to take into account detailed analysis of the area, is shown in figure 10.2. Sites south of the railway are in Flood Zone 1 (low probability), whilst parts of the North Side sites fall within Flood Zones 2 (medium probability) and 3 (high probability).

10.14 The following sites are affected:

- North of Station (RC1e) - parts of sorting office and station car park in Zones 2 and 3, with much of the Station Retail Park in Zone 2;
- Riverside (RC1g) - partly in Zone 2
- Napier Road (RC1h) - partly in Zone 2.

Policy on Flood Risk

10.15 Policy CS35 states that planning permission will not be given for development in an area identified as being at high risk of flooding, where development would reduce the capacity of the flood plain to store floodwater, impede the flow of floodwater or in any way increase the risks to life and property arising from flooding.

10.16 Policy RC1 of the RCAAP sets out further site-specific requirements. The North of the Station site (RC1e) and Napier Road (RC1h) should include an acceptable dry access scheme from across the site as part of any development (although it is now more helpful to talk in terms of 'safe access'). Paragraph 6.8 of the RCAAP also states that detailed proposals will need to consider the distribution of uses in the context of PPS25.



Assessment of Flood Risk

10.17 Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments were carried out for the three sites affected by Flood Zones 2 and 3 (prior to the recent changes to the flood maps, which mainly downgraded the flood risk). In all cases, the Assessments demonstrated that the sites can be developed safely to mitigate the potential risks posed by flooding from the River Thames. In general, the assessments showed the following:

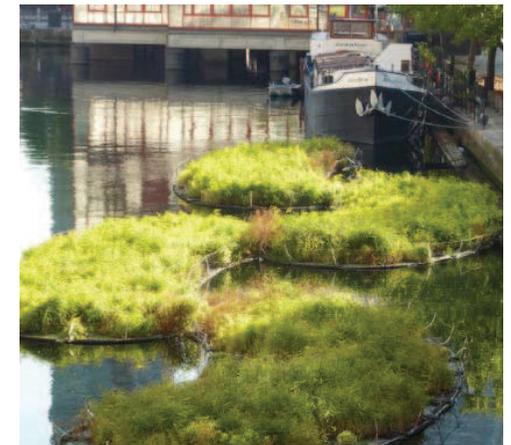
- Flood depth - the maximum depth in a 1:100 flood event would be 1,100 mm (taking account of climate change), on the Napier Road site. On the North of the Station site, the maximum depth would be 850 mm.

- Speed of flooding - on most sites, the speed of floodwaters would be slow. The exception would be the Riverside site, due to its proximity to the Thames.
- Period of inundation - this would generally be long, potentially up to one week.

10.18 The assessment provides design recommendations in relation to particular sites. It is essential that these recommendations are entrenched into the design process from the conceptual stage.

10.19 A Flood Risk Assessment will need to be prepared in support of any application for development in areas at risk of flooding, to be carried out in accordance with Section 6.6.1 of the Level 1 SFRA and the requirements of PPS25.

10.20 Where there is an opportunity to undertake more detailed up to date hydraulic modelling, this should be carried out at the outset in order to inform the baseline of any flood risk assessment to determine existing flood depths and flood flow routes. However it will not be acceptable to undertake modelling to justify no flood mitigation.



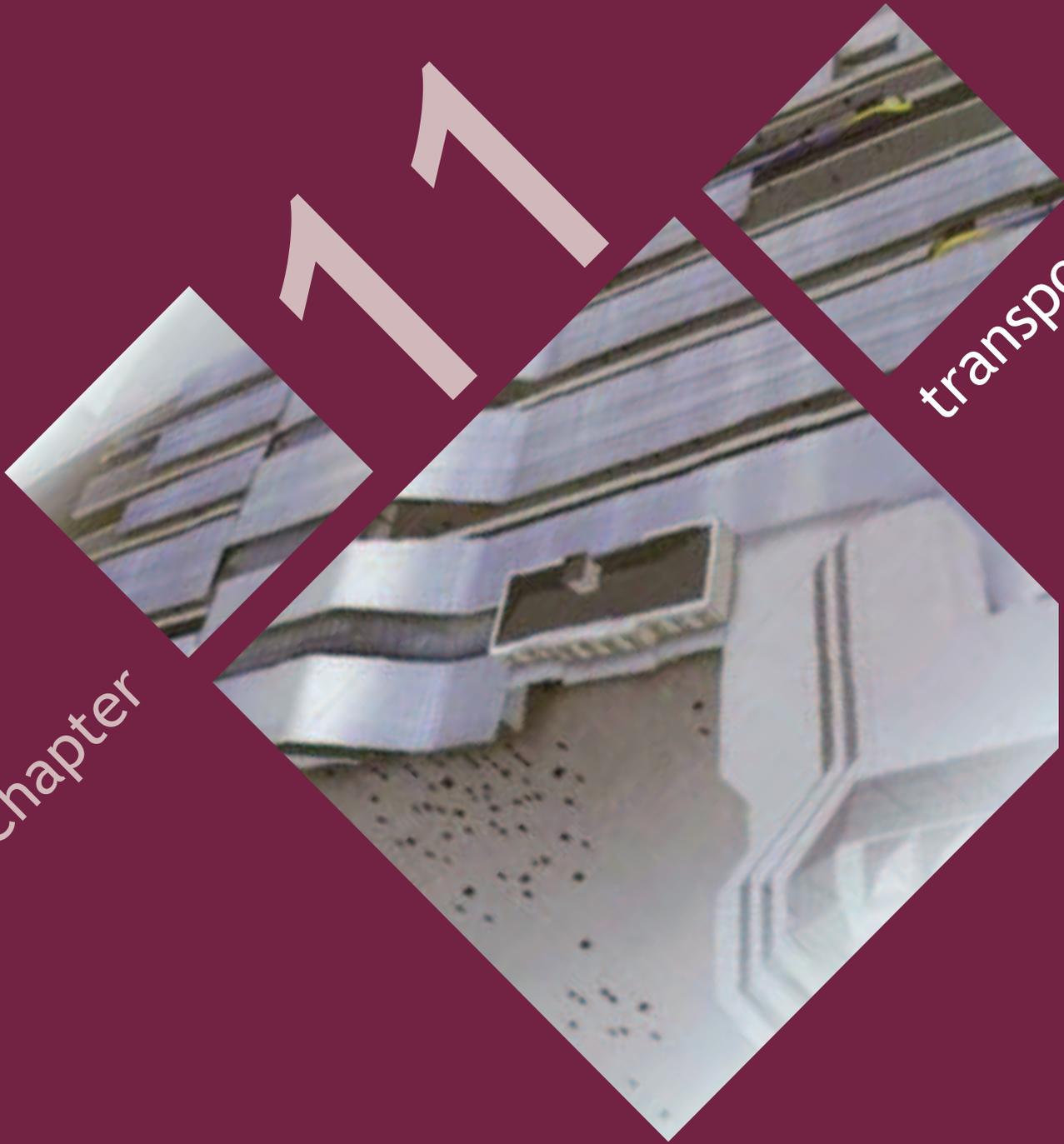
10.21 The Level 2 SFRAs generally recommended a number of design measures, which should be addressed in proposals on affected sites. The following general measures, which include those from the SFRAs, should be reflected in any proposals:

- Residential uses should not be situated at ground level within Zone 3a.
- Ground floor levels for residential developments should be set at a minimum of 300mm above the 1:100 annual probability (1%) flood level including allowance for climate change.
- All buildings within the site should adopt resilient design techniques to minimise the damage and disruption sustained by businesses and/or residents following a flooding event. Further guidance can be found in Flood Performance of New Buildings (Flood Resilient Construction), CLG (2007).
- It is essential that tenants within the site are made aware of the potential risks of flooding, and are actively encouraged to sign up to the Environment Agency's flood warning service. A safe evacuation route should be established, in accordance with guidance provided within the Level 1 SFRA and the requirements of PPS25.
- Sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) must be incorporated into the site design to ensure that runoff from the site does not exceed, and, where possible, improves on, existing runoff rates. It is important to ensure that SUDS are designed with due consideration to soil and groundwater conditions. Infiltration techniques should be sought wherever possible, however are likely to be unsuitable in areas of shallow groundwater and/or impermeable soils. Care should also be taken in areas overlying Thames Gravels within close proximity of the River Thames as groundwater flooding may ensue during high river levels. SUDS can also help to achieve other sustainability aims, e.g. biodiversity, contributing to the public realm and improving the river corridor. Any proposed drainage scheme should apply the SUDS 'Management Train' approach by using a range of sustainable techniques to ensure the maximum benefits of using these methods can be achieved.
- Where flood storage compensation is needed, opportunities should be sought at an early design stage to secure areas which could incorporate any open green spaces. Voids and stilts are not an appropriate mitigation measure to provide flood storage compensation. Any proposed compensation must be in place before development commences.
- Buildings, landscaping and infrastructure should be oriented within the site to avoid blocking overland flow routes. Where this cannot be achieved, appropriate management of these flow routes should be provided to ensure there will be no increase in flood risk to the surrounding area and aim where possible to improve flood risk.
- Any raised areas within the floodplain should provide appropriate flood storage compensation and not be located across existing flood flow routes, to ensure no increase in flood risk to the surrounding area.
- Basements must not be used for habitable purposes within Zone 3a. It is essential to ensure that all basement areas within flood affected areas of the site are watertight, and the entrance point is situated above the 1% (1 in 100) design flood level, including climate change.
- Undercroft parking should generally be avoided in areas within Zone 3a.

Chapter

11

transport



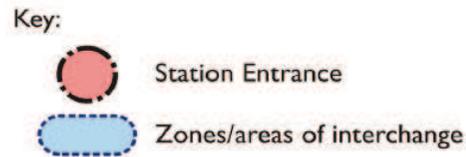
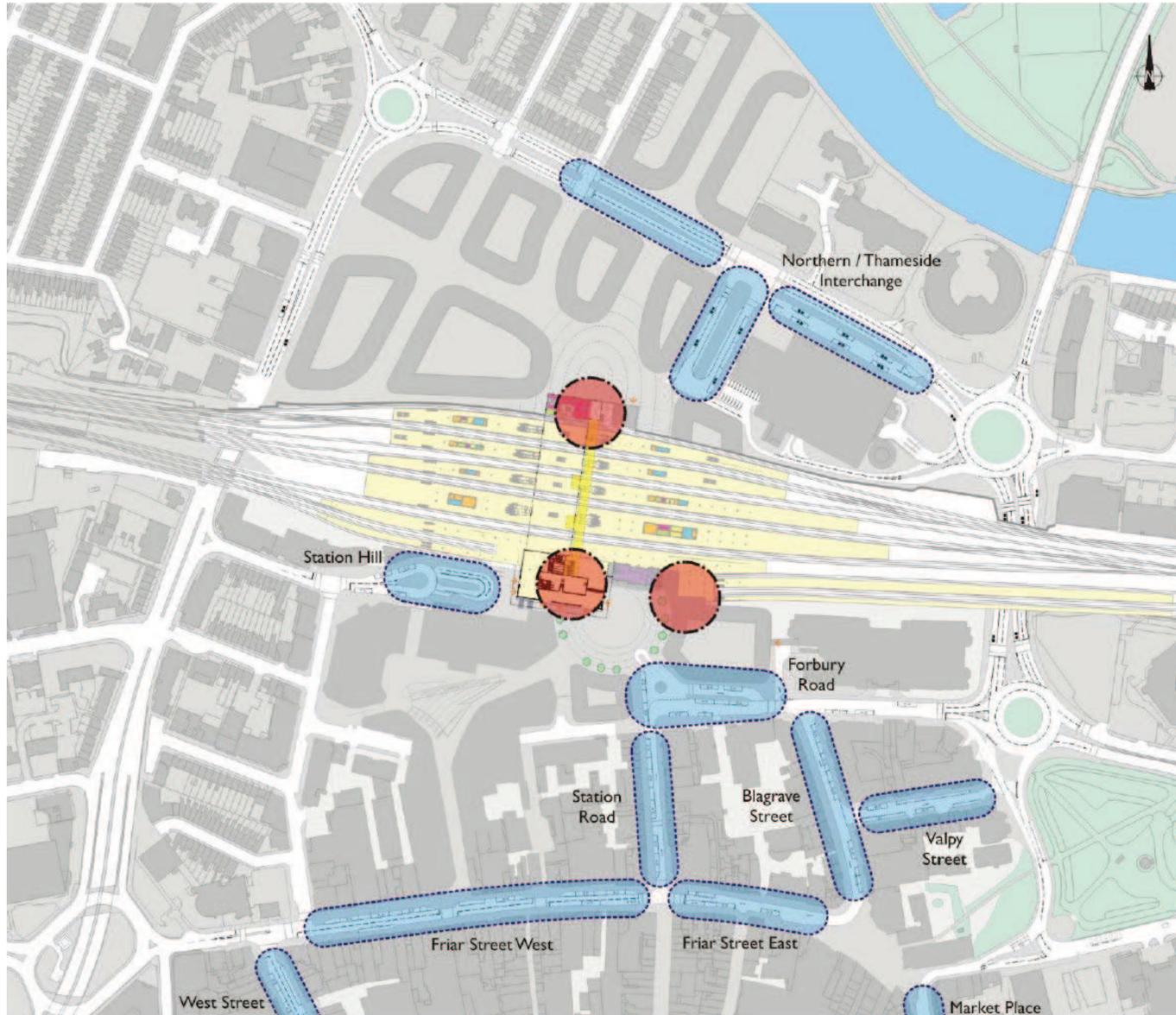


Figure 11.1 Station scheme plan



transport

Transport Development Area

11.1 The guiding concept for Reading Station is a Transport Development Area (TDA). TDAs are highly accessible interchange zones which are well served by walking, cycling and public transport where, through the integration of transport and land use planning, and the promotion of higher density and more intensive land uses, more sustainable patterns of development can be attained.

'The concept of Transport Development Areas may provide a mechanism to help integrate development and transport objectives in highly accessible locations, for instance by bringing all parties together around a shared vision'.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (revised): March 2001



Transport and development

11.2 Reading Borough Council and Network Rail are in the process of delivering major transport improvements at Reading Station. These improvements include a national rail scheme and a number of local transport projects, associated with the station upgrade and for supporting growth and regeneration in central Reading.

11.3 The development sites in the Station Area should be developed in conjunction with these transport improvements. They should also be based on detailed assessments of the impact of future development upon both existing transport infrastructure and planned improvements. It is likely that development will need to be phased with, and directly related to, the implementation of transport and access improvements.

Transport components

11.4 There are five broad transport components that make up the Station Area regeneration. They are:

- The railway station redevelopment incorporating new platforms, track, signalling, concourse and station entrances;
- New and enhanced multi-modal interchanges distributed around the Station Area and central Reading;
- Improved accessibility, convenience and facilities for walking and cycling making these journeys easier, safer and more attractive (refer to Public Realm Chapter);
- Operational car parking associated with development;
- Reconfiguring existing roads and the provision of new streets associated with transport improvements and redevelopment proposals.

The Railway Station redevelopment

11.5 Network Rail, in partnership with Reading Borough Council and the Department for Transport, are undertaking significant rail improvements in the vicinity of Reading Station to remove a national rail bottleneck.

11.6 The main elements of work which are associated with Reading Station include upgrading track and signalling, the provision of new and extended platforms, a new over-bridge and new station entrances to the north and south of the railway. Track signalling and station improvements are planned to accommodate a 103% increase in passenger flows on the Great Western railway through and to Reading.

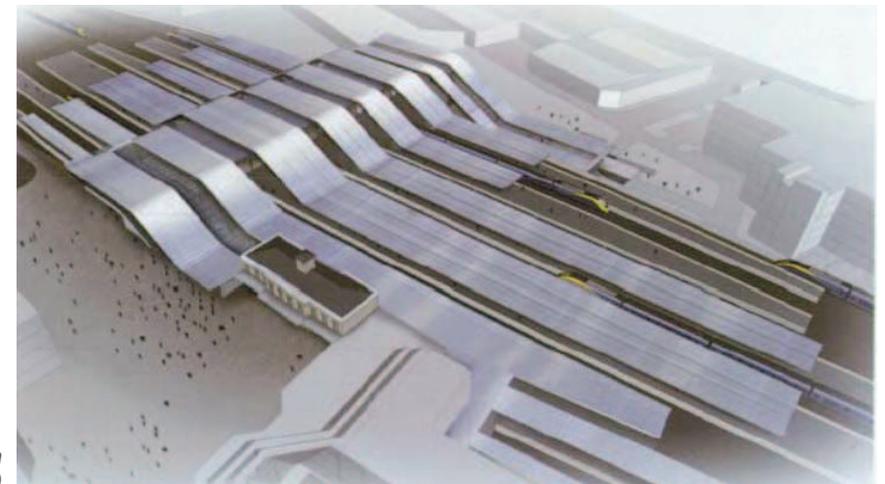


Figure 11.2 Aerial image of Proposed Station (Network Rail)

New and enhanced multi-modal interchanges

11.7 The development of the Station Area will include new and enhanced multi-modal interchanges. These transport interchanges are planned with a revised pattern of bus movements in the town centre.

11.8 The upgraded interchanges will help open up sites to the north for redevelopment to facilitate the extension of central area activities through to the River Thames.

11.9 The location of these new/reconfigured interchanges is indicated in figure 11.1. The diagram also shows the new platforms and over-bridge and the three station entrances.

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.

11.11 The scale of land development and the increased capacity of the new interchanges will require an extension of pedestrian priority.

11.12 All development should consider pedestrian movement in and about the Station Area and be designed to be permeable with a high degree of integration - both vertical (stairs, lifts, ramps, bridges, concourses and escalators) and horizontal integration (streets, alleys, malls, atria). Please refer to chapter 5 on public realm.

Reconfiguring Roads

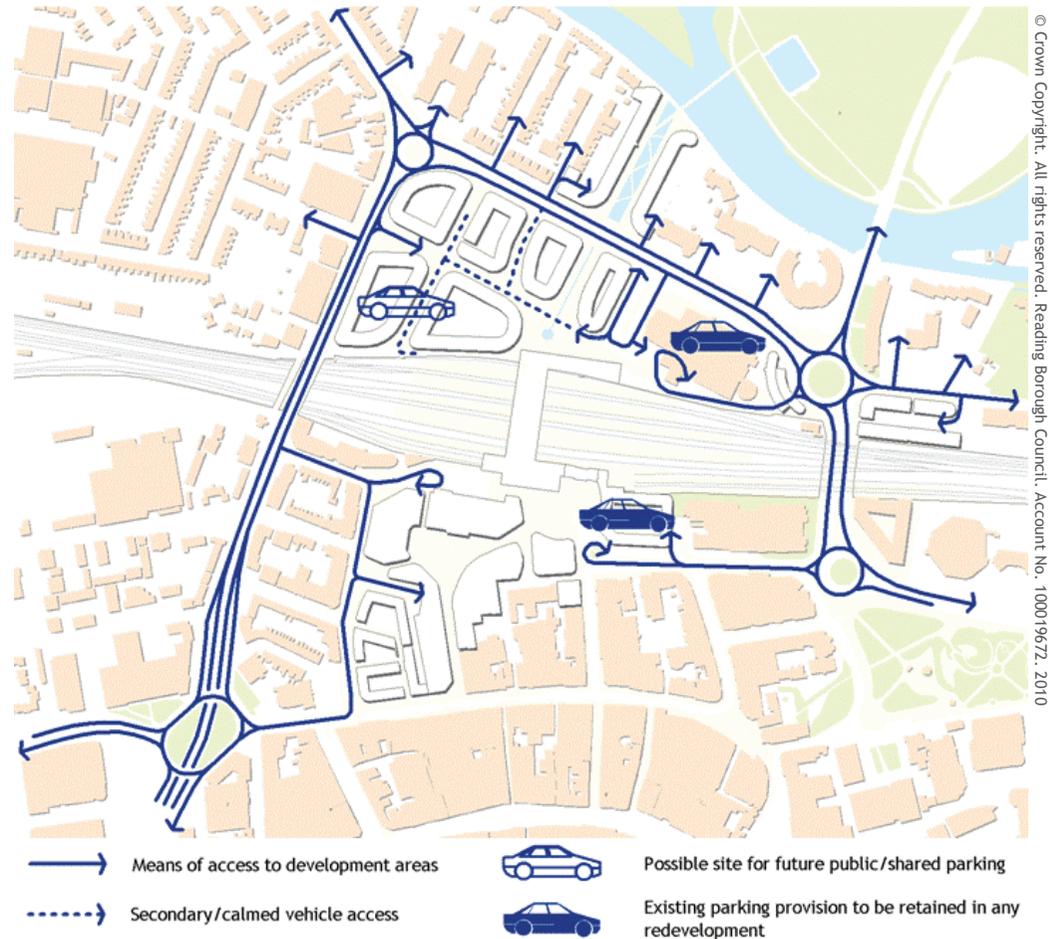
11.13 The development of the Station Area must ensure that the impact on the surrounding road network is acceptable and that improvements are made to the road network to accommodate the increases in people movement generated by the sites.

11.14 The highway works for the new and enhanced interchanges require that some roads are reconfigured. This opens up opportunities for the visual and environmental impact of traffic on Vastern Road and Caversham Roads to be reduced.

11.15 The following changes to traffic flow south of the Station are already planned or underway:

- Station Approach - road closure;
- Friar Street West - westbound contra-flow bus lane (eastbound not affected);
- Friar Street East - reverse existing one-way to westbound;
- Blagrove Street - one-way southbound;
- Valpy Street - one-way eastbound;
- Station Road - one-way northbound;
- West Street - southbound contra-flow bus lane;
- St Mary's Butts - extension of two-way from Broad Street junction.

Figure 11.3 Emerging site access strategy



11.16 Central area traffic management will also open up opportunities for part (and possibly later full) pedestrianisation of a number of streets within the Station Area, better crossing and cycle facilities and integrated public transport.

11.17 Figure 11.3 shows an emerging vehicular access strategy. This is indicative at this stage, and is not intended to be a prescriptive solution.

Car parking

11.18 Car parking provision will be considered in the context of the guiding Transport Development Area concept and government guidance, which seeks to use parking policies as one measure to promote sustainable transport choices.

11.19 The approach to development related car parking in the Station Area is outlined in Reading Borough Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD which was adopted in September 2009. This document forms a part of the RCAAP.

11.20 The SPD on parking standards and design adopts a zonal system for specifying standards, with the Station Area being designated as Zone 1, Central Core Area.



Figure 11.4 A recent Central Area car park development at Chatham Place, Reading.

Parking Design

11.21 The following pages set out broad design guidelines for the development of car parking in the Station Area.

11.22 The guidelines do not address the question of the amount of or justification for car parking provision in the Station Area, which is addressed in other Council policy and guidance documents.

11.23 There are five broad design principles:

- Fully integrate car parking into the overall fabric so that it is neither prominent nor visually dominant;
- As far as practicable, ensure car parking areas incorporate sustainable design and construction principles;
- Address the quality and safety of the external face of car parking areas, minimising the visual impact upon the external environment, public space, and neighbouring uses;
- Address the quality of the internal car parking environment such as natural lighting levels, artificial lighting, passive surveillance, materials, signage etc;
- Through good design, minimise undesirable external environmental effects such as noise, fumes, light pollution etc.



Figure 11.5 Light wells allow natural lighting and ventilation into lower level parking areas.



Figure 11.6 Bunding and landscape buffer partly masks parking area.

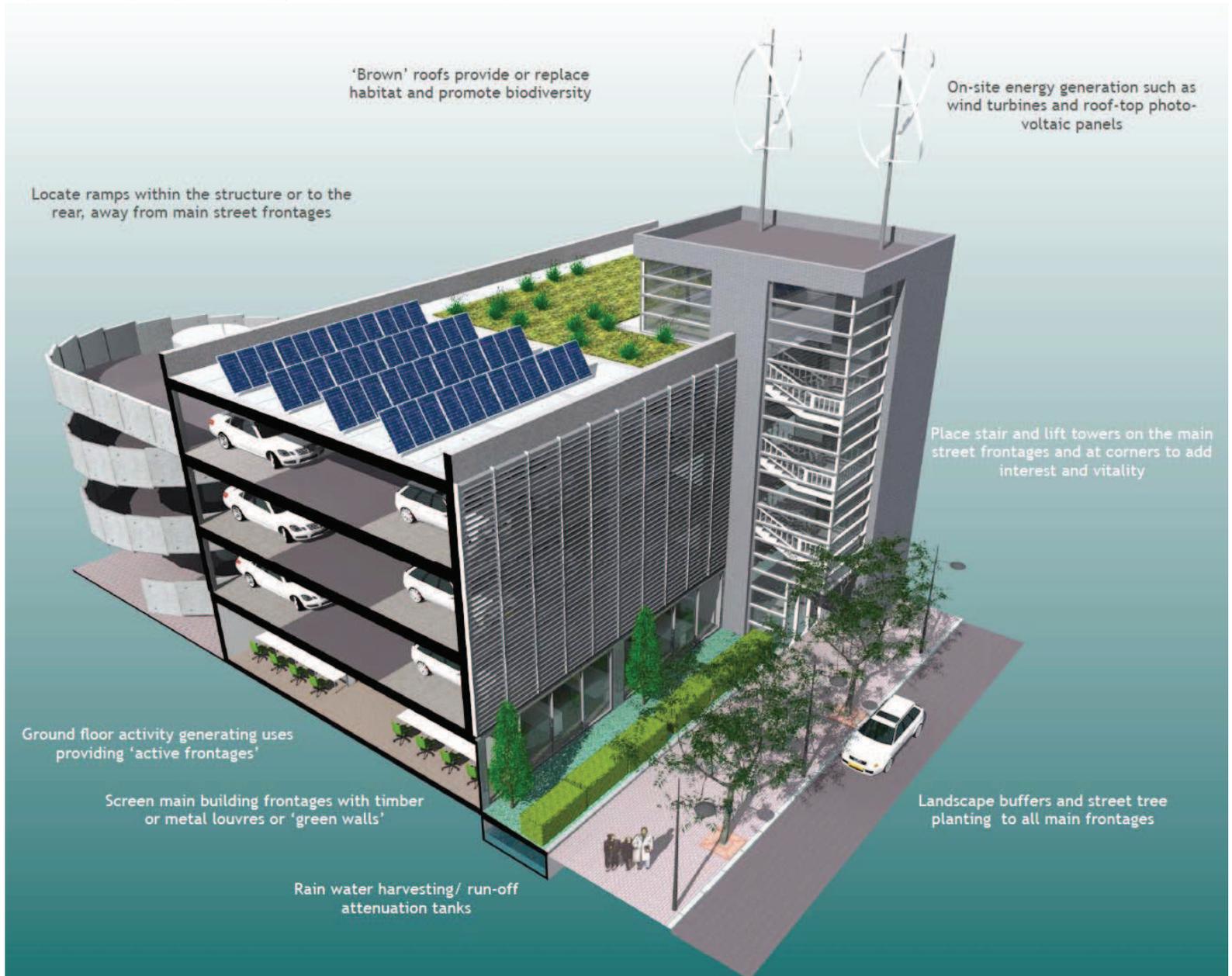


Figure 11.7 Landscape buffer, timber screens and tree planting.



Figure 11.8 Parking masked by a landscape buffer, timber screens and balconies.

Figure 11.9 Integrating multi-storey parking into the wider urban fabric



Cycling

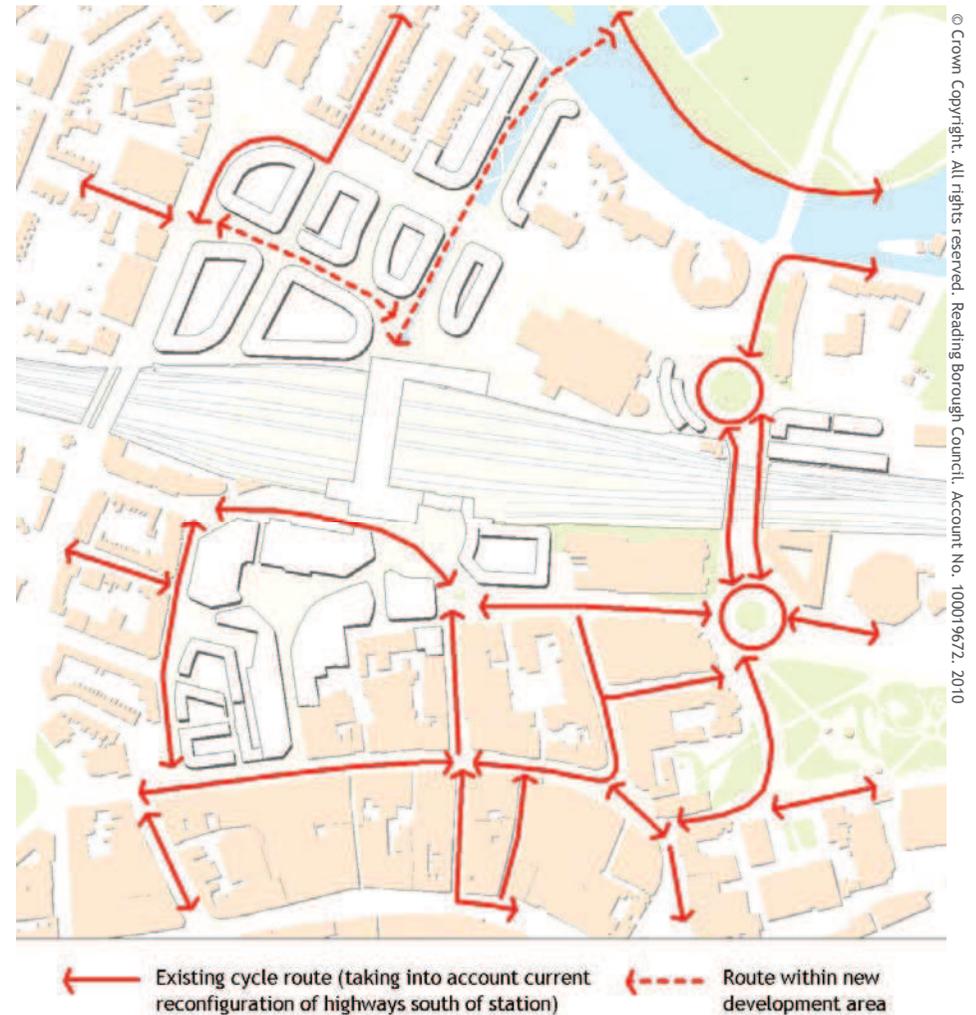
11.24 Reading Borough Council's Cycling Strategy seeks to improve cycle links to Reading Station and interchange and to improve cycle crossings of and travel on the IDR. Development in the Station Area provides an excellent opportunity to achieve these aims. In particular, the development of the Northside area can provide new cycle links approaching the northern Station entrance, potentially separated where necessary. These should link in with the route network shown on the map accompanying the Cycling Strategy, and improve north-south crossing of Vastern Road.

11.25 Figure 11.11 shows the existing cycle network, and shows where new routes can be created in the Northside area to link into the network.



11.26 Development in the Station Area will provide a significant amount of new cycle parking. The levels provided for individual developments should be in accordance with the minimum standards for each land use set out in the Parking Standards and Design SPD. In addition, there will be new cycle parking associated with the Station entrance/interchanges, both north and south of the railway tracks. Guidance on design of cycle parking is set out in the Parking Standards and Design SPD.

Figure 11.11 Cycle access



Chapter

12

heritage





Figure 12.1 Image of the Station Circa 1900-1910 (Reading Borough Libraries)

heritage

12.1 The Area's historic landmarks provide the opportunity to build a distinctive character for the area, and create attractive public spaces, framed by good architecture and high quality design.

12.2 Figure 12.1 shows the heritage assets present in and around the Station Area. Six listed buildings or structures are within the area falling under policy RC1, although these are mainly in the southeastern corner along Friar Street and Station Road, which is not proposed for comprehensive redevelopment. Further listed buildings, including Grade I and II* buildings, as well as the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, Forbury Gardens (a historic park) and the Abbey Ruins (a scheduled ancient monument) are nearby.

12.3 The opportunities for enhancing the setting of historic assets are clearly, in the main, south of the railway. In the case of development close to the Conservation Area, the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the principal characteristics of the Area and the characteristics the Council wants to conserve or enhance.

12.4 Policy on dealing with historic assets is contained in PPS5 and in Core Strategy policy CS33. Useful guidance on designing new development in historically sensitive contexts can be obtained from the English Heritage and CABE publication 'Building in Context'.

12.5 The Station Area is also part of an 'area of archaeological potential', where it is known that there is likely to be archaeological interest. Where an application is likely to affect an area of archaeological potential, an archaeological assessment and/or evaluation (as appropriate) should be carried out prior to submission.

Figure 12.2 Historic assets in the Station Area



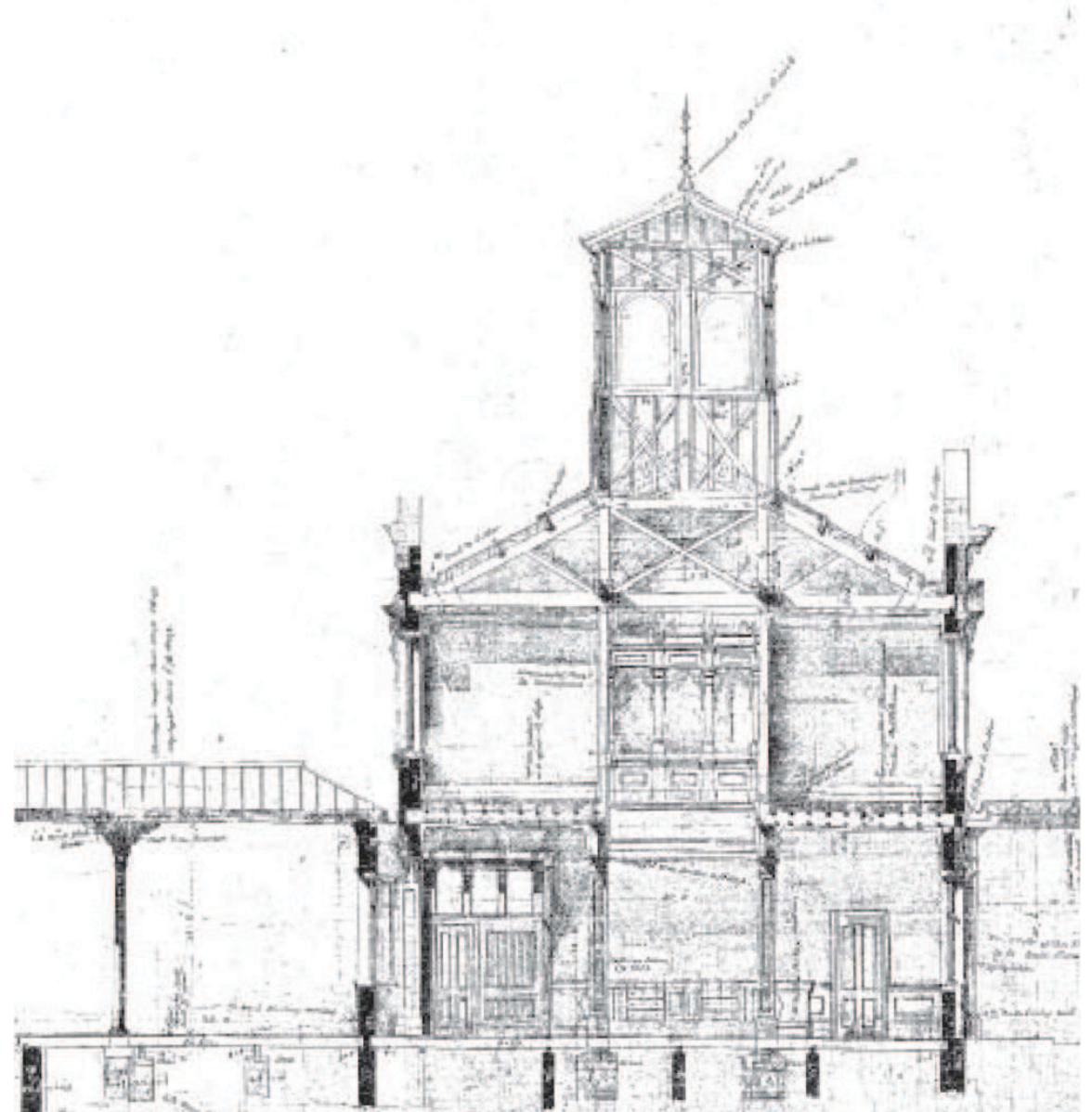


Figure 12.3 Historic Station Plans (Network Rail Archives)



Historic Station Building

12.6 The grade II listed Station building is one of Reading's most prominent historic buildings. The Station Area Framework therefore places the building at the centre of the strategy for the area.

12.7 The listing extends to the flanking walls and canopies and places controls upon development within the curtilage which will affect the setting.

12.8 The listed Station building or its setting will need to be altered to some degree in order to achieve the optimal station layout, access and circulation. Listed building consent was recently granted for alterations to deliver the new southern station entrance.

12.9 The Framework anticipates alterations to the setting of the Station, its functional relationship and physical connections with the new station and the surrounding development. The Framework does not make the case for these alterations, which must be made in the light of a specific scheme and judged upon the particular merits of that scheme.



Core Strategy Policy CS33: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include: -

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.



next >>

Chapter

13

implementation
and phasing





implementation and phasing

13.1 A piecemeal, site by site approach to implementation risks the creation of disjointed and fragmented development with no cohesion. The objective of the Council is, therefore, to secure the comprehensive regeneration of the Station Area in a phased manner in order to achieve maximum quality of development and public realm.

13.2 The Council will exercise its planning and transport powers in order to ensure that individual developments are co-ordinated and physically integrated with wider plans to upgrade local transport and infrastructure, including the rail station and new interchanges.

13.3 Subsequent briefs for individual sites (the Station Hill brief has already been published) will explain the Council's requirements in more detail where necessary.

13.4 Network Rail and the Department for Transport have a key role to play in expediting track, signalling and station upgrades which are prerequisites to realising the wider objectives for the Station Area.

Development Programme

13.5 It is clear that the Station Area development will proceed in phases. However, advice on phasing must be limited at this stage to a general description of the component parts and the likely sequence.

13.6 There are two inter-related development programmes or sequences: the implementation of transport and infrastructure; and the development of sites and public places.

13.7 The RCAAP sets out a broad approach to the phasing of development in the Central Area MOAs and takes broad time bands of short-term (up to 2011), medium term (2012 to 2017) and long-term (2018 to 2026).

Transport

13.8 The Station redevelopment will necessarily lead the development of the Station Area.

13.9 The development of new dispersed transport interchanges, which are closely related to the reconfiguration of the Station, will need to proceed alongside the station redevelopment.

13.10 The construction of the Station will affect the development programme for surrounding sites. A number of sites adjoining the tracks will be affected by railway construction and can only be released for development upon completion of the Station scheme.

	Rail	Transport	Public Realm	Site Development (start)
Short Term (up to 2011)	Stage One	SE Interchange Station Road	Station Square South Friar Street Link (SH)	Station Hill (RC1b & c) Thames Tower (RC1a)
Medium Term (2012 to 2017)	Stage Two	Nth interchange SW Interchange	Link from Station to Vastern Road Station Square North	Post Office/Aviva (RC1e)
Long Term (2018 to 2026)	Stage Three	Nth Interchange	Vastern Road Avenue Riverside link Riverside walk	Former Sainsbury's (RC1b) Riverside RC1e) 80's concourse (RC1d) Napier Road (RC1h)

Figure 13.1 Indicative programme

Site and public space sequence

13.11 Because of their location and proximity to the town centre, the first major sites to be redeveloped will most probably be Station Hill, Station Road and Friars Walk (the south west quadrant). Land to the north of the tracks is expected to follow. Whilst comparable developments on both sides of the tracks (in terms of scale, intensity, mix and quality), are vital to the long term success of the Station Area, it is accepted that some sites will be redeveloped later in the programme as confidence is built by successful schemes and once progress on transport and other infrastructures is evident. However, it is vital to ensure that the public realm and public spaces are provided at the same time as, or before, the surrounding buildings, and the Council will use its planning powers to achieve this.

13.12 Use of 'Grampian' conditions may be necessary, where these fulfil the tests in Department of the Environment Circular 11/95.

13.13 The Council will continue to work closely with other agencies and with developers in order to create and maintain the conditions for change, build confidence, and continue to maintain the right climate for investment.

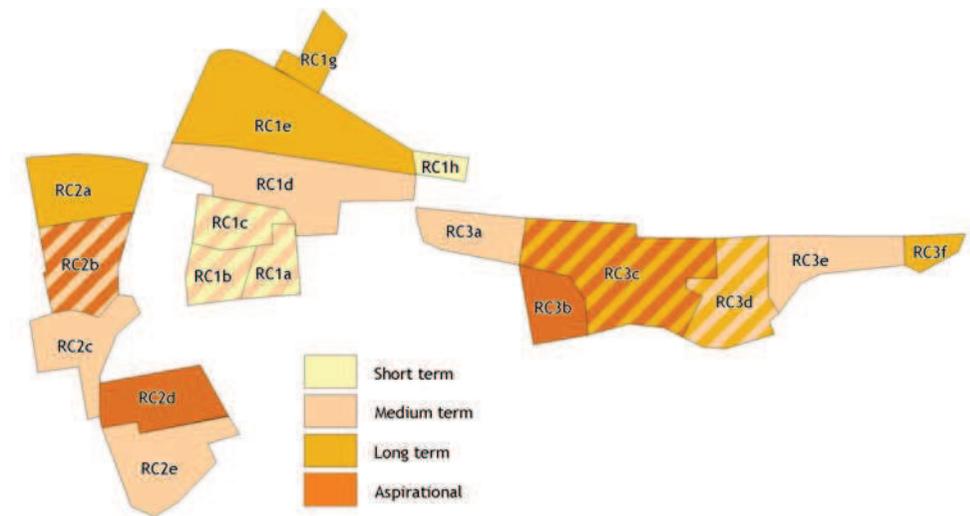


Figure 13.2 RCAAP 'Summary Of Delivery Timescales For Major Opportunity Area Sub Areas'.

Construction

13.14 The provision of a pedestrian access across the railway linking Station Road to the station car park and Vastern Road will be maintained throughout the period of construction. All other public routes should be maintained wherever it is safe and practicable to do so. All proposed developments will be expected to consider and to submit a construction method statement as part of any application because of the complexities and difficulties of access and construction in this area.

Compulsory purchase

13.15 The Station Area is in multiple ownerships. Control of certain parcels of land may be needed in order to facilitate comprehensive development. As far as possible this will be sought by negotiation. However, it may prove necessary to use compulsory purchase powers, either directly on behalf of the Council or on behalf of developers; for example, pursuant to Sections 226 and 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

13.16 Use of the Council's powers of compulsory purchase would be subject to the developer underwriting all of the costs to be incurred, both in terms of making and promoting a compulsory purchase order, and in respect of acquiring title and vacant possession and the acquisition and extinguishment of rights.

Planning contributions

13.17 In respect of all prospective Station Area planning applications, there will be a presumption (unless the Council considers otherwise in relation to a particular development proposal), that in order to mitigate the impact of the respective proposed developments and make them acceptable in planning terms - and for the proper planning of the Area - the Council will require the carrying out of works and/or the paying of contributions towards the provision for infrastructure, facilities, services and/or amenities, on and/or off site, to be secured by an agreement or otherwise, as the Council may determine. Where such contributions are required in relation to a particular development proposal, these may be 'pooled' with contributions received in relation to other developments in the Area, in order to cover the infrastructure and other provisions necessary for the proper planning of the Area. The specific level of provision and/or contributions the Council will require in relation to the particular development proposal will be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to that development and accord with the other tests in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations and the DCLG Circular 5/05, or any subsequent relevant government legislation, regulations, or guidance relating to planning obligations or an infrastructure levy.

Pooled contributions

13.18 The comprehensive regeneration of the area will clearly increase the cumulative demand for public transport (rail and bus) infrastructure, roads and other transport infrastructure, as well as a variety of other infrastructure, facilities, services and amenities. In addition, the location of the area is conducive to the provision of particular infrastructure and facilities, such as community, cultural and leisure facilities. The Council therefore considers it appropriate to set a level of contribution for particular infrastructure and facilities to be collected from each development and that these contributions are pooled.

13.19 The creation of a consistent approach to planning contributions across the Station Area can create greater certainty for developers and the Council. This will ensure that the right balance is struck between making reasonable contributions to the likely wider public costs of development, as set out in Government guidance, and the need not to restrain development by making it unviable.

13.20 Contributions will be pooled towards priorities including those listed in figure 13.3.

13.21 Other priorities not listed in figure 13.3 may also be identified.

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC REALM	WHOLE AREA	Improvements to transport interface between railway station and surrounding interchanges, including station entrances and the subway link
		Improvements to the north-south link, including crossing of key barriers, such as railway, IDR and pedestrian/cycle crossing of the Thames
		Improvements to public transport services, including buses
		Improvements to the pedestrian and cycling environment
		Improvements where the proposal would generate additional journeys to and from the site
		Creation, conservation and enhancement of areas of plant and wildlife habitat
		Environmental improvements to streets and spaces including signage, lighting and landscaping
		Improved access to existing open space
		Public art
	Commuted sum for maintenance of public realm	
	NORTHSIDE	Northern Station interchange
		Crossings of the IDR
		Highways improvements: including Vastern Road, Caversham Road, Reading Bridge roundabout
		Station Square North
		Riverside open space
		Thameside footpath
	SOUTHSIDE	South west Station interchange, including treatment of level changes
		South east Station interchange
		Highways improvements: including Caversham Road, Forbury roundabout, Station Road, Garrard Street, Friar Street
Station Square South		
Link through Station Hill to Friar Street including central piazza		
Station Road environmental enhancements		
COMMUNITY-RELATED MATTERS	Thames Valley Police Service infrastructure	
	Enhanced safety and security measures, such as CCTV	
	On-site childcare provision/nursery	
	Children's play facilities	
	Community facilities, such as a primary health centre and community meeting space	
	Leisure and cultural facilities such as sports or fitness facilities etc (see e.g. paragraph 9.3)	

Figure 13.3 Key priorities for pooled contributions

Non-Pooled Contributions

13.22 The following contributions and benefits would be sought in relation to individual sites rather than being part of a developers' pool, where there is a direct link between the development proposed and the contribution or benefit sought. These may be sought via S106 agreement or by a condition attached to a planning permission, if appropriate. They will not all be applicable to every site, and other site-specific priorities not mentioned below may also be identified.

- Provision of on-site affordable housing in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS16.
- Developers should incorporate a mechanism to provide employment opportunities for local residents during both the construction and implementation phases of development. These may include:
 - Provision of education, training and employment projects to equip the local labour force with skills in the resultant developments, possibly in the form of an 'Academy of Construction' to serve the Reading area.
 - Training initiatives during construction.
 - Affordable and flexible workspace suitable for small and start-up businesses.
- Provision of small retail units in accordance with RCAAP policy RC11.
- Provision of on-site open space other than that identified under 'pooled contributions', on a site-by-site basis.
- Travel plans.
- Air Quality Action Plan measures and monitoring.
- Contribution towards the provision/improvement of educational facilities and infrastructure in accordance with Core Strategy policy CS9.
- Ensuring public access through privately-owned public realm.
- Public access to upper floor observatory in tall buildings.
- Contribution towards the Council's administrative and legal costs and the costs of monitoring the provisions of the S106 agreement in accordance with policy CS9.



Utilities

13.23 It is anticipated that the scale of development in this area may require some capacity improvement or upgrade of utilities infrastructure, for instance water/wastewater and electricity. It will be for the developer to establish whether upgrades or additional capacity are required, and to liaise with the utility provider to ensure that these are carried out.

Works near the Thames

13.24 Works within 8 metres of, on or over the Thames, including the provision of a foot and cycle bridge, may require the prior written consent of the Environment Agency under the Water Resources Act 1991 and Land Drainage Act 1991. This consent has a number of requirements, and the Environment Agency should be contacted at an early stage.

Supporting Information

13.25 The submission of any planning application for the Station Area should address and contribute towards the comprehensive development of the area including, among others:

- (i) A Transport Assessment to determine the scope and need for on-site and off-site highway works as well as contributions to public transport and pedestrian/cycle facilities.
- (ii) An Environmental Impact Assessment for any phase of development where significant impacts are identified.
- (iii) A Design and Access Statement.
- (iv) A Tall Building Assessment, where tall buildings are proposed.
- (v) A Flood Risk Assessment for all developments specified by Annex E of PPS25.
- (vi) A Construction Method Statement.

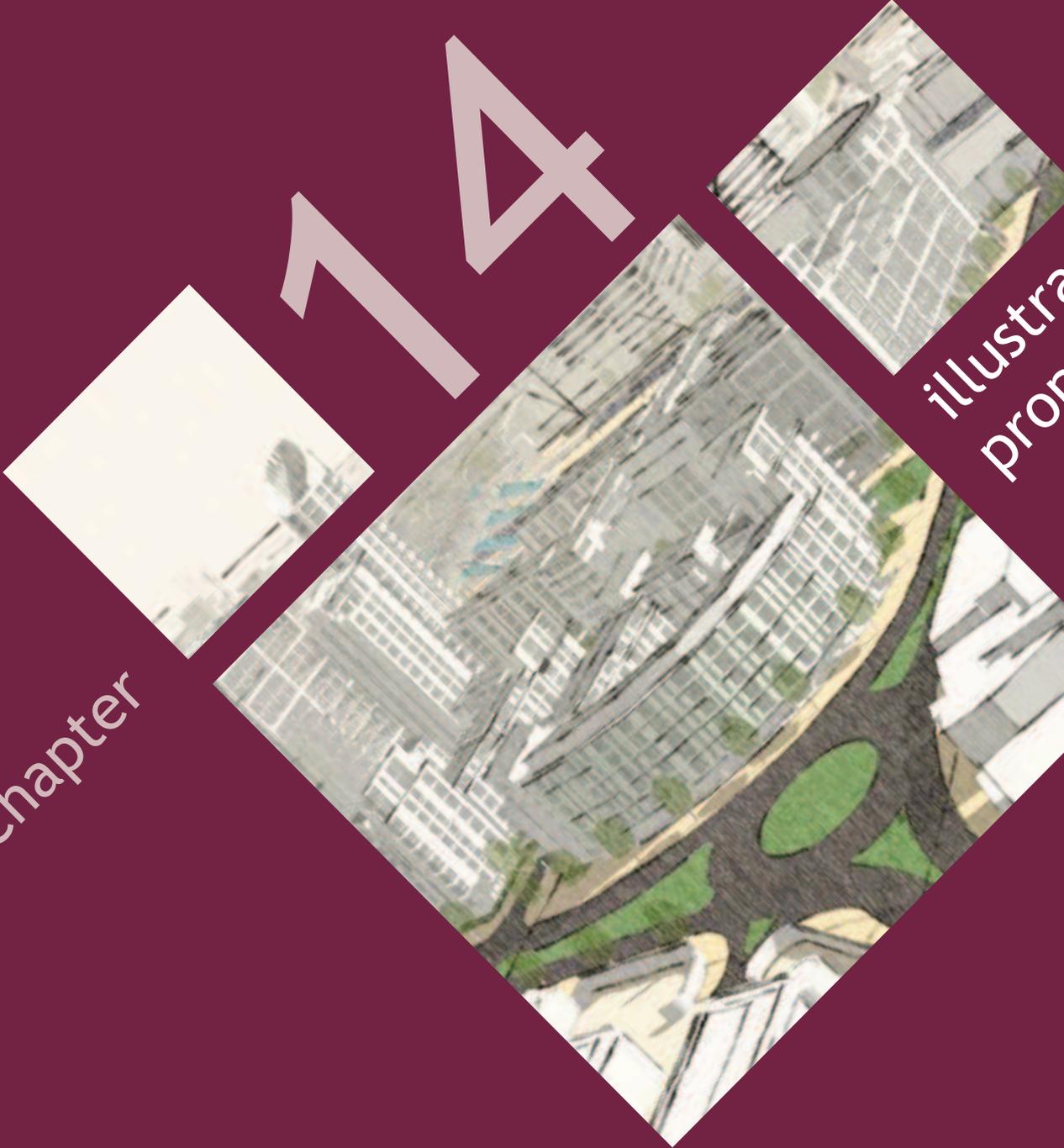


next >>

Chapter

14

illustrative
proposals



illustrative proposals

14.1 The following illustrations are included as an aid to the wider framework development process, primarily to establish the potential density and massing of development and to determine key principles of site layout. They provide an indicative vision of the Station Area in the future, but represent one possible scheme that would comply with the Framework and are provided for illustration only.

Figure 14.1 Illustrative layout



The principal features of the approach

14.2 The figures in this section illustrate one possible way in which the components can be combined to form a coherent scheme.

14.3 The key principles from the Framework are visible in the images. The overall massing strategy of rising to a crown immediately south of the Station is visible, with development decreasing in height to the more sensitive areas around the fringes. The approach of overall benchmark heights, punctuated by landmarks, breaks the overall massing strategy up to some extent, and provides visual interest.

14.4 New crossings re-unite central Reading, which was historically cut in two by the railway. A new overbridge, new northern and southern Station halls and entrances combine to create a landmark station building complex.

14.5 Major new 'Town Squares' to the north and south form gateways to Reading and the new Station square opens up the northern quarter and connects through to the River Thames. Bus and Mass Rapid Transport routes converge on new public transport interchange hubs to the north, south east and south west which are an integral part of the new Station.



Figure 14.2 Station Square South



Figure 14.3 Northern Interchange from Vastern Road



Figure 14.4 Perspective view along Station Road looking North



Figure 14.5 Perspective view looking from the North



Figure 14.6 Perspective view looking from the South

14.6 New high quality streets, avenues and pedestrian routes focus on the interchange hub whilst a grid of streets and squares ‘stitch’ the new development into the wider grid of streets within the centre. High density mixed use development is arranged along streets and around squares, with activity and vitality generating uses at ground floor level, and elegant landmark towers rising above to mark important places, creating a dramatic new silhouette for the town centre. New landscaping and tree planting enhance the environment of the key routes and spaces. The development facilitates high levels of pedestrian and vehicular accessibility to the interchange to which the developments are directly connected.

14.7 Perimeter blocks, particularly north of the station, allow light penetration to buildings and provide communal amenity space. Parking and service access areas are incorporated within buildings and structures to allow the creation of pleasant, pedestrian friendly, public spaces.



Figure 14.7 Station overbridge



Figure 14.8 Perspective view from Caversham Road



Figure 14.9 Perspective view from the North East



Figure 14.10 Perspective view from the South East



Figure 14.11 Perspective view from the South West

A1

Appendix



policy references

local planning policy references

Core Strategy

Sustainable Construction and Design
CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design

Waste Minimisation
CS2: Waste Minimisation

Social Inclusion
CS3: Social Inclusion and Diversity

Accessibility
CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Inclusive Access
CS5: Inclusive Access

Design and the Public Realm
CS7: Design and the Public Realm

Reading's Waterspaces
CS8: Waterspaces

Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities
CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities

Location of Employment Development
CS10: Location of Employment Development

Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses
CS11: Use of Employment Land for Alternative Uses

Maintaining a Variety of Premises
CS12: Maintaining a Variety of Premises
CS13: Impact of Employment Development

Strategy for the Provision of Housing
CS14: Provision of Housing

Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix

Affordable Housing
CS16: Affordable Housing

Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
CS20: Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)

Major Transport Projects
CS21: Major Transport Projects

Transport Assessments
CS22: Transport Assessments

Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans
CS23: Sustainable Travel and Travel Plans
CS24: Car/ Cycle Parking

Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture.
CS25: Scale and Location of Retail, Leisure and Culture Development

Hierarchy of Centres
CS26: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

Loss of Open Space
CS28: Loss of Open Space

Provision of Open Space
CS29: Provision of Open Space

Access to Open Space
CS30: Access to Open Space

Additional and Existing Community Facilities
CS31: Additional and Existing Community Facilities

Impacts on Community Facilities
CS32: Impacts on Community Facilities

Historic Environment
CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Pollution
CS34: Pollution and Water Resources

Flooding
CS35: Flooding

Biodiversity and Geology
CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space
CS37: Major Landscape Features and Strategic Open Space

Trees, Hedges and Woodlands
CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

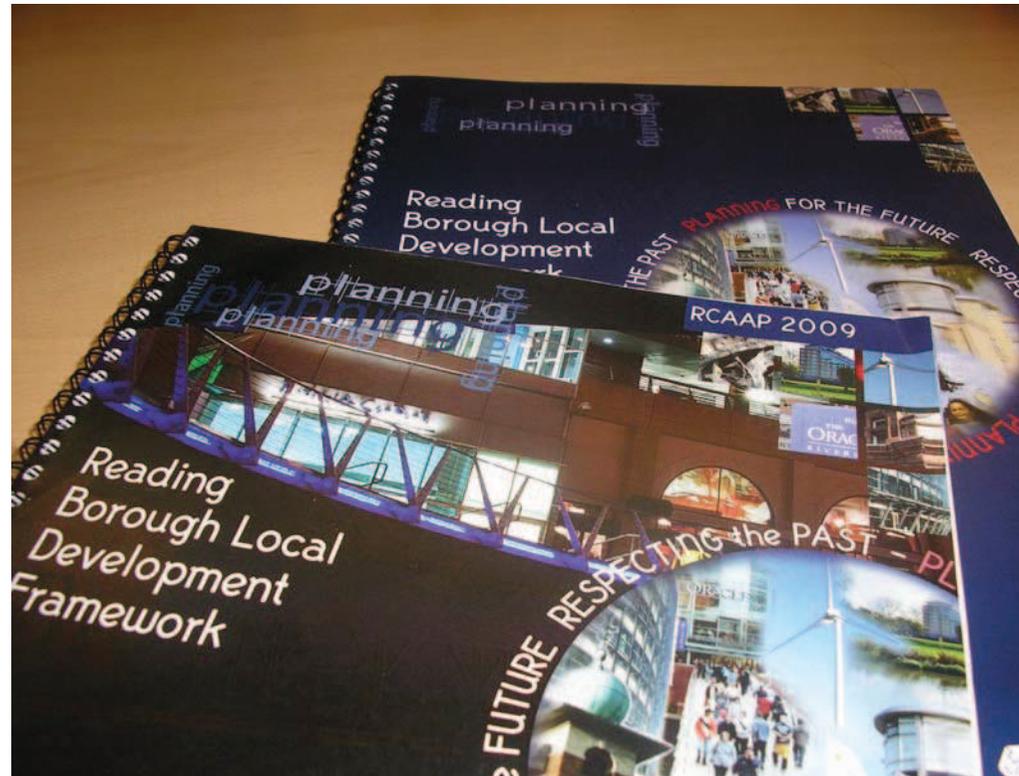
Reading Central Area Action Plan

Major Opportunity Areas

Station/River Major Opportunity Area
RC1: Development in the Station/River
Major Opportunity Area

General Central Area Policies

- RC5: Design in the Centre
- RC6: Definition of the Centre
- RC7: Leisure, Culture and Tourism in the Centre
- RC8: Drinking Establishments
- RC9: Living in the Centre
- RC10: Active Frontages
- RC11: Small Retail Units
- RC12: Terraced Housing in the Centre
- RC13: Tall Buildings
- RC14: Public Realm



Contacts

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