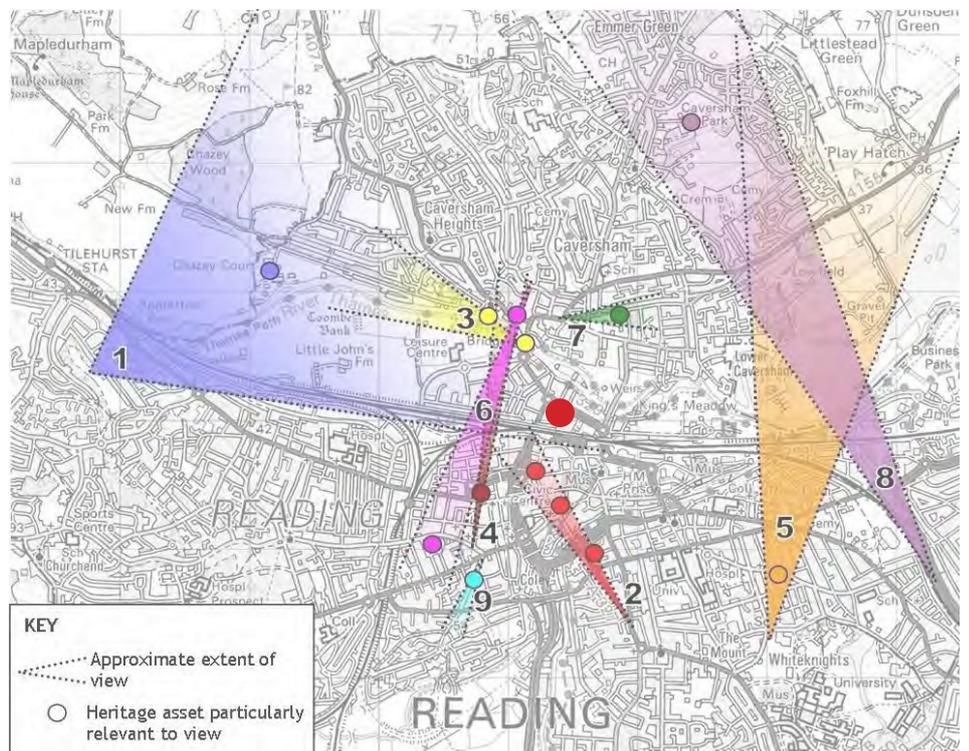


PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT VIEWS WITH HERITAGE INTEREST

New development should not harm, and where possible enhance the views of acknowledged historical significance.

The site is not located in the range of significant views with heritage interest. However, the impact of the proposal on townscape has been reviewed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The results of the assessment can be seen in the Townscape Impact Assessment chapter of the EIA.



Reading Borough Local Plan. Significant Views with Heritage Interest

1. View from McIlroy Park towards Chazey Barn Farm, the Thames Meadow and the Chilterns escarpment

2. View northwards down Southampton St from Whitley St towards St Giles Church, St Mary's Church and Greyfriars Church

3. View upstream from Caversham Bridge

4. View northwards down Russell St towards the Church of the Holy Trinity

5. View over Alexandra Road Conservation Area toward the Chilterns escarpment

6. View southwards down St Anne's Rd towards Downshire Square

7. View of St Anne's Church Tower from the West

8. View towards Caversham Park House from the A329(M), railway and surrounding streets

9. View southwards along tree-lined Coley Avenue

2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

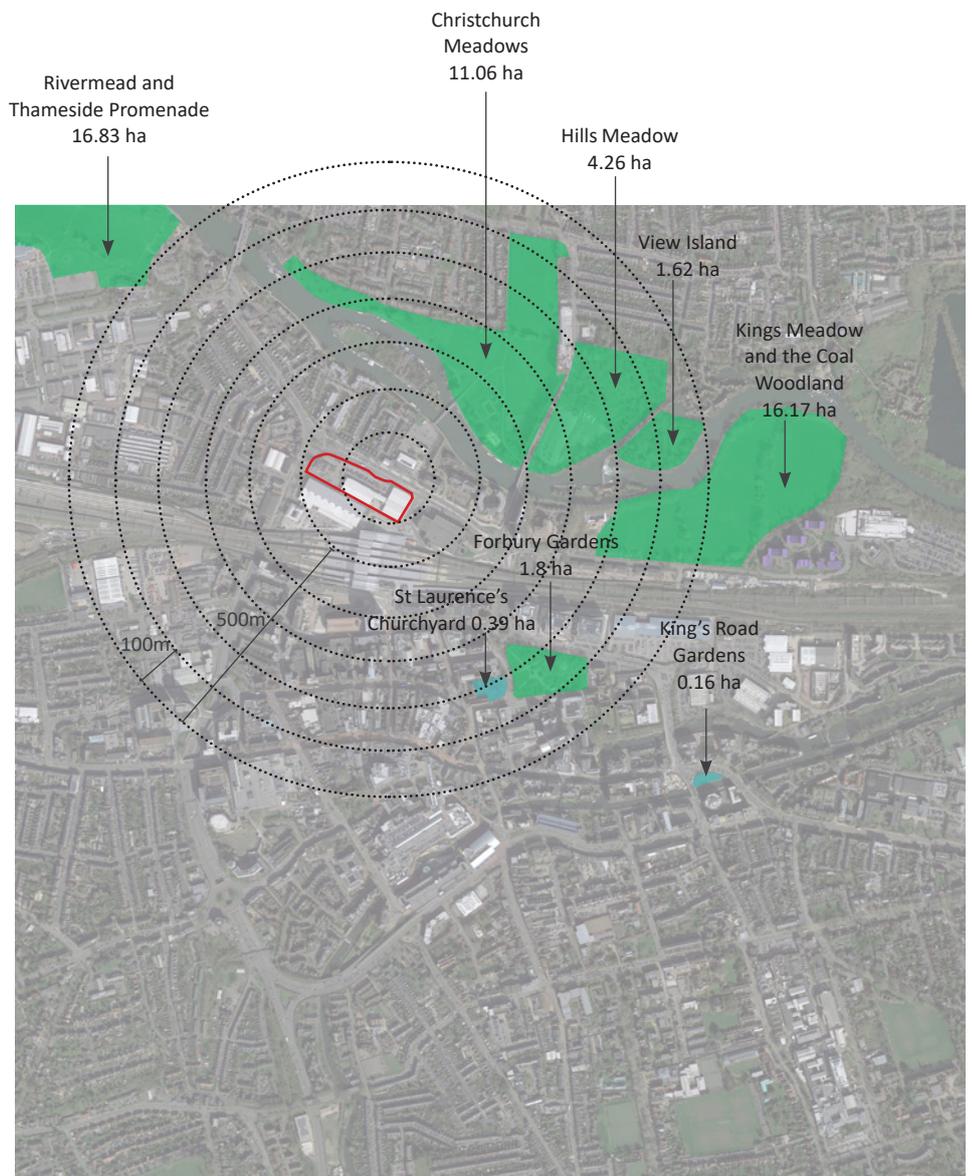
2.2 READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

LOCAL GREEN SPACE AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The site is located in close proximity to protected Local Green Space and Public Open Space.

Local Green Spaces within less than 1km: Rivermead Promenade, Christchurch Meadows, Hills Meadow and Kings Meadow are easily accessed.

To the South the character of the green spaces changes to appropriate town centre use, and the site is in close proximity to Public Open Space: St Laurence churchyard and King's Road Gardens.



Site ———

Local Green Space (LGS) ■■■■

Public Open Space (POS) ■■■■

PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE

For developments of 50 dwellings or more, a contribution to the open space is sought by the Council. This needs to satisfy the 'most urgent need subject to considerations of particular deficiencies' (*Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, page 46)

The site assessment highlighted connectivity issues between the town centre and the Local Green Space to the North of the River. This creates an opportunity to secure through the Outline Planning Application a link into the green network that would enable the two areas to connect.

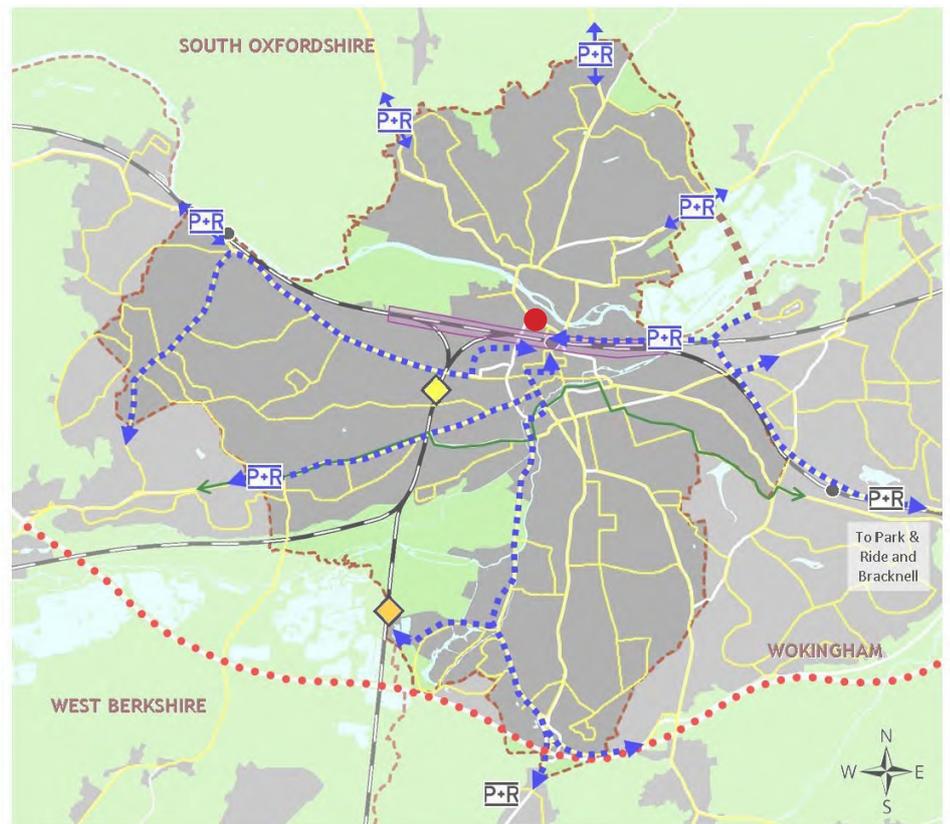


2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.2 READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES

Due to its central location and existing and proposed transport links, the site will enjoy enhanced public transport.



KEY

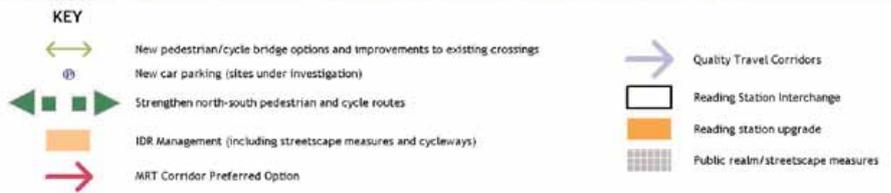
	Green Park Station and Interchange		National Cycle Network 422 scheme		Local authority boundary
	Reading West Station upgrade		M4 Smart Motorway scheme		Railway and station
	Future park and ride corridor		Existing bus network		Water
	Existing park and ride		Potential additional Thames crossing		Undeveloped land
	Proposed Mass Rapid Transit route		Safeguarded for Crossrail		Built up area and road

Reading Borough Local Plan. Major Transport Schemes in Reading

AREA SPECIFIC SECTIONS: CENTRAL READING

As described in the local plan:

'The centre of Reading is one of the most accessible locations in the South East and contains one of the most successful shopping centres in the UK. It is a location for a number of businesses of national and international importance and is home to a growing residential community. It has a significant concentration of important heritage assets, some of which are increasingly being better revealed through new investment.' (Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, page 125)



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Reading Borough Council. Account No. 100019672. 2008

Key principles:

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, work, study 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.* (*Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, page 126)

2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.2 READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

AREA SPECIFIC SECTIONS: CENTRAL READING

The Local Plan mentions the improvements implemented in the past ten years to overcome the fragmentation of this area. East-West running major transport links such as the Inner Distribution Road (IDR), the railway and the River Thames have become barriers for routes running North-South.

The Local Plan seeks to continue improving North-South access through a spatial strategy that is dedicated to expanding the centre northwards.

'Emphasising a North-South link through the centre will help to link the centre to the Thames and its adjacent parks, to Caversham and to the rest of Reading.' (Reading Borough Local Plan 2019)

The site's development is an opportunity to contribute to Reading's strategy for overcoming local fragmentation. Sitting at the centre of three major opportunity sites, the proposal will act as a tie and gateway for future transport and access to the North.

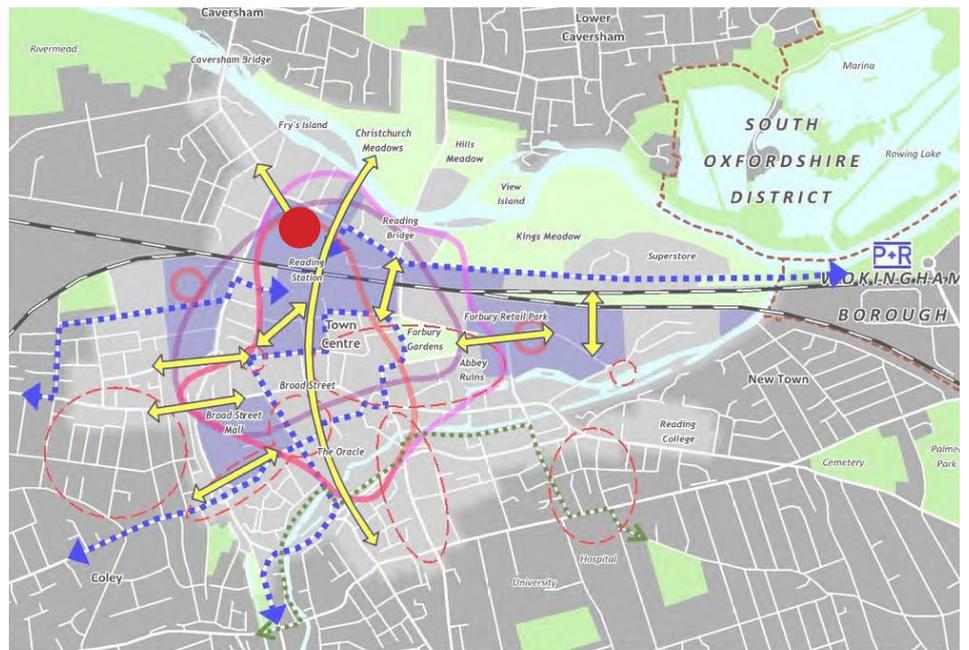


AREA STRATEGY FOR CENTRAL READING

The site is marked as an opportunity area for major development.

The document highlights that currently the site is under-used and contains low-quality buildings. Future development should be of high quality and able to achieve an improved connectivity with the centre and good links to public transport interchanges.

The Local Plan mentions that future development on the areas identified will have to meet most of the needs identified for the central area. Therefore, these sites are expected to contain high-density schemes.



Key

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|--|
| | Concentration of retail* | | Potential Mass Rapid Transit route | | Improved pedestrian and cycle movement |
| | Concentration of offices* | | Future park and ride site | | Particular cluster of heritage assets |
| | Concentration of leisure uses* | | National Cycle Network 422 scheme | | Local authority boundary |
| | Opportunity for major development | | | | |

* Location of concentrations are approximate only—please see definitions on Proposals Map

2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.2 READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

DESIGN IN CENTRAL READING

New developments in Central reading should have the following key attributes:

1. 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;

2. 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 landscaped areas, and public art, that provide suitable functions and interest, sense of place and safe and convenient linkages to adjoining areas;

3. Development should consider and, where possible, include ways of providing green infrastructure designed into the development, for instance through roof gardens, green walls and green roofs, to enhance the otherwise very urban environment;

4. 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;

5. 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; and

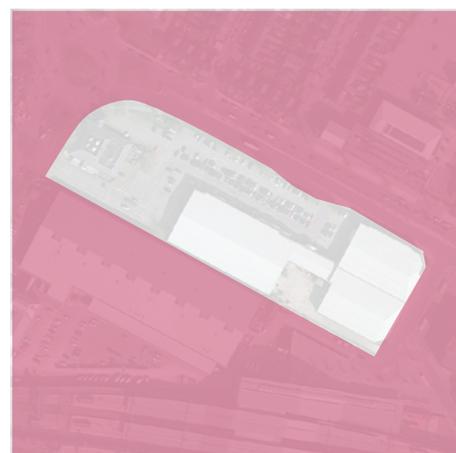
*6. Development should be designed with consideration of adjacent development sites, and should not prevent or cause unreasonable burdens on the future development of those sites.**

(* Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, p130)

With reference to points 1 and 6, all development coming forward on the site will have to take into consideration existing infrastructure and neighbouring buildings. In addition, future developments will have to be considered to ensure that the proposed development will not have a negative impact on its surroundings.

Following the requirements of point 3, future development of the site will take into consideration ways to improve connectivity between the South and the North through the provision of a green link. In addition, development coming forward at reserved matters stage will provide a range of amenities with different layers of privacy from public spaces to communal amenity, private shared gardens in courtyards within perimeter blocks, and roof gardens.

In response to point 4, the Outline Planning Application will ensure the use of high quality materials for schemes coming forward at reserved matters through the guidelines of the Design Code.



PUBLIC REALM IN CENTRAL READING

New developments in Central reading should have the following key attributes:

1. All proposals on sites of more than 1 hectare within the central Reading 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;

2. 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 expected where appropriate;

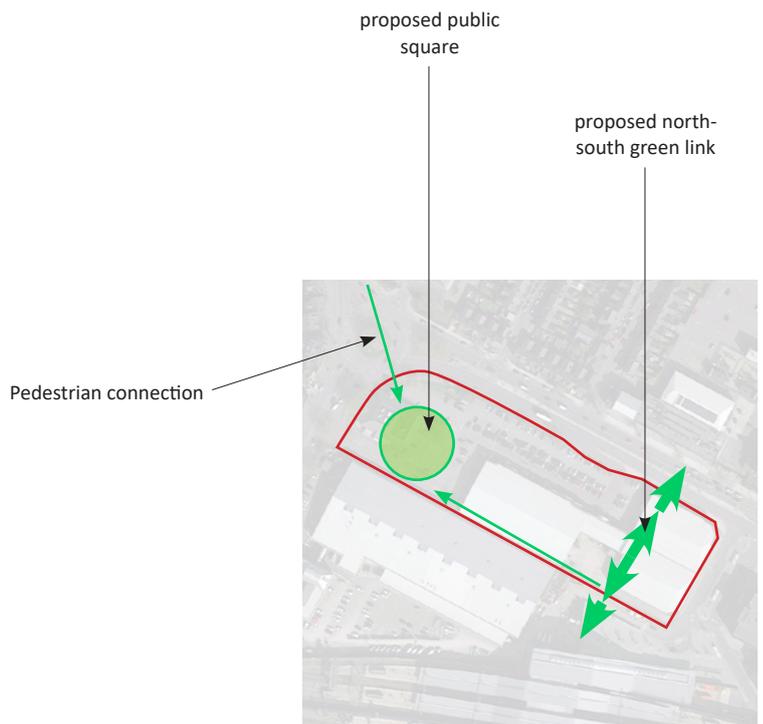
3. Development proposals adjacent to or in close proximity to a watercourse will retain and not impede existing continuous public access to and along the watercourses, and will provide legible continuous public access to and along the watercourses where this does not currently exist;

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

5. The public realm should conserve and enhance the historic environment of the centre and the significance of heritage assets therein and their setting.*
(* Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, p132)

The site will need to provide new public open space. The green link to Christchurch Meadows, plus an open square in the western part of the site will be the main public open space areas provided. The two ensure an even distribution of open space throughout the scheme.

Their design could respond to their different characters, where the link is an active transitory route as well as a sitting area, the square to the West could be designed as a destination.



2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.2 READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

TALL BUILDINGS

The Local Plan attributes the term to buildings with more than 10 storeys of commercial space, or 12 storeys of residential use, equating to over 36m in height.

Tall buildings are considered appropriate only in designated areas. The site is located within one of these areas: CR10A, Station Area Cluster.

Within this area, the tallest buildings are expected to be located closest to the station. Other buildings should step down towards the fringes.



STATION/RIVER MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREA

The site is located within the Station /River Major Opportunity Area CR11e - North of Station. As part of this zone, proposed development for the site will have to comply with specific guidelines, as listed below.:

1. Contribute towards providing a high-density mix of uses to create a destination in itself and capitalise on its role as one of the most accessible locations in the South East. Development for education will be an acceptable part of the mix;

2. Help facilitate greater pedestrian and cycle permeability, particularly on the key movement corridors. North-South links through the area centred on the new station, including across the IDR, are of particular importance;

3. Provide developments that front onto and provide visual interest to existing and future pedestrian routes and open spaces;

4. Safeguard land which is needed for mass rapid transit routes and stops;

5. Provide additional areas of open space where possible, with green infrastructure, including a direct landscaped link between the station and the River Thames;

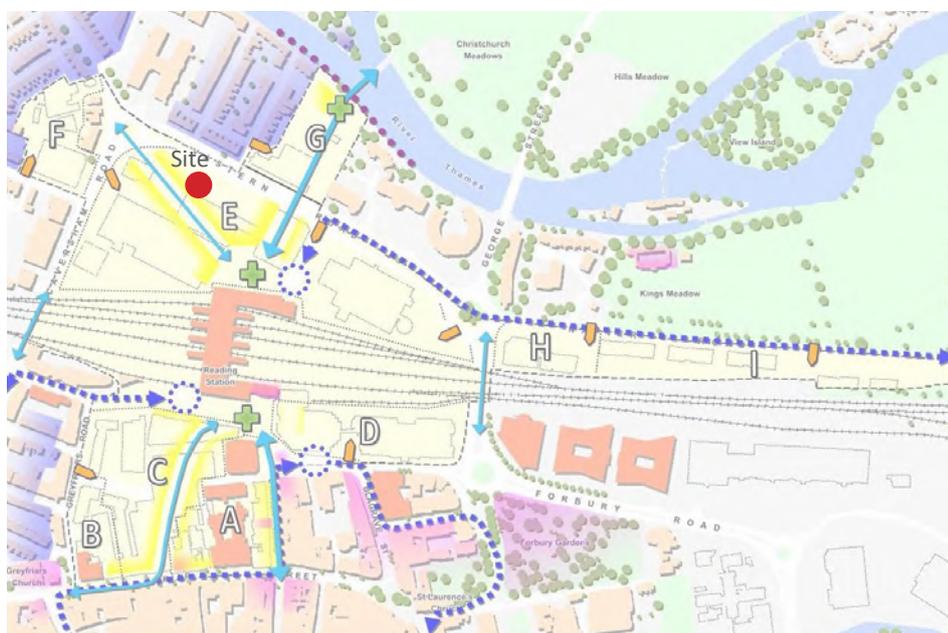
6. Give careful consideration to the areas of transition to low and medium density residential and conserve and, where possible, enhance listed buildings, conservation areas and historic gardens and their settings;

7. Give careful consideration to the archaeological potential of the area and be supported by appropriate archaeological assessment which should inform the development;

8. Demonstrate that it is part of a comprehensive approach to its sub-area, which does not prevent neighbouring sites from fulfilling the aspirations of this policy, and which contributes towards the provision of policy requirements that benefit the whole area, such as open space; and

9. Give early consideration to the potential impact on water and wastewater infrastructure in conjunction with Thames Water, and make provision for upgrades where required.*

(* Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, p135)



Key

	Sub-area boundary		New area of open space
	Major Opportunity Area		Vehicle access point
	Footprint of existing building in Major Opportunity Area		Key movement corridor (pedestrian and/or cycle)
	Existing building		Location of transport interchange
	Recent building or building under construction		Proposed Mass Rapid Transit route
	Nearby sensitive location—low-rise residential		Retained or new public access along waterways
	Nearby sensitive location—heritage assets		Activation of key routes and spaces with town centre uses

Sub-Areas

A	CR11a: Friar Street and Station Road
B	CR11b: Greyfriars Road Corner
C	CR11c: Station Hill and Friars Walk
D	CR11d: Brunel Arcade and Apex Plaza
E	CR11e: North of the Station
F	CR11f: West of Caversham Road
G	CR11g: Riverside
H	CR11h: Napier Road Corner
I	CR11i: Napier Court

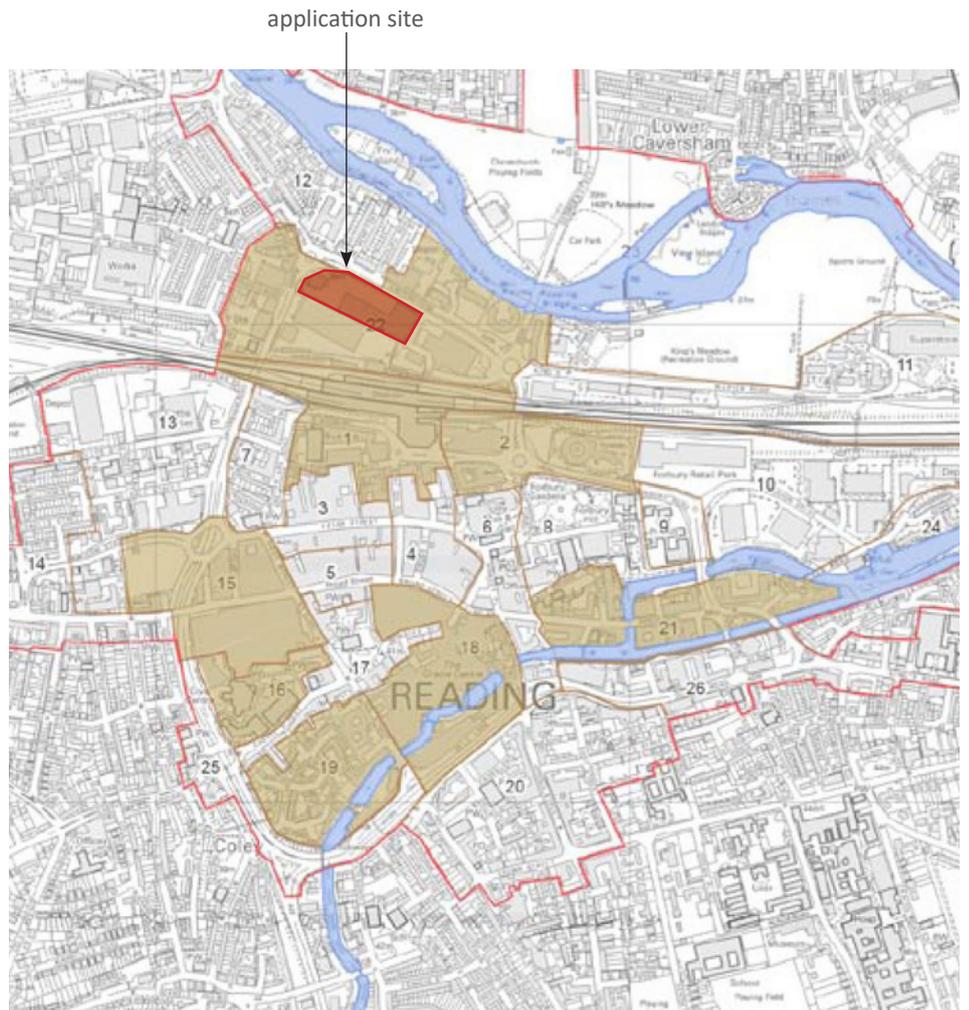
2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.3 READING TALL BUILDINGS STRATEGY

GUIDANCE SCOPE

This document sets out to: *inform the development of a tall buildings policy and of specific guidelines for individual sites and areas that will be documented within the Reading Central Area Action Plan. It will also operate as a useful tool for the Council in assessing proposals for taller buildings in the central area of Reading over the coming years.* (source: Reading Tall Buildings Strategy (RTBS))

The document places the site within one of the areas with some townscape capacity for tall buildings: zone 22, Vastern Road.



Reading Tall Building Strategy (2008)

CHARACTER AREA 22

Character Area 22 is identified to have **low sensitivity to tall buildings**. Tall buildings are not recommended to the East or north of this area, but to the South and in proximity to the railway they are acceptable.

The area is considered highly suitable for tall buildings due to the character of the existing context and also due to the absence of key views or visual focal points affected by redevelopment.

The following improvements should be sought to support new tall developments:

*source: Reading Tall Buildings Strategy

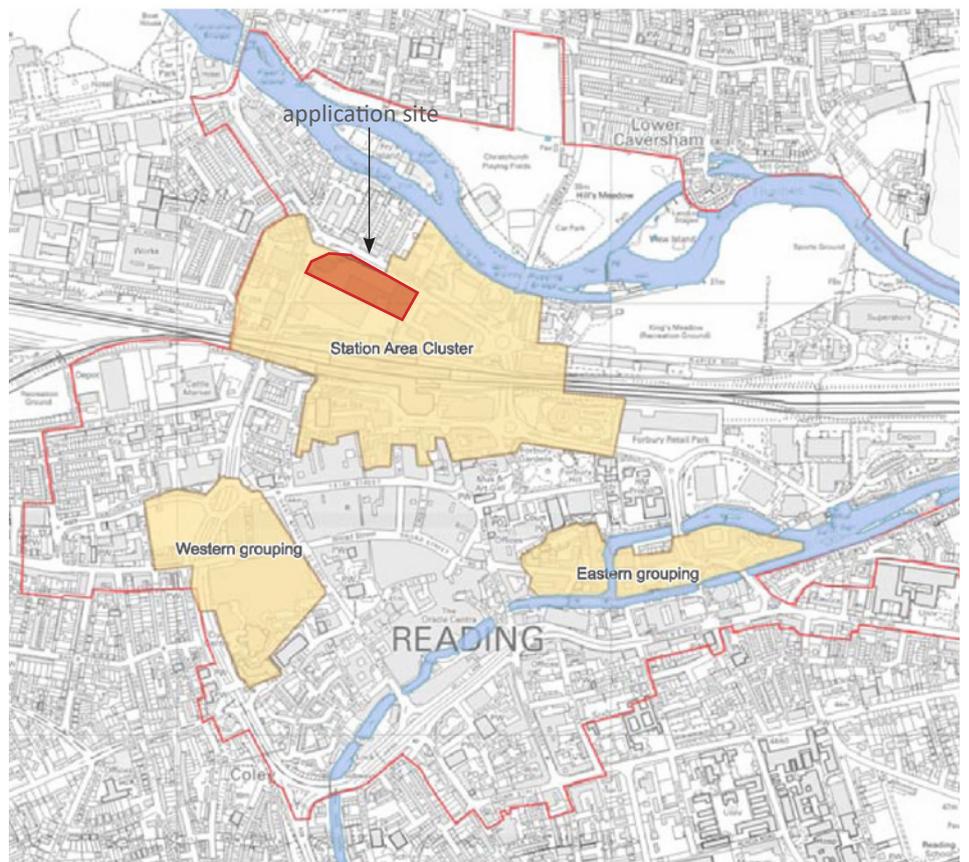
- Transport :

Although this area is close to the railway station, access across the railway is poor and will require improvement to take full advantage of its location. The links to the town centre are also poor but two main bus routes cross the area at either end. A future National Cycle Network traffic free route is proposed that would link the existing National Cycle Network traffic-free route along the river to the station area and town centre from one side of the character area.

- Market considerations:

There would need to be associated public realm enhancements and enhanced accessibility to improve market perception of the area.

The document also groups adjacent areas that share attributes and attaches Character Area 22 to *Station Area Cluster* - a preferred tall buildings location.



2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

2.3 READING TALL BUILDINGS STRATEGY

SENSITIVE VIEWS

The document points out that introducing tall buildings to the centre of Reading will change the skyline that is currently experienced by viewers, a change that should bring improvements to the townscape.

The document also highlights the risks and opportunities of tall buildings that can either: *enhance certain views, providing a focal point, and detract from others, forming an unsympathetic backdrop to important townscape features, or becoming an uncharacteristic feature of views from tranquil rural landscapes.*

The **key views** identified in the Reading Tall Building Strategy as relevant for this site are:

1. Views within the town centre:

A: Along Market Place towards St Lawrence's Church;

C: Along St Mary's Butts to St Mary's church;

D: From Castle Street to St Mary's church.

2. Views into central Reading:

View 3: From the grounds of the University of Reading, Whiteknights camps;

View 4: From 'The Mount' towards Caversham Park;

View 5: From the A327, South of Central Reading;

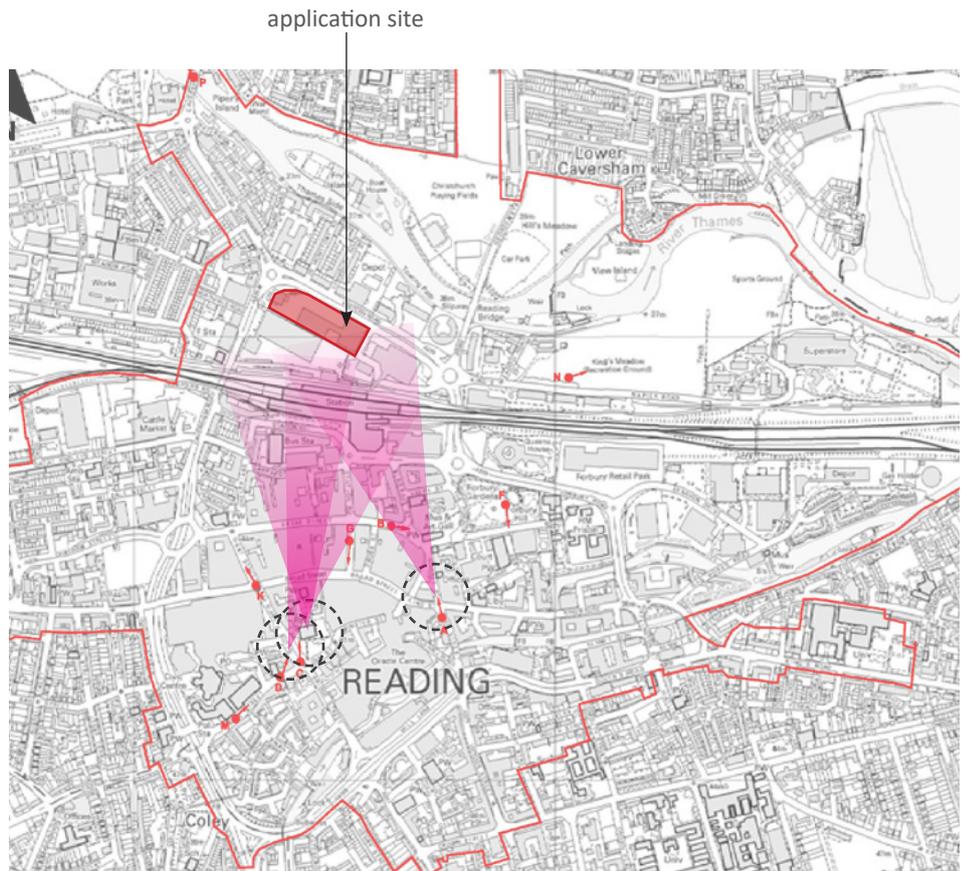
View 6: From Caversham Bridge;

View 7: From the Thames Path East of Reading;

View 9: From footpath East of Maple Durham;

View 11: From Dunsden Way, South of Dunsden Green;

View 14: From Balmore Park.

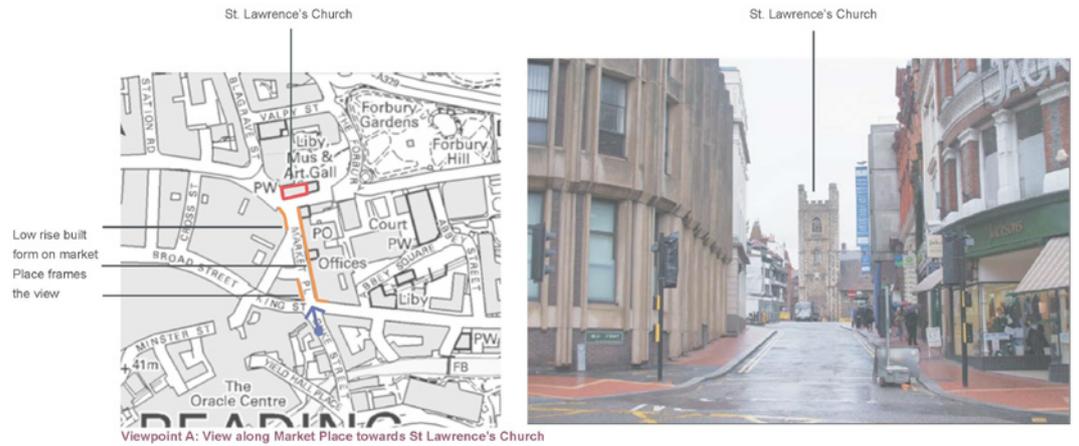


Reading Tall Buildings Strategy. Long range high sensitivity views 1



Reading Tall Buildings Strategy. Long range high sensitivity views 2

A: Along Market Place towards St Lawrence's Church;



C: Along St Mary's Butts to St Mary's church;



D: From Castle Street to St Mary's church.



2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

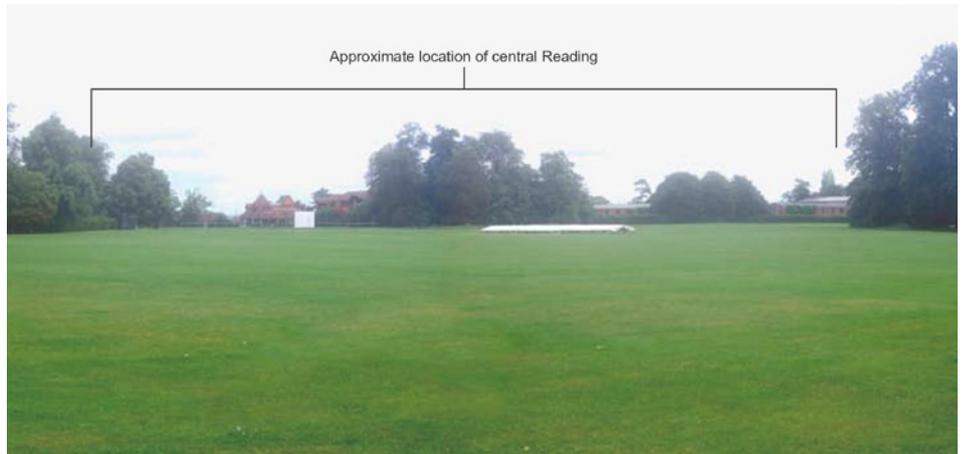
2.3 READING TALL BUILDINGS STRATEGY

SENSITIVE VIEWS

View 3: From the grounds of the University of Reading, Whiteknights camps;

Due to the very low density of built form, the view would have a high sensitivity to the introduction of tall buildings in central Reading as a visible skyline feature.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



View 4: From 'The Mount' towards Caversham Park;

The combination of the residential character of the view and the inclusion of Caversham Park as a focal point of the view, ensure that the view would have a high sensitivity to the introduction of tall buildings.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



View 5: From the A327, South of Central Reading;

Although the buildings in the foreground are residential and low rise, the existing visibility of buildings in central Reading as a focal point creates a low sensitivity to further tall building developments.

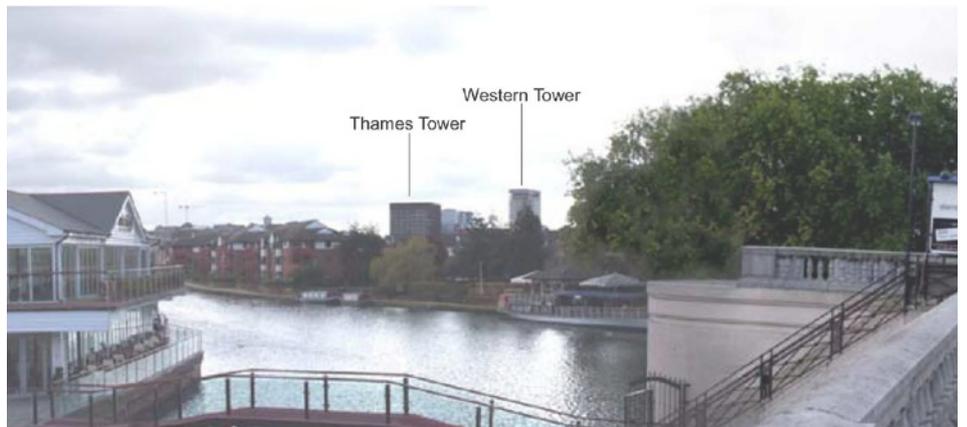
*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



View 6: From Caversham Bridge;

The view has a medium/low sensitivity to the inclusion of tall buildings on the skyline. Although the skyline is currently dominated by low rise development, the inclusion of a tall building would add focus to the view and provide an opportunity to add character and focus.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



View 7: From the Thames Path East of Reading;

Expanses of floodplain and recreational grassland are interrupted by views of riverside vegetation and individual clumps of trees. The skyline is also interrupted by the upper floors of Thames Tower in the background of the view. The introduction of further tall buildings to the skyline would further erode the tranquil character. There is a high sensitivity to the inclusion of further tall buildings to the view.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy



View 9: From footpath East of Maple Durham;

Although occasional built form is a feature, the built form is residential and low rise. The rural view has a high sensitivity to the development of tall or very tall buildings.

*source: reading Tall Buildings Strategy

