
Reading Station Park

Planning Statement

Prepared by Barton Willmore LLP on Behalf of Aviva Life & Pensions UK Ltd

February 2020

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Project Ref:	17127/A5
Status:	FINAL
Issue/Rev:	01
Date:	17 th February 202
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Date: 17th February 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore LLP on behalf of Aviva Life & Pensions UK Ltd. ("the Applicant") in support of an application for outline planning permission at Reading Station Park (RSP) (the 'Application Site'), also known as Vastern Court. The Application Site lies within the jurisdiction of Reading Borough Council (RBC).

1.2 The description of development is as follows:

"Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Demolition and redevelopment to comprise: up to 115,000 sqm GEA in one or more land uses comprising: Residential (Class C3 and including PRS); Offices (Use Class B1(a); development in Use Classes A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away), C1 (hotel), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car parking; provision of new plant and renewable energy equipment; creation of servicing areas and provision of associated services, including waste, refuse, cycle storage, and lighting; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; provision of attenuation infrastructure; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the approved Development Parameters Schedule and Plans."

1.3 This planning statement identifies and describes the key opportunities presented by the proposed development and assesses the proposals against relevant planning policies, and conformity with the Development Plan.

1.4 The structure of this Statement:

- Section 2 – Background;
- Section 3 – The Proposed Development & Planning Application Approach;
- Section 4 – Planning Policy Context;
- Section 5 – Key Planning Considerations; and
- Section 6 – Conclusion and Summary of Benefit

2.0 BACKGROUND

Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The Application Site (see **Appendix 1**) is approximately 1.77 hectares and is located to the north of Reading Railway Station and approximately 200m south of the River Thames.
- 2.2 The Application Site is bounded to the north by Vastern Road (A329), beyond which there are residential properties and an office building, owned by Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE). To the east the Application Site is bounded by Trooper Potts Way, beyond which is Reading Railway Station multi storey car park. To the south of the site is the former Royal Mail sorting office, beyond which lies the Great Western Railway line. The Application Site is bounded to the west by Caversham Road, beyond which lie a range of commercial, residential and industrial properties.
- 2.3 The Application Site is occupied by a commercial unit (occupied by Aldi, The Range, Mothercare and Majestic Wine) and a separate building in restaurant use (TGI Fridays), and associated surface car parking, and service yard. The units are low rise, approximately 2-3 storeys high. There is currently provision for 280 surface car parking spaces on site.

Planning History

- 2.4 In March 1988, planning permission was granted for three retail warehouses, one restaurant, together with car parking, internal site roads, service area and landscaping on land at junction of Caversham Road and Vastern Road, Reading (Ref: 87/TP/1105).
- 2.5 In October 2007, planning permission was approved for minor external alterations to shopfront, erection of canopy to front of building, minor external alterations to south-east elevation and siting of secure compound in rear service yard (Ref: 070767).
- 2.6 In April 2008, planning permission was granted for the change of use of 2,322 sqm of ground floor floorspace from retail (A1) to leisure (D2) or retail (A1) (Ref: 070767).

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING APPLICATION APPROACH

- 3.1 As set out above, the planning application, which is accompanied by this Planning Statement, is made in outline, for the following:

"Outline planning permission with the details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination. Demolition and redevelopment to comprise: up to 115,000 sqm GEA in one or more land uses comprising: Residential (Class C3 and including PRS); Offices (Use Class B1(a); development in Use Classes A1, A2, A3 (retail), A4 (public house), A5 (take away), C1 (hotel), D1 and D2 (community and leisure); car parking; provision of new plant and renewable energy equipment; creation of servicing areas and provision of associated services, including waste, refuse, cycle storage, and lighting; and for the laying out of the buildings; routes and open spaces within the development; and all associated works and operations including but not limited to: demolition; earthworks; provision of attenuation infrastructure; engineering operations. All development, works and operations to be in accordance with the approved Development Parameters Schedule and Plans."

- 3.2 At present, it is not known whether the site will be developed by the Applicant, sold to a single developer or sold as serviced blocks. In the event that the site is sold, the expectation is that the eventual developer(s) will have their own specifications and preferred land use mix and layout. Therefore, applying for an outline permission will provide certainty over the principle and the parameters within which a detailed design (via reserved matters approval) can be developed for the site.
- 3.3 Planning permission is sought for the development set out in the accompanying "Planning Application Booklet" (dated February 2020). The Booklet contains the description of development and the "Development Parameters (Schedule and Plans)". The Development Parameters (Schedule and Plans) set the maximum extent of development, the land uses and minimum and maximum floorspace proposed. This has provided a sound base for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and non-EIA technical assessments to be undertaken and provides the Local Planning Authority (LPA) with control over subsequent reserved matter submissions.

- 3.4 To give the market some flexibility, the Development Parameters allow different layouts and uses to come forward in different locations within the site, provided these are in accordance with the Development Parameters.
- 3.5 The proposed development will comprise four development plots (A-D) running west to east through the site, separated by three north-south routes, integrating the Application Site with the surrounding area (see plan contained in **Appendix 2**). The proposed development is anticipated to comprise a mix of commercial and residential uses, with activating uses (Use Classes A1-A5, D1-D2) at ground floor level. The proposed development will have a maximum height of 112.9m AOD (Plot D only), within the northern part of the Application Site the height of the proposed development will step down to respect the amenity of existing residential properties located to the north. Access to the proposed development will be via Caversham Road and egress onto Vastern Road, as is presently the case.
- 3.6 New public realm spaces will be created within the scheme, including a high-quality pedestrian/cycle link through the Application Site between Plots C and D, linking the train station and underpass with Vastern Road and beyond to the River Thames.
- 3.7 The illustrative scheme contained in the Design & Access Statement, which accompanies the planning application, shows one way, but not the only way, the site could come forward at reserved matters stage, in accordance with the proposed Development Parameters. This should assist with the understanding of how the Parameters and a detailed scheme might interface at the reserved matters stage.
- 3.8 Design quality and the public realm are important to the overall development of the site and station area generally. Therefore, a Design Code for the site has been prepared and accompanies the planning application. Ultimately, compliance with the Design Code is envisaged to be secured through condition.
- 3.9 Both the benefits and mitigation packages are expected to be secured via conditions and/ or Section 106 Agreement. **Appendix 3** contains a draft Heads of Terms for the Section 106 Agreement. This draft is expected to form the basis of on-going discussion with the LPA post submission.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section sets out the planning policies that are relevant in considering the application proposals.

4.2 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that applications must be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The planning application proposals will therefore need to be considered against the relevant development plan policy documents and other material considerations.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019)

4.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (February 2019) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications (Paragraph 2).

4.4 Paragraph 10 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and Paragraph 11 confirms that for decision-taking this means:

"... approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; ..."

4.5 The NPPF places significant weight on the need to support economic growth and productivity and making effective use of land in meeting the need for new homes. Paragraph 123 states that:

"where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site."

Statutory Development Plan

4.6 The current Development Plan for Reading Borough Council comprises:

- Local Plan - Adopted November 2019
- Proposals Map – Adopted November 2019
- Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule – Adopted January 2015

Statutory Planning Documents (SPDs), which are material considerations, are as follows:

- Reading Station Area Framework SPD (RSAF) – Adopted December 2010
- Affordable Housing SPD – Adopted July 2013
- Employment Skills and Training SPD – Adopted April 2013
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD – Adopted October 2011
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 SPD – Adopted December 2019

Relevant Planning Policies

4.7 The policies of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (November 2019), relevant to the proposal are set out below:

- Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction;
- Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change;
- Policy CC4: Decentralised Energy;
- Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage;
- Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development;
- Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm;
- Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity;
- Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure;
- Policy EN5: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest;
- Policy EN9: Provision of Open Space;
- Policy EN10: Access to Open Space;
- Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands;
- Policy EN15: Air Quality;
- Policy EN18: Flooding and Sustainable Drainage;
- Policy H1: Provision of Housing;
- Policy H2: Density and Mix;
- Policy H3: Affordable Housing;
- Policy H4: Build to Rent;
- Policy H5 Standards for New Housing;

- Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space;
- Policy TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy;
- Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters;
- Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities;
- Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging;
- Policy CR1: Definition of Central Reading;
- Policy CR2: Design in Central Reading;
- Policy CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading;
- Policy CR6: Living in Central Reading;
- Policy CR7: Primary Frontages in Central Reading;
- Policy CR10a: Tall Buildings, Station Area Cluster; and
- Policy CR11e: Station/River Major Opportunity Area, North of Station

Site Allocation, Density & Tall Buildings

- 4.8 The Application Site is located within Central Reading, and within the Central Core and Office Core, as defined on the Proposals Map. As such, Local Plan **Policy CR1: Definition of Central Reading**, applies, which directs major office and other main town centre uses to the Central and Office Cores.
- 4.9 The Application Site is located within the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, North of Station allocation, set out in **Policy CR11e**. The policy promotes mixed-use redevelopment, to include ground floor uses such as retail and leisure in order to 'activate' streets and the new northern station square. The policy states that upper floors should include uses such as offices and residential. A key aspect of the redevelopment should be to enable good pedestrian links and provision of flood risk mitigation.
- 4.10 Local Plan **Policy CR10a: Tall Buildings, Station Area Cluster**, is also applicable and seeks to use tall buildings to 'signify the status of the station area'. Tall buildings are required to step down in height from the centre, include provision of high quality public realm, ensure separation distances between buildings are adequate to avoid overly dense townscape, and should be designed in a way which will support the nearby sites within the cluster to come forward in a coordinated manner.
- 4.11 To further define density in the area around Reading Station, including the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, the Reading Station Area Framework (2010 (RSAF), provides indicative density ranges for each site/land parcel (Figures 6.6 and 6.7). Paragraph 6.17 of the RSAF states that the purpose of the density ranges is to

'guide the intensity of development'. The SPD further advises that these are not exact building controls and will be considered subject to other conditions. For the Application Site, the SPD indicates that the easternmost building should achieve a high, to very high density, which should then reduce steadily from east to west, to a medium density. The SPD determines densities equating approximately to the following plot ratios:

- Very high density = more than 1,000%
- High density = 500 – 1,000%
- Medium density = 200 – 500%.

4.12 The proposed development includes the ability to provide very high density development in Plot D (see Building Plots Plan in **Appendix 2**) reducing in density moving west towards Plot A in accordance with the above policy.

4.13 The RSAF defines tall buildings as being over twelve residential storeys or ten commercial storeys and states that tall building controls and design guidance will be applied to heights above ten storeys. The RSAF provides benchmark guidance for heights on the Application Site, indicating that the easternmost building should be at least ten storeys. Moving west through the Application Site, the building heights should step down to benchmark heights of eight, seven and six storeys. The RSAF also advises that a 'buffer zone' should be formed, with heights stepping down to respect the adjacent, low rise areas such as Vastern Road to the north of the Application Site.

4.14 The proposed maximum height parameter for Plot D, is upto 112.9m AOD. This will enable a building of over ten storeys to come forward at reserved matters stage, in accordance with the above RSAF aspiration. As with building density, the maximum heights proposed reduce east to west. Also, the proposed maximum height parameters reduce along the Vastern Road frontage, to respect the existing residential properties on the northern side of Vastern Road.

Climate Change and Sustainability

- 4.15 Local Plan **Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development**, states that the Council will take a positive approach to considering development proposals which reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained within the NPPF. It requires that proposals are determined in line with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise
- 4.16 Local Plan Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction, states that new development will be acceptable where it makes appropriate and effective use of resources including energy, water, minerals and materials. Development should also include recycling of greywater and rainwater harvesting, where systems are energy and cost effective. The planning application is accompanied by two Energy and Sustainability Statements, one for residential development, the other for non-residential development. These statements provide details in relation to sustainable design and construction.
- 4.17 Local Plan **Policy CC3: Adaption to Climate Change**, states that all developments will demonstrate how they have been designed to adapt to climate change and gives guidance with regard to building design, use of trees and natural materials to assist with shading and managing predicted climatic conditions. It also emphasises that the design of drainage systems which incorporate mitigation and resilience measures against river flooding should be included.
- 4.18 Local Plan **Policy CC4: Decentralised energy**, states it should be demonstrated that consideration has been given for major residential developments (of over 20 dwellings) to secure energy for the development from a decentralised energy supply, or by linking to an existing, active decentralised energy source nearby.
- 4.19 The planning application is accompanied by two Energy and Sustainability Statements, one for residential development, the other for non-residential development. These statements provide details in relation to the above policies. In addition, a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy is provided within the Environmental Statement.

- 4.20 Local Plan **Policy CC5**: Waste minimisation and Storage, seeks demonstration of measures to minimise generation of waste in the construction, use and life of buildings. Design should facilitate effective waste storage, reuse, recycling and composting. The planning application is accompanied by an Operational Waste and Site Waste Management Plan which provided detail with regard to waste management arrangements.
- 4.21 Local Plan **Policy CC6**: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development, states that the most dense and larger scale development should take place in the most accessible locations. Accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to surrounding services and facilities, is key to determining the density of development. The provision of high-quality pedestrian routes as part of development can enhance accessibility. The planning application is accompanied a Transport Assessment and Design and Access Statement which provide details regarding accessibility.

Design

- 4.22 Local Plan **Policy CR2**: Design in Central Reading, states that applications should demonstrate the following attributes: development should build on the existing grid layout structure of the central area and promote ease of movement; and provide quality public spaces, public realm, linkages, landscaping and green infrastructure. New development should consider the quality of architecture details and materials and relate them to the surrounding area. New development should also enhance community safety and should be designed in consideration with adjoining sites, preventing unreasonable burdens on the future development of such sites. The Application is accompanied by a DAS and a Design Code, which addresses these issues.
- 4.23 Local Plan **Policy CR7**: Primary Frontages in Central Reading, states that uses on designated ground floor frontages on the Proposals Map will be within the following use classes: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, C1, D1, D2 or related sui-generis uses. Frontages should be of high visual quality. More than 50% loss in A1 or A2 use along the frontage will not be permitted and 50% of frontages should be in A1 or A2 use. The Application seeks permission for the Development Parameters and is accompanied by a DAS and a Design Code, which addresses these issues.

- 4.24 Local Plan **Policy CC7**: Design and Public Realm, states that development must be of high-quality design to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. Development should enhance public realm, create safe environments and be accessible to all members of the community. The council will assess the various elements of development such as: layout, landscaping, density and mic, scale and height and architectural details and materials. A Design and Access Statement should deal with all above matters. The Application seeks permission for the Development Parameters and is accompanied by a DAS, a Design Code, and a Public Realm strategy, which address these issues.
- 4.25 Local Plan **Policy CC8**: Safeguarding Amenity, States that development will not have a detrimental effect on the living environment of existing or new residents. Habitable rooms will be set back 20 metres between dwellings. The policy also protects against detrimental effects caused by hours of operation of businesses and traffic or HGV movements.
- 4.26 The minimum separation distances set out in Table 2 below, are proposed within the planning application:

TABLE 2

Minimum Separate Distance Category	Residential to Non-Residential	Residential to Residential	Non-Residential to Non-Residential
Window to Window	20m	20m	15m
Balcony to Balcony	n/a	16m	n/a
Balcony to Window	18m	18m	n/a

- 4.27 In addition, the planning application is accompanied by a Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing and Solar Glare Assessment, which is contained in the Environmental Statement, and provides confirmation of the acceptability of proposed set backs and maximum heights proposed with regard to both proposed and existing residential properties.
- 4.28 Local Plan **Policy CC9**: Securing Infrastructure, states that permission will only be granted where provision for infrastructure, services, resources or amenities lost as a result of development are compensated for by direct or a financial provision. The draft HoTs for the S106 and the approach to CIL respond to these issues. Further discussion is expected before the application will be ready for determination.

4.29 In relation to Vastern Road, paragraph 5.12 of the RSAF (2010), states the following:

"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."

Significant Views with Heritage Interest

4.30 Local Plan **Policy EN5**: Protection of Significant Views with Heritage Interest states that new development should not harm and where possible should make a positive contribution to views of acknowledged historical significance. The Application is accompanied by a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Open Space and Public Realm

4.31 Local Plan **Policy CR3**: Public Realm in Central Reading, states that development proposals need to make a positive contribution towards the quality of public realm in the central area. Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria. Sites of more than 1 hectare will need to provide new public open space, integrated with surrounding development. New open spaces should be imaginative, adaptable and premium landscaping such as water features and planting will be expected, where appropriate. Development should also provide access to a watercourse if this is in the vicinity. The accompanying DAS and Public Realm Strategy address these issues.

4.32 Local Plan **Policy EN9**: Provision of Open Space, states that all new development should make provision for appropriate open space, based on the needs of the development. On sites of 50 or more dwellings, where there is a deficiency in open space, new provision will be sought. Development must ensure satisfactory provision of children's play areas and neighbourhood parks. Secure maintenance agreements for the open space should be in place for the lifetime of the development. The Development Parameters, draft HoTs and planning conditions will secure appropriate compliance.

4.33 Local Plan **Policy EN10**: Access to Open Space, states that new development with poor access to open space should make provision or contribute to road and other crossings to green spaces.

- 4.34 Local Plan **Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space**, states that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children's play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Specifically, flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens. The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing. The accompanying Development Parameters, draft HoTs and planning conditions, DAS and Public Realm Strategy will secure appropriate compliance.

Biodiversity, Trees and Environment

- 4.35 Local Plan **Policy E14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands** states that trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance. New development should make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, to maintain and enhance the appearance of the area. Measures must be in place to ensure that trees are adequately maintained. The accompanying Public Realm strategy addresses these issues.
- 4.36 Local Plan **Policy EN15: Air Quality**, states that development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce effects of poor air quality. The following situations should therefore be considered, the cumulative effect of other developments, if the development is within or accessed via an Air Quality Management Area any detrimental effects will be mitigated. Applications should be refused where effects cannot be mitigated. The Application is supported by an Air Quality Assessment.
- 4.37 Local Plan **Policy EN18: Flooding and Sustainable Drainage**, states that Development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance. However, where development in areas at risk of flooding is necessary, it will not reduce the capacity of the floodplain to store floodwater, impede the flow of water or increase risks associated with flooding. Development should encourage reduced flood risk on and off site. Major developments must incorporate sustainable drainage systems and runoff rates should aim to reflect greenfield conditions and be no greater than the

existing conditions of the site. The design should not worsen contamination effects. SUDS provision should maximise ecological benefits and be well landscaped. The Application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and the Development Parameters, DAS and Public Realm Strategy has taken its conclusions into account.

Housing

- 4.38 Local Plan **Policy H1**: Provision of Housing, states provision of an additional 15,847 (689 per annum) homes over the plan period.
- 4.39 Local Plan **Policy CR6**: Living on Central Reading, states that residential proposals in the Central Area will be required to contribute towards a mix of different sized units, with a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bed units preferred. Proposals should demonstrate how potential noise disturbance from neighbouring land uses and air quality implications have been mitigated.
- 4.40 Local Plan **Policy H2**: Density and Mix, states that the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by multiple factors including the character of the area, accessibility, quality of design, effective maximisation of land use and the minimisation of environmental aspects of development. The Application includes the Development Parameters, which will ensure suitable compliance at the reserved matters stage. The accompanying DAS and Design Code show how compliance can be achieved.
- 4.41 Local Plan **Policy H3**: Affordable Housing, states that on sites of 10 or more dwellings, 30% of the total dwellings will be in the form of affordable housing. Provision should be made on site and integrated with the development in the first instance, with a financial contribution negotiated to make up the full requirement, where appropriate. Lower affordable housing contributions will need to be justified by the developer. It is expected that the approach to affordable housing, including financial viability, will be discussed further post the submission of the application.
- 4.42 Local Plan Policy H4: Build to Rent Schemes, states that planning permission will be granted for developments of self-contained, private rented homes which; are secured in a single ownership, solely for the rental market for a period of at least a twenty year term (with clawback provision for affordable housing contributions if the covenant cannot be met), provide tenancies for a minimum of three years (to include a six month break clause in tenant's favour and limited rent increases agreed in advance), provide a high standard of on-site management and control, provide rental

arrangements which meet RBC's 'Voluntary Rent with Confidence Standards, provide a mix of unit sizes to meet Policies H2 or CR6, and to meet standards of design set out in Policy H5. The development will also need to provide 30% on-site affordable housing, or Affordable Private Rent Housing in accordance with Policy H3 and the Affordable Housing SPD (2013).

- 4.43 Local Plan **Policy H5: Standards for New Housing**, states that standards for new housing should; be built to a higher water efficiency standard under regulation 36(3) of the building regulations; achieve zero carbon homes; achieve 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations; be accessible and adaptable in line with M4(2) of the Building Regulations, unless it is built in line with M4(3), On developments of 20 or more new build dwellings; at least 5% of dwellings will be wheelchair user dwellings in line with M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Any market homes provided to meet this requirement will be 'wheelchair adaptable' as defined in part M.

Transport

- 4.44 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2019) states that development should only be refused on highways grounds *"if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."*
- 4.45 Local Plan **Policy TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy** states that development should meet the objectives of the Local Transport Plan. Permission will only be granted where the application shows measures to promote and improve sustainable transport facilities, such as provision to encourage non-car methods and improve safe routes.
- 4.46 Local Plan **Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters** states that proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.
- 4.47 Local Plan **Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities**, states that developments should improve access for cyclists and integrate provision of cycling through provision of new facilities such as cycle hire points and cycle parking. Identified cycle routes should be maintained and enhanced where opportunities exist.

Car Parking

- 4.48 Local Plan **Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging** states that development should provide car and cycle parking which is appropriate to accessibility of public and sustainable transport. Within communal car parks for residential developments of at least 10 spaces, 10% of spaces should provide an active charging point. The Development Parameters, Design Code, planning conditions and/or S106 Agreement will achieve suitable compliance.

5.0 KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Following the previous planning policy context section, this section addresses the key planning considerations relating to the proposed development:

- i) Outline Application/Development Parameter Approach;
- ii) Principle of Proposed Development;
- iii) Scale of Proposed Development;
- iv) Relationship with adjoining redevelopment sites;
- v) Protecting Neighbour Amenity ;
- vi) Design Quality;
- vii) Open Space & Public Realm; and
- viii) Technical Considerations:
 - Flood Risk;
 - Built Heritage;
 - Energy & Sustainability; and
 - Transport.

Outline Application/Development Parameters Approach

5.2 The site is owned by a “fund” who will not occupy the ultimate development and may chose not to develop the scheme themselves. For occupiers to be interested in purchasing the site some form of “planning status” needs to be achieved before the site can be sold. The optimal approach is to therefore secure an outline planning permission, which provides planning certainty, but also provides flexibility so that the exact form and layout of the ultimate scheme can be brought forward under reserved matters.

5.3 Since the application site is not in a conservation area, does not include, and is not within, the setting of any heritage assets, and therefore there is no requirement indicating the need for a detailed application, the applicant wishes to progress an outline application.

- 5.4 The outline application that is being progressed includes Development Parameters that subsequent reserved matters need to comply with. The Design & Access Statement and Design Code includes principles that reserved matters submissions must accord with. The intention of the applicant is to ensure that the application process enables an acceptable balance to be struck between the flexibility that the private sector is seeking and the certainty the local planning authority is inherently predisposed to.
- 5.5 It is therefore considered that the principle of the outline application advanced with the certainty of the Development Parameters and Design Code accords with the planning legislation. There are no overriding issues that mean the application is required to be made either in full or with only some matters reserved.

Principle of Proposed Development

- 5.6 Policy CR11e of the adopted Local Plan, as set out above, allocates the Application Site as part of the Station/River Major Opportunity Area, North of Station area. The proposed development is for mixed-use redevelopment, to include activating ground floor uses such as retail and leisure in order to activate the streets, residential and/or office uses at upper floors and the expansion of Station Square North. As such, the proposed development is fully in accordance with Local Plan policy CR11e.

Scale of Proposed Development

- 5.7 Local Plan Policy CR10a, as set out above, relates to Tall Buildings in the Station Area Cluster, which is applicable to the Application Site. In accordance with Policy CR10a the Development Parameters have been prepared with regard to the requirement for tall buildings to step down in height from the Town Centre outwards, in this regard the maximum height proposed for RSP (Plot D) is 112m AOD, which is significantly lower than the emerging scheme at Station Hill within Reading Town Centre. The proposals have also had regard to the current planning application for the adjacent former Royal Mail site, although it is noted that these proposals are not approved and therefore have no formal status.
- 5.8 Similarly, the scheme density reduces east to west, in accordance with the RSAF guidance.

- 5.9 In line with the structure of the planning application, the Development Parameters propose the maximum scale of scheme capable of being brought forward under reserved matters. The ultimate design, layout, massing and appearance of the scheme will be the subject of approval at reserved matters stage when the eventual developer/occupier submits their specific scheme(s) for the consideration.
- 5.10 The minimum and maximum floorspace proposed by Use Class, by Plot (see **Appendix 2**), and by total is set out in Table 1 below

Table 1

Use Class		Plot A	Plot B	Plot C	Plot D	Total GEA sqm (excluding plant)
C3 Residential units	Min	0	0	0	0	0
	Max	18,500	23,500	27,800	30,200	100,000
B1a Offices	Min	0	0	0	0	0
	Max	20,000	30,000	34,000	29,000	113,000
C1 Hotel	Min	0	0	0	0	0
	Max	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
A1-A5, D1-D2	Min	2,000				2,000
Retail units/ Community Facilities/ Gym	Max	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000

- 5.11 The Design Code submitted with the planning application provides a mechanism for the LPA to control future reserved matters application to ensure that the development includes the provision of high-quality public realm, and that separation distances between buildings are appropriate. As such, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policies CR11e, CR10a and the RSAF.

Relationship to adjoining redevelopment sites

- 5.12 As set out above, the Application Site is part of a larger area allocated for redevelopment in the Local Plan (Policy CR10a). As such, in preparing the planning application for the RSP site, regard has been had to the emerging proposals for the former Royal Mail site located immediately to the south of the Application Site, and the SSE site located to the north of the Application Site, beyond Vastern Road.

- 5.13 Details of the emerging schemes for both sites have been considered in both the design and technical assessment work for the Application Site, including the EIA, where the cumulative impact of the redevelopment of these sites has been assessed. This confirms that the proposed development will not result in unacceptable impacts.
- 5.14 The Development Parameters include a minimum building set back of 10m from the southern site boundary. This is required to ensure acceptable distance separates between proposed new buildings on both sites, following redevelopment. In relation to the SSE site, there is ample distance separation between proposed new buildings, as Vastern Road lies between the SSE site and the Application Site. As the SSE site is located to the north of the Application Site, regard has been had to the impact of the proposed development on daylight and sunlight penetration. This is reflected in the proposed maximum heights for Plots B and C, where the maximum heights have been restricted to ensure there is no unacceptable impact in terms of daylight and sunlight.

Protecting Neighbour Amenity

- 5.15 The following matters have been comprehensively taken into account in preparing the Development Parameters:
- The need to integrate the site with the surrounding area;
 - The relationship with existing residential properties;
 - The need for alignment with existing pedestrian/cycle routes;
 - The need to ensure no unacceptable daylight/sunlight impact;
 - The need to ensure the scheme is not overbearing; and
 - The appearance of the scheme, particularly when viewed from surrounding residential sites.
- 5.16 The applicant considers the scheme is acceptable in respect of impact on neighbours and therefore the Development Parameters for which planning permission is sought are acceptable and provide a suitable LPA controlling mechanism for subsequent reserved matters development.

Design Quality

- 5.17 The Design and Access Statement 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 and includes illustrative

proposals that indicate one way, but not the only way, in which development may come forward in accordance with the Development Parameters and Design Code.

- 5.18 A Design Code has been prepared to ensure that the development at Reading Station Park is well designed and built to a high standard. It builds upon the design vision and objectives set out in the Design & Access Statement. The Design Code will serve to instruct and guide the future physical development of the site. Compliance with it could be required through a suitably worded planning condition. This approach allows an appropriate level of design development to take place and for variation to be established.
- 5.19 The Design Code is a set of illustrated design rules and requirements which instruct the physical development of the site and could be used to guide the preparation of and assess the acceptability of future Reserved Matters applications.
- 5.20 As 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 takes place in a co-ordinated fashion but, at the same time, allowing for design variety and changes deemed necessary, either through regulatory change or changing market conditions.

Open Space & Public Realm

- 5.21 The Proposed Development provides an opportunity to unlock a significant part of the desired green pedestrian/cycle route between the Kennet Canal and River Thames. As part of the proposed development a high-quality public realm corridor, at least 23m wide, will be provided between building plots C and D (see plan at **Appendix 2**), linking the railway underpass and Station Square North to Vastern Road and the River Thames beyond.
- 5.22 The Development Parameters allow for the expansion of Station Square North, to include part of the Application Site, to the south of Plot D, such that Station Square North ties into the new pedestrian/cycle route between the station and Vastern Road. To further enhance the public realm opportunity in this location, the Development Parameters also commit to setting back any buildings within Plot D at ground and first floor level on the south west corner. The Development Parameters also require the inclusion of an open square between Plots A and B, in the western part of the Application Site. The two address the far edges of the site to ensure an even distribution of open space throughout the development.

- 5.23 The design of the space/public realm areas is expected to be controlled by reserved matters having to comply with the Design Code. It is envisaged that the links would be active route(s) as well as having sitting area(s), while the square to the west of the Application Site could be designed as a destination.
- 5.24 Additionally, to the north of Plots A and B, the building footprint has been set back from the Application Site boundary to allow the future extension/upgrade of the cycle route along Vastern Road.
- 5.25 As well as the above public open spaces the proposed development will include private and/or communal open spaces for the new residents, including children's play areas. Details regarding the provision of open spaces will be provided at the reserved matters stage.

Technical Considerations

- 5.26 Flood Risk - A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been undertaken, and accompanies the planning application, supported by this Planning Statement. The FRA confirms that the Flood Zone maps show the Application Site to be located in Flood Zone 2 in present day circumstances, with areas in Flood 3a when applying climate change allowances up to 2070 and 2115.
- 5.27 In terms of flood risk, it is concluded that the proposed development can be occupied for the land uses applied for and operated safely and that there will be no increase in the level of flood risk to the Application Site or neighbouring sites as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.28 Built Heritage – A Built Heritage Assessment has been undertaken and is reported in the Environmental Impact Assessment, which accompanies the planning application. The assessment concludes that while the proposed development will have an adverse effect on the main building to Reading General Station and Great Western House, and the other designated heritage assets, this would amount to less than substantial harm, and can be mitigated through design and materials to be determined at the reserved matters stage. This is the expected outcome when considering a large and tall redevelopment of a significant part of a town centre.

- 5.29 Energy & Sustainability – Energy and Sustainability Statements have been prepared for both residential and non-residential elements of the proposed development and confirm that the proposed development can achieve the relevant on-site carbon reductions required by building regulations in relation to residential development and BREEAM in relation to commercial development.
- 5.30 Transport – A Transport Assessment accompanies the planning application and concludes that the development proposals comply with local, regional and national transport policies aimed at ensuring that new development is located where there is good accessibility by sustainable modes of transport. The proposals also comply with various local policies aimed at increasing the proportion of journeys made by walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.31 The Application Site offers good accessibility by public transport, with the site being situated within easy walking distance of rail and bus stops providing high frequency services. It is also located within easy walking distance of a range of day-to-day services and facilities including primary education, health and leisure facilities, retail, and employment provision. The accompanying Travel Plan will seek to maximise the number of journeys made by sustainable modes of transport and thus contribute towards achieving policies contained within RBC’s Local Plan and the Local Transport Plan.
- 5.32 The low level of on-site car parking proposed will contribute towards a sustainable development and the uptake of sustainable transport modes. The majority of trips generated by the development will be via bus, rail and on foot. The development is predicted to have a positive impact on the local highway network due to a significant reduction in the number of vehicular trips generated by the site compared to the existing uses on site.
- 5.33 The development will incorporate a managed system of servicing for deliveries, refuse, and other vehicles, which will be able to adequately access all parts of the site.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

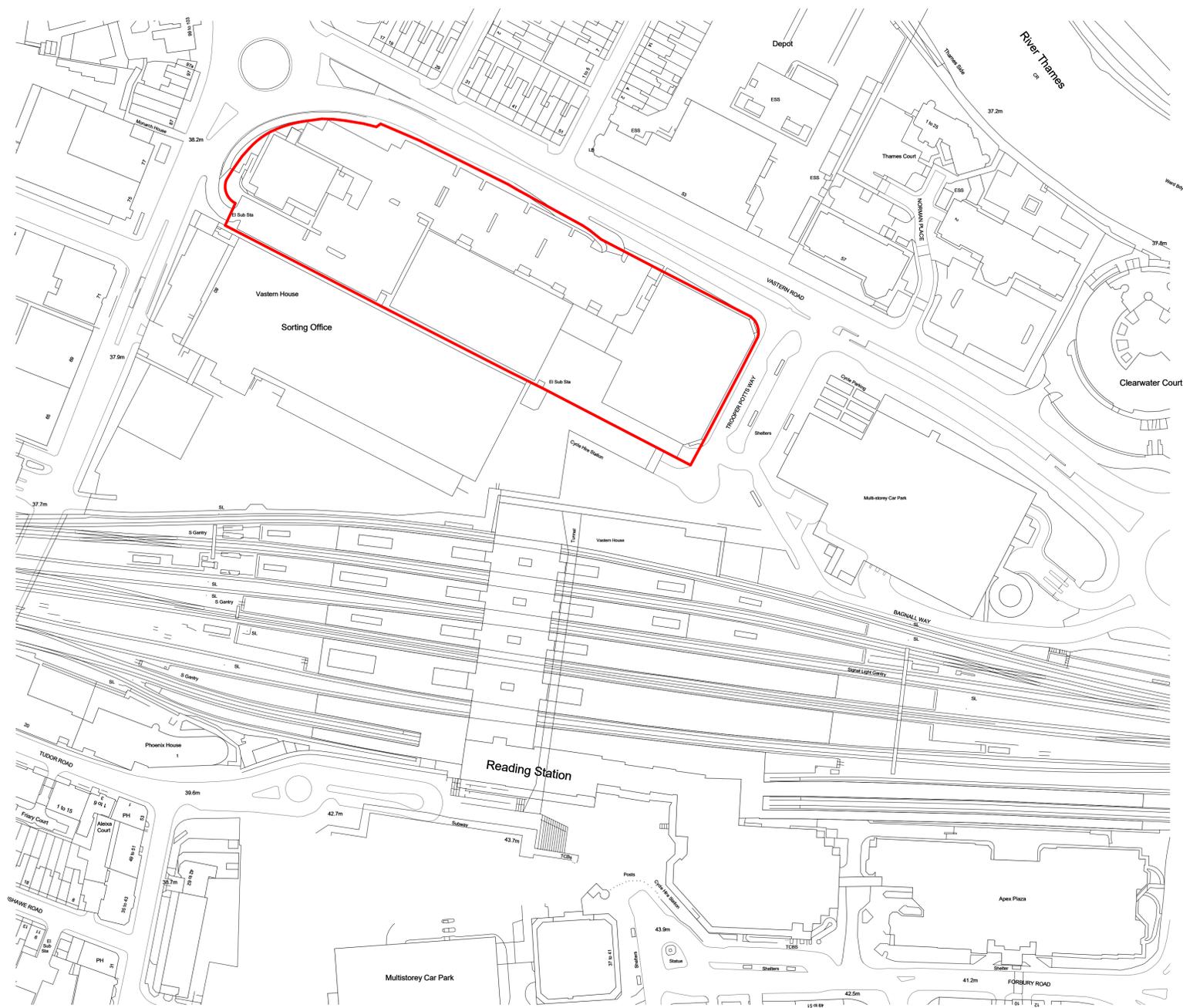
6.1 The proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan, in particular the Local Plan site allocation (Policy Ref: CR11e). It supports the redevelopment of the Application Site to provide a mixed use scheme, with activating uses at ground floor level and residential/commercial accommodation above, with provision of the key linkage between the railway underpass and Vastern Road, as part of a longer spine route between the Kennet Canal and River Thames, and enhancements to Station Square North.

6.2 The proposed development will provide the following benefits:

- Redevelopment in line with the RBC Local Plan allocation;
- Provision of high quality new residential and/or commercial accommodation;
- Unlocking a key part of the Kennet-Thames spine route;
- Enhancement of Station Square North;
- Reduction in vehicle trips to and the from the Application Site;
- Safeguarding of land for cycle route enhancement along Vastern Road; and
- A planning permission framework based Development Parameters, Design and Access Statement and Design Code including Public Realm Strategy, which will guide subsequent reserved matters submissions to achieve the expected end state development and connectivity of the Application Site into the wider existing town centre urban realm.

6.3 The planning application proposals are considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan for the Application Site. In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the application should be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan and approved.

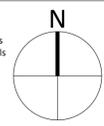
**APPENDIX 1
SITE LOCATION PLAN**



NOTES
 CONSULTANTS
 - Refer to highways consultant's drawings for details
 - Refer to landscape consultant's drawings for details
 - Landscaping layout is indicative only

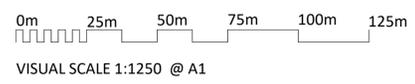
AREAS
 - Refer to area schedule

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Rev	Notes	Date	By	Auth
P1	Issued for planning	06-02-2020	vp	rc

— Red line boundary



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Date: 01/07/20
 Drawn By: VP
 Checked by: FC
 Scale @ A1: As indicated
 Scale @ A3:
 CAD File No:

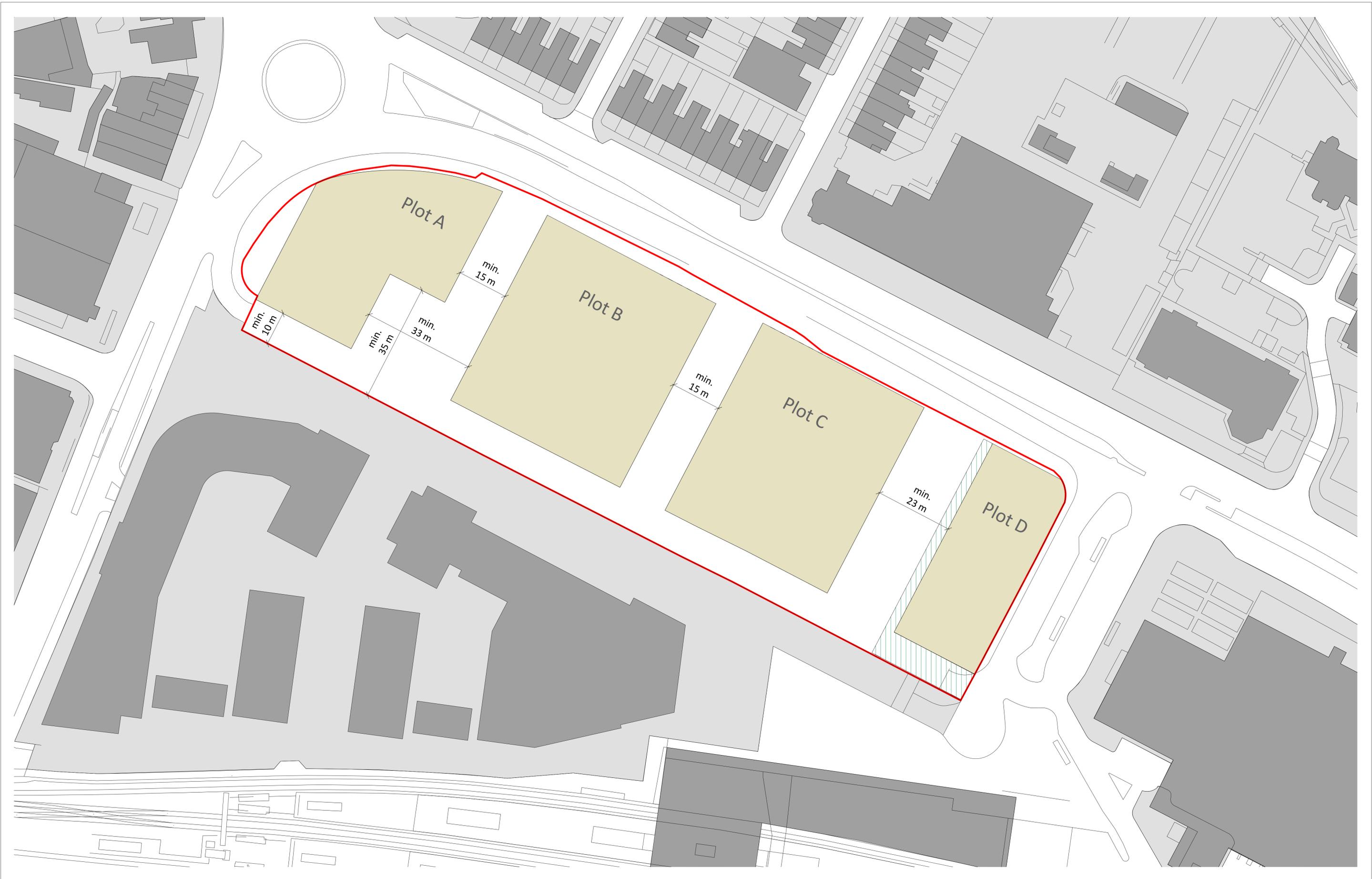
Aviva Investors
 Reading Station Park
 Site Location Plan

PLANNING
 17043

P0-000

P1
 Revision

APPENDIX 2
PARAMETER PLAN 102 - BUILDING PLOTS



NOTES
 CONSULTANTS
 - Refer to highways consultant's drawings for details
 - Refer to landscape consultant's drawings for details
 - Landscaping layout is indicative only

AREAS
 - Refer to area schedule

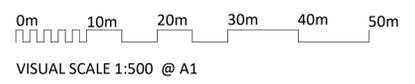
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— Red line boundary

Area within which buildings to be located

No building footprint at ground and first floor. Floorspace acceptable above first floor.



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Date: 23/05/2019
 Drawn By: rnm
 Checked by: VP
 Scale @ A1: 1 : 500
 Scale @ A3: 1 : 1000
 CAD File No:

Aviva Investors
 Reading Station Park
 Parameter Plan - Building Plots

PLANNING
 17043

PP-102

P1
 Revision

APPENDIX 3
SECTION 106 - DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS

The developer will make appropriate provision for:

- Affordable housing
- Highway works
- Public realm works
- Footpath/cycleway enhancements on Vastern Road/Caversham Road
- Car parking, restrictions on parking permits, provision of car club spaces
- Travel plan monitoring
- Local Employment and Training