



Reading Station Park

Design and Access Statement

February 2020

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared as part of the outline planning application for the development at Reading Station Park.

The **Design Documents** submitted with the outline planning application interact with each other at differing levels of fixity to control the further development and overall outcome of the redevelopment of Reading Station Park at a detailed level. They also, however, allow an appropriate level of design development to take place and for variation to be established.



THE DESIGN DOCUMENTS

DEVELOPMENT PARAMETER PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS SCHEDULE.

These give an absolute level of information, quantified and quantifiable, to assess specific three dimensional and quantitative information. They establish the basic 'rules' of the proposed development and are submitted for planning approval.

DESIGN CODE

This is a set of specific rules and requirements to guide the physical development of the site. It incorporates not only items that shall happen (mandatory) but also items that are desired or advised (discretionary).

The code is a set of illustrated design

rules and requirements which instruct the physical development of the site and will be used to guide the preparation, and assess the acceptability, of future Reserved Matters applications.

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT (THIS DOCUMENT)

This sets out the illustrative design rationale for the proposals within the existing and future context of central Reading. The document establishes the aspiration and ambition of the scheme, the thinking behind those aspirations, and includes illustrative proposals that indicate one possible way, in which development could come forward in accordance with the Development Parameters and Design Code.

The Reading Station Park development may be built out over an extended period of time. The Design Documents will ensure that a high quality development can be delivered in a co-ordinated fashion but at the same time allows for design variety and and departures from the illustrative scheme as necessary, either through regulatory change or changing market conditions.



1. ASSESSMENT

1.1 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

SITE LOCATION

The site lies immediately adjacent to the railway station at the northern edge of Reading town centre, the major part of the town centre being on the other side of the railway tracks. The River Thames is to the North of the site, with the open green spaces of Christchurch Meadows beyond.

Located at the heart of a possible pedestrian and cycle route from the station to the river, the site represents a significant redevelopment opportunity, providing the potential to secure a major mixed-use sustainable development of a scale and quality that will contribute positively to the continuing development of Reading Town Centre.

Key:

-  main vehicular routes
-  secondary vehicular routes
-  proposed north-south pedestrian axis



Aerial view. Site's relationship to the town centre and Reading railway station

1. ASSESSMENT

ACCESS

The site is bounded by Vastern Road to the north, Caversham Road to the west, the Former Royal Mail depot to the south and the lesser-used taxi drop off and bus return route of Trooper Potts Way to the east. There is one public vehicular access point to the site from Caversham Road and one egress point onto Vastern Road. Additionally there is a service access off Trooper Potts Way for deliveries to the retail park.

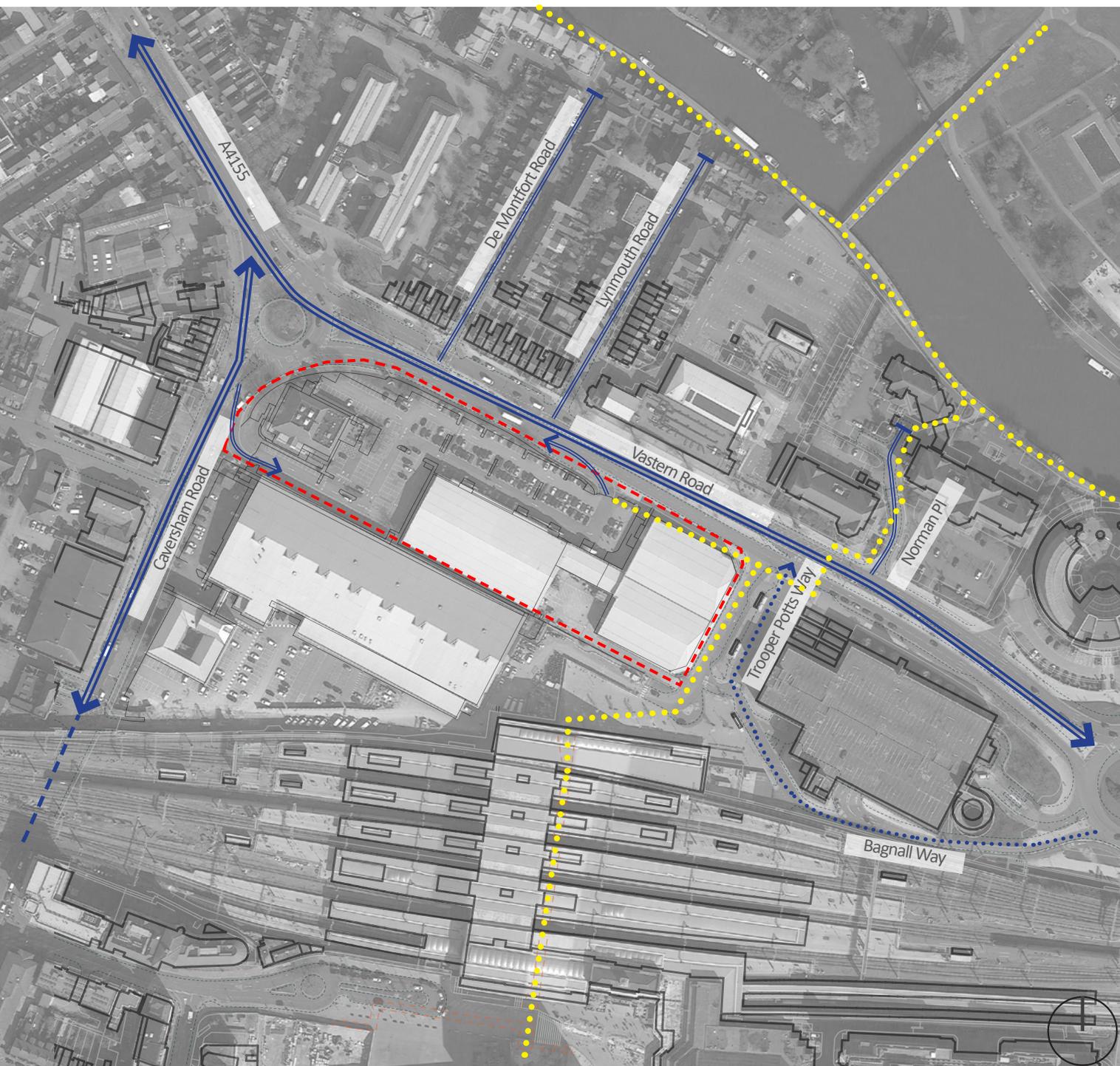
The road, bus and rail network give good transport links to Reading and beyond.

Pedestrian access from the town centre is via a ground level passage beneath the railway tracks. Two alternative routes are to the East and West, alongside major roads.

The pedestrian access from the railway station to the river is currently via an indirect and almost hidden route through an office development, heavily reliant on signposting rather than natural wayfinding.

-  Site boundary
-  Existing pedestrian routes
-  Existing main vehicular access
-  Existing main vehicular access/under bridge crossing
-  bus only route except for access to station car park
-  Existing 'dead end' vehicular routes



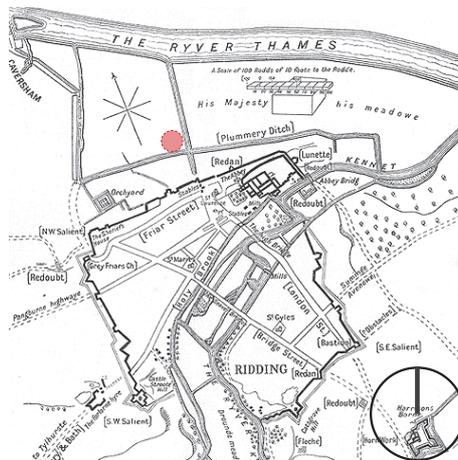


1. ASSESSMENT

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The site is located in an area that was heavily influenced by the development of the Great Western Railway(GWR), one of the main factors affecting rapid growth in Reading.

However, for a long period of time the area North of the tracks was used mainly for the GWR signalling works (until 1960) and for storage.



Map dated 1643



Map dated 1830

The first Reading station was opened on 30 March 1840 as the temporary western terminus of the original line of the GWR. The time taken to travel from London to Reading was reduced to one hour and five minutes, less than a quarter of the time taken by the fastest stagecoach. The line was extended to its intended terminus at Bristol by 1841.

As built, Reading station was a typical Brunel-designed single-sided intermediate station, with separate up and down platforms situated to the South of the through tracks and arranged so that all up trains calling at Reading had to cross the route of all down through trains.

Between 1865 and 1867, a station building, built of buff brick from Coalbrookdale with Bath Stone dressings and incorporating a tower and clock, was constructed for the GWR. In 1898 the single sided station layout was replaced by a conventional design with 'up', 'down' and 'relief' platforms linked by a pedestrian subway.



Reading Station 1865

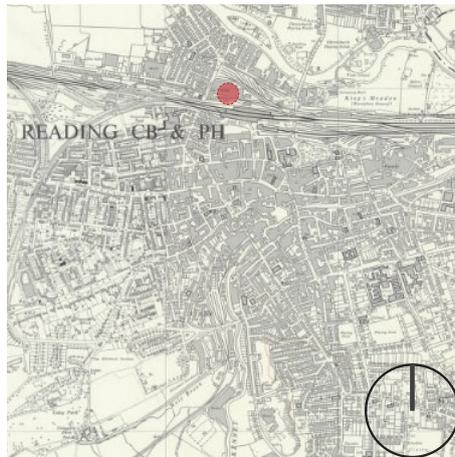
A common negative impact of railway development is the divide that generates uneven growth between the two sides of the track.

However, in Reading, the railway follows the path of River Thames. Railway and river barges must have traded together for a short period of time before the railway took over as the main means of transport. This boundary between North and South must have been enforced by the river.

On the south, Reading grew rapidly expanding Southward.

In 1911, Reading continued to expand, but this time northwards, annexing Caversham.

Aiming to connect to Caversham, redevelopment works since 1989 have incorporated means of linking the two sides of the tracks for better connectivity and more even growth. It can be argued that the current station retail park, which turns its back on the station and has an open frontage only to Vastern Road, has undone some of the work that was previously carried out to improve connectivity.



Map dated 1962



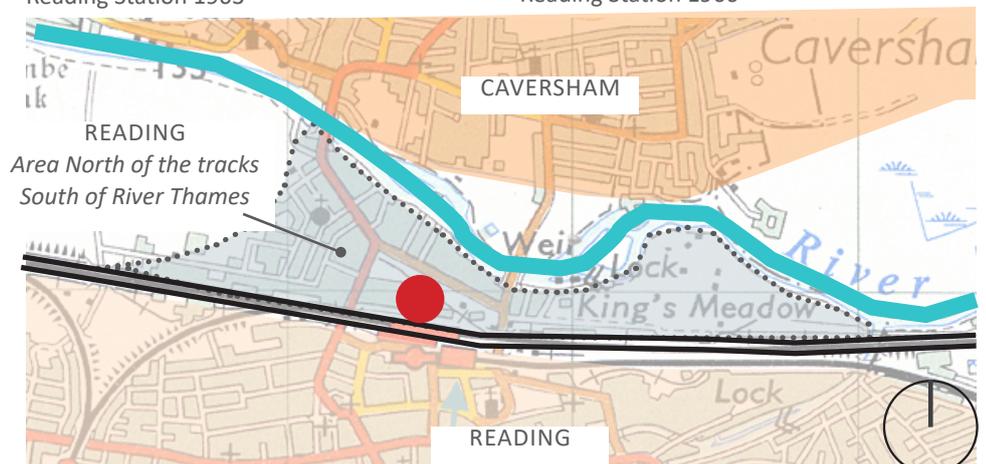
Reading Station 1960



Reading Station 1963



Reading Station 1966



1. ASSESSMENT

CHARACTER AREAS

Currently, the 1.77 hectare site contains Class A1 floorspace and associated parking. To the South and West there are storage facilities and small retail units. On the northern boundary, the site is separated by Vastern Road from a row of terraced houses and some office accommodation. The surrounding uses on the eastern boundary are mostly commercial: office space and a town centre multi-storey car park.



1. Aerial view of the retail park and royal mail depot



2. Railway station, northern entrance



3. Railway Station car park



4. Vastern Road office buildings



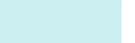
5. Vastern Road residential



6. Caversham Road fire station

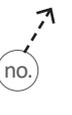
Application site - - - - -

Residential Use 

Office Use 

Industrial Use/ Parking/
Substation 

Retail Use 

Photos direction
and location 

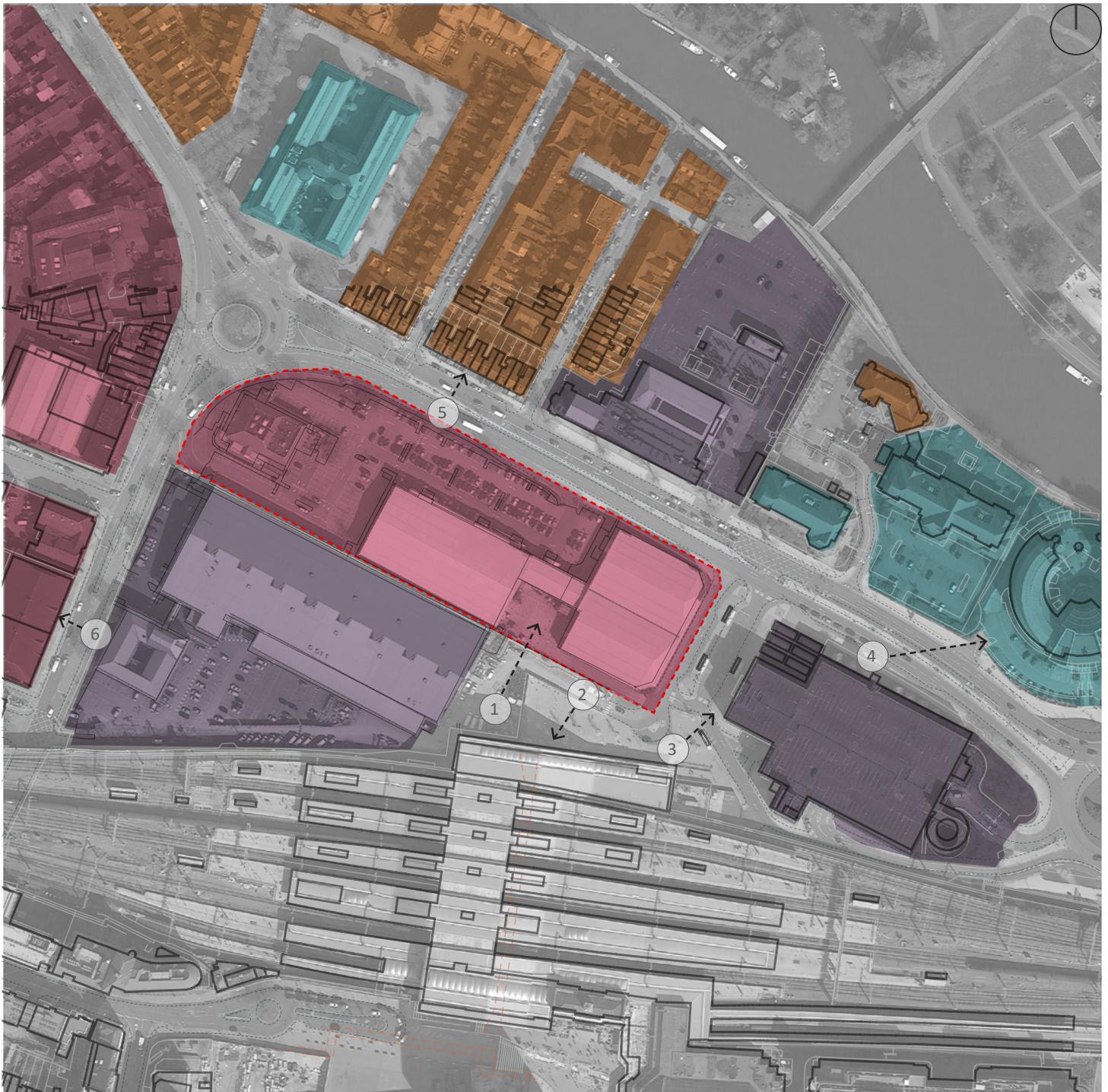


Diagram plan view of surrounding Uses

1. ASSESSMENT

HEIGHTS

The surrounding uses on the eastern boundary are mostly commercial: office space and a town centre multi-storey car park.

The heights vary according to use. The single houses are two storeys with pitched roofs; the heights of the office and commercial buildings to the East and West of the site are considerably taller, the multi-storey car park being the tallest at 5-6 storeys.



1. Vastern Road



2. Office Building on Vastern Road



3. Office Building on Vastern Road



4. Caversham Road



5. Royal Mail and Retail back of house

Application site - - - - -

1 to 3 storeys

> 3 storeys

> 5 storeys

Photos direction
and location

no.

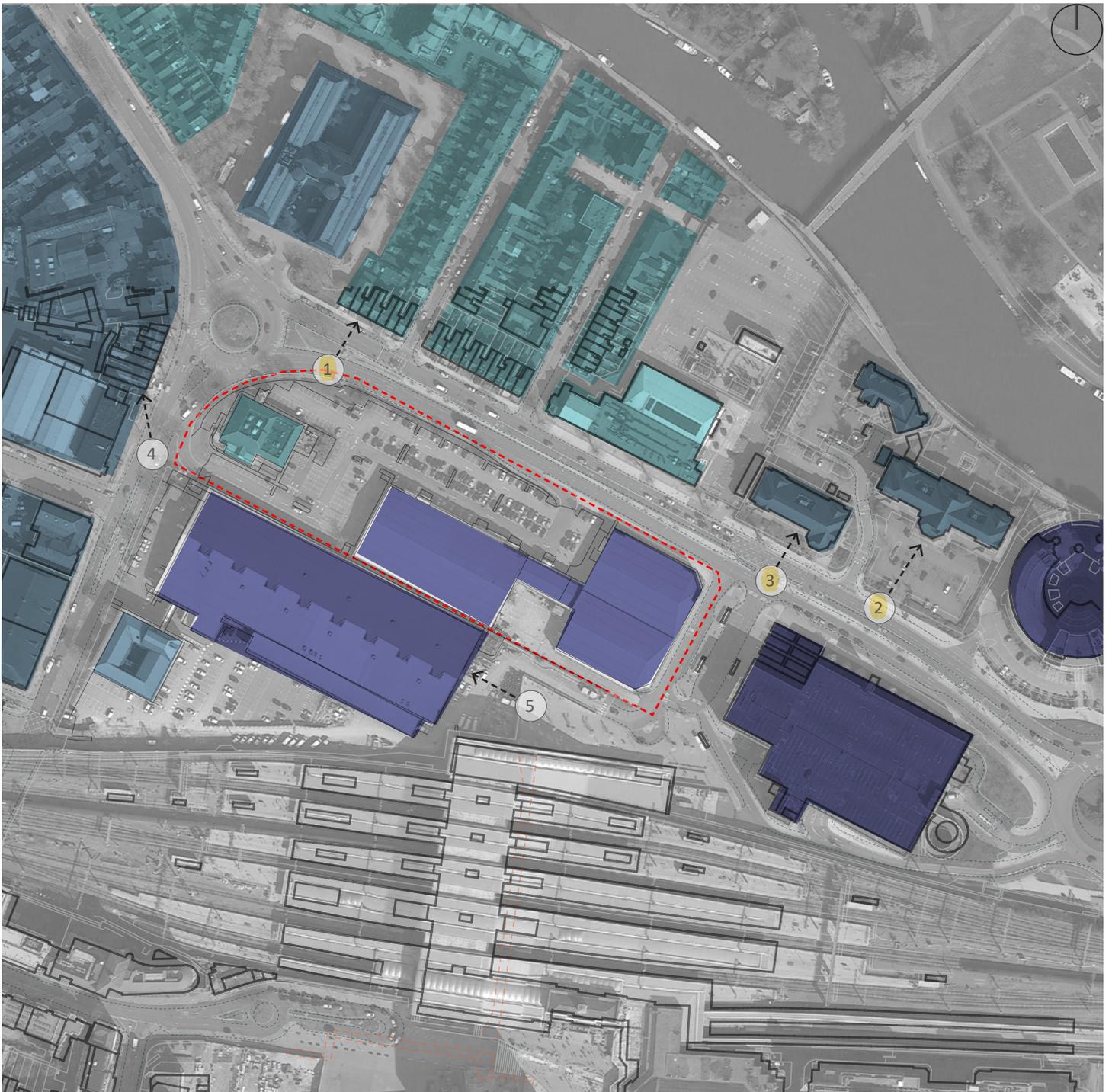


Diagram plan view of surrounding heights