

4. INVOLVEMENT

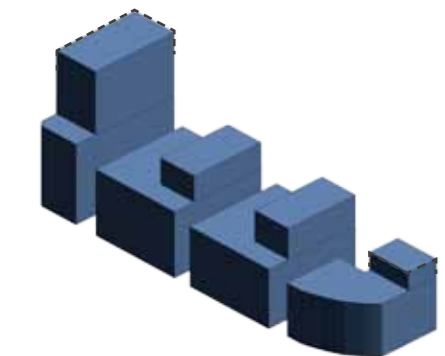
4.1 PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY

Pre-application discussions have been held with Reading Borough Council to agree the planning application approach, content of the planning application and the emerging proposals.

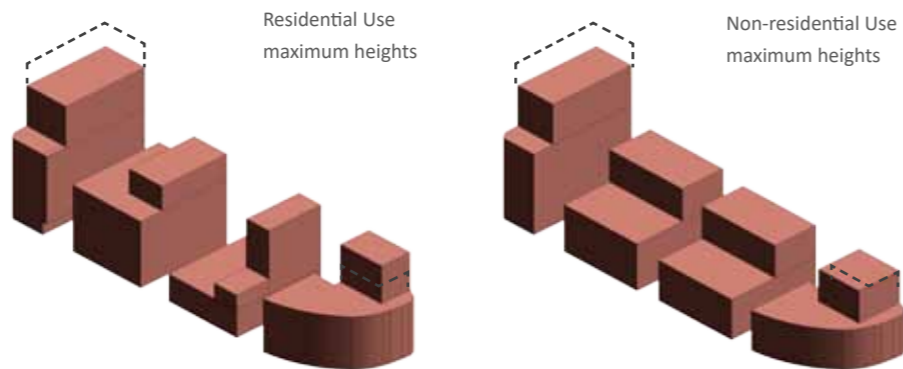
Following the feedback received from the Planning Officers, the emerging proposals were amended to improve townscape impact and to ensure that the scheme proposed at reserved matters will keep in line with the Council's vision and standards for quality.

Issue	Action	Response
The height of Plot D should be reduced to demonstrate a clearer hierarchy between Station Hill which stands as a District Landmark and the site's Local Landmark.	The maximum height parameter for plot D, was reduced.	Proposed at a height slightly exceeding the tallest tower of the planning application submitted for the Former Royal Mail site in order to maintain RSAF's recommendation for the allocated location of a Local Landmark, plot D's tower was set at the equivalent of 27 residential storeys. Following the pre-application feedback, this height was reduced by 14 m. This reduction equates to 4 office storeys or 5 residential storeys.

Second Pre-application

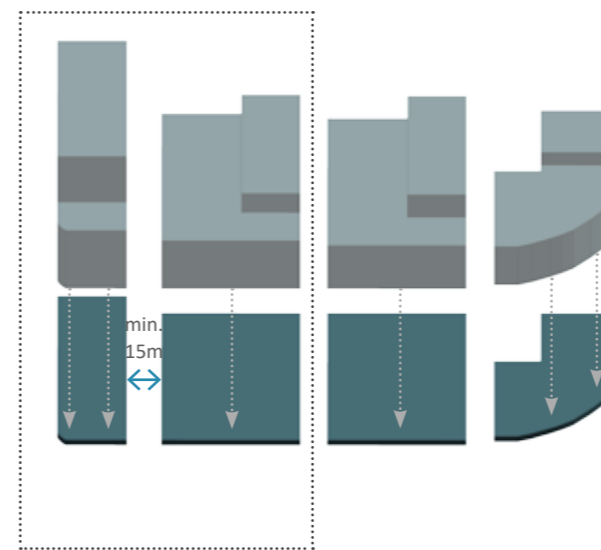


Application

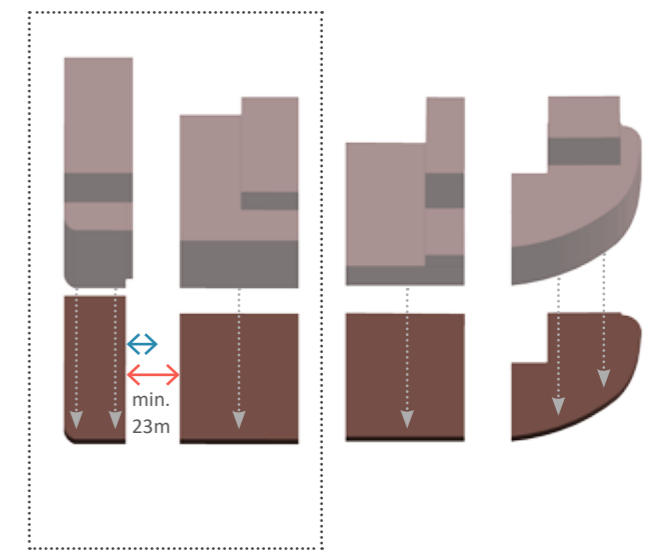


Issue	Action	Response
The link between plots C and D will be part of the main pedestrian access to the riverfront. The minimum width set in the parameter plans should be wider to ensure good quality public amenity will be able to come forward at reserved matters.	North - South Link between plots C and D was widened from a minimum of 15m to a minimum of 23m.	Previous proposal took into consideration the separation distances required for an office to office scheme and added 25% of this width to set the minimum distance between plots C and D. Following the advice received from the Council, the minimum separation distance between these plots was widened from 15 to 23m. This change will ensure that any scheme proposed at reserved matters can provide the desired high quality link path in line with the Council's vision.

Pre-application



Application

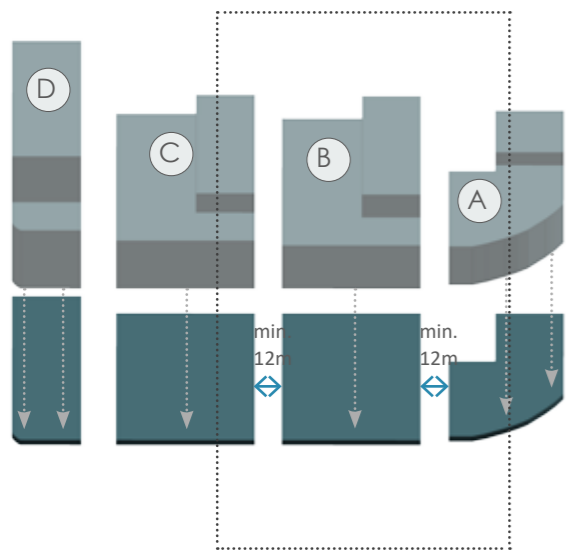


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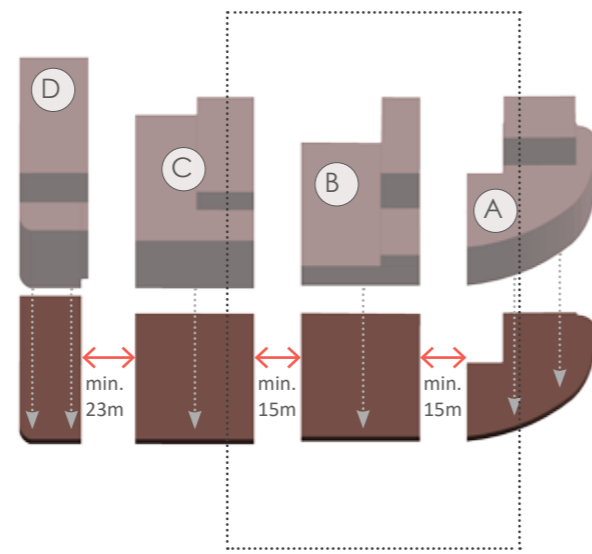
4.1 PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY

Issue	Action	Response
The minimum separation distances between Plots A and B, B and C are too narrow.	All separation distances between plots have been widened from a minimum of 12m - which is the minimum requirement for office-to-office fronts to a minimum of 15m.	<p>This minimum is subject to use relationships and will not be applicable to residential-to-office or residential-to-residential frontage, where the minimum is set in the Parameter Development Schedule at 20m.</p> <p>This amendment will ensure that any scheme coming forward at reserved matters will have to demonstrate the ability to achieve separation distances between plots over and above the planning recommendations - subject to daylight/sunlight requirements.</p>

Pre-application

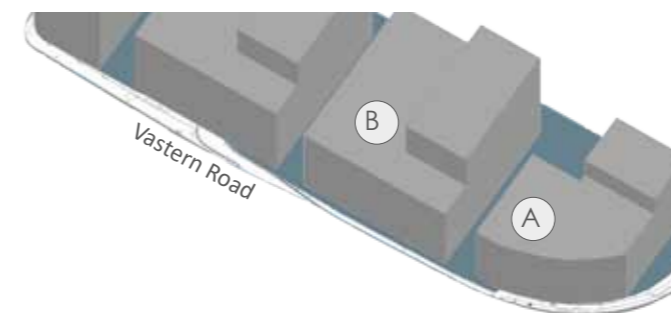
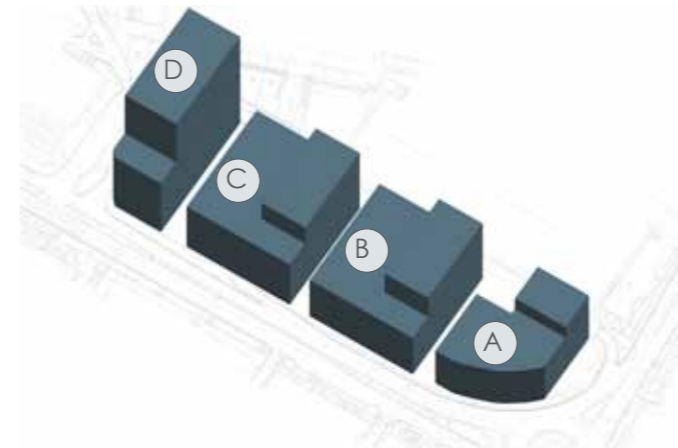


Application

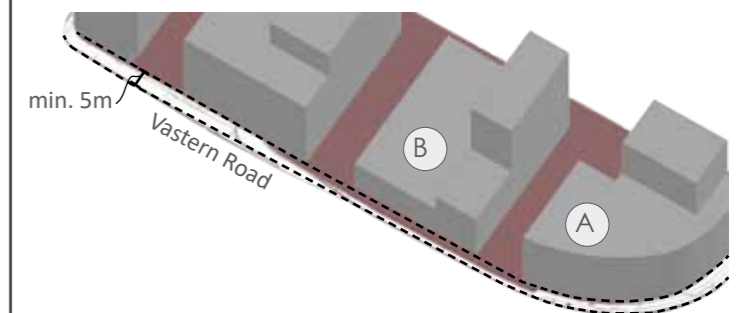
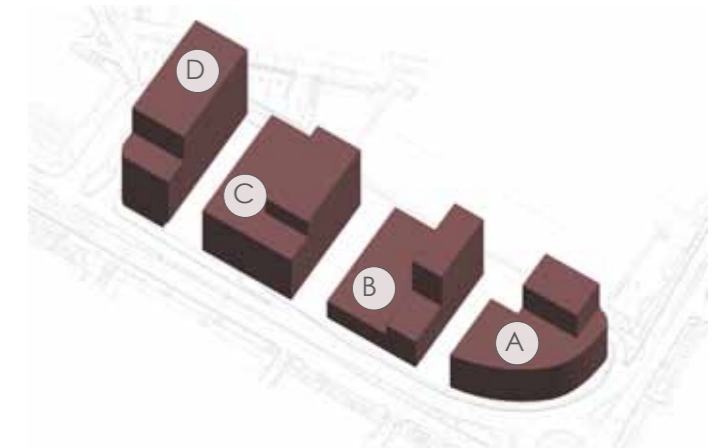


Issue	Action	Response
Improve relationship with Station Square. Plot D is extending outwards from the alignment of the other plots and setting this back would be beneficial for the way pedestrians experience this space.	Set back development footprint on lower levels for plot D along the boundary with Station Square	<p>The southern boundary of Plot D was extending approx. 10 m out beyond the alignment of the other plots: A, B and C.</p> <p>The footprint has been reduced on the lower floors up to the second storey in order to respond both to the relationships with the other plots as well as with the relationship to Station Square. This restriction will ensure that the pedestrian experience is improved by any scheme coming forward at reserved matters.</p>

Pre-application



Application

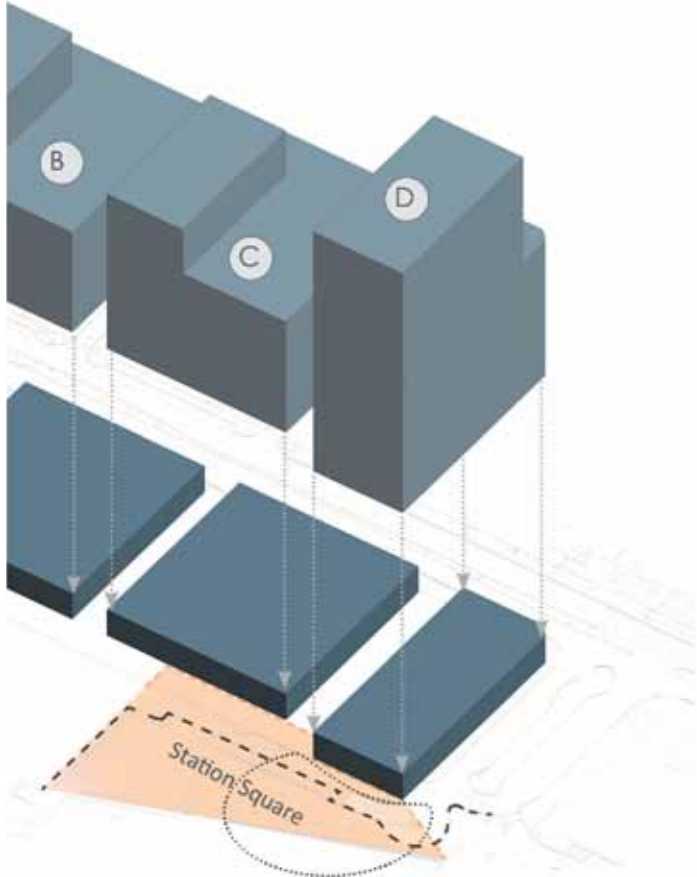


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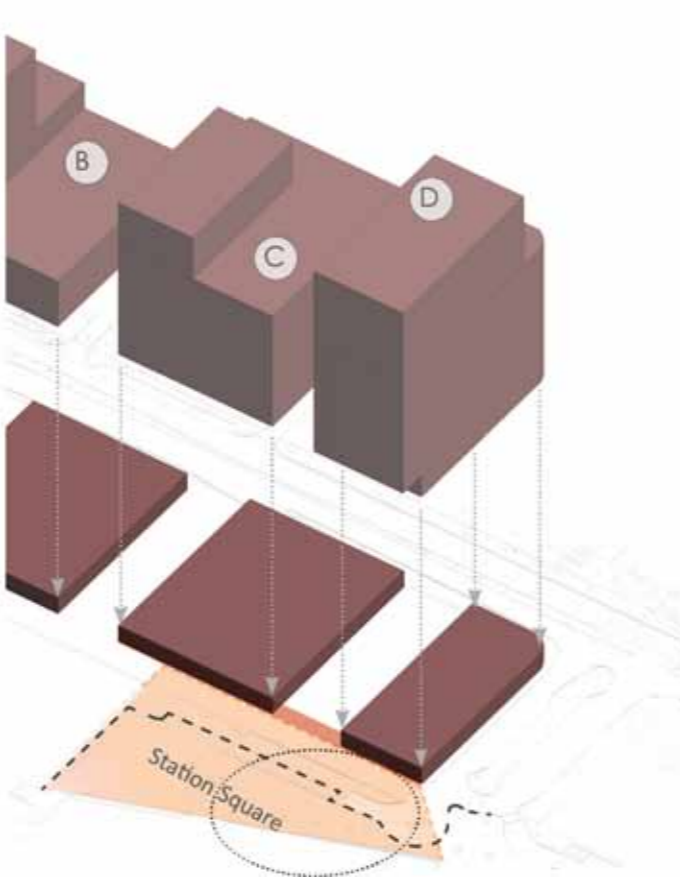
4.1 PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY

Issue	Action	Response
Assurance that the scheme will allow sufficient setback for a pedestrian and cycle route to be provided along Vastern Road by Reading Borough Council.	The development footprint for plots A, B and C was set back from the kerb line along Vastern Road to ensure that there will be sufficient space for a potential future pedestrian and cycle path along this boundary at reserved matters.	Plots A and B were set back from the boundary with Vastern Road to ensure a clear width of 5m from the kerb line is maintained by any future development. The width was tested with the Landscape Architects to confirm it is sufficient to provide the desired uses.

Pre-application



Application



4. INVOLVEMENT

4.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The consultation process consisted of several initiatives aimed at ensuring that residents living near the site and other key stakeholders were aware of the emerging scheme, and that they had an opportunity to express their opinions, comments, and aspirations.

The initiatives included:

- Immediate and near residents and stakeholder mailing
- Project website
- Public exhibitions
- Site visits
- One to one meetings, in addition to pre-application meetings with Reading Borough Council.

The current proposal has evolved to encapsulate a long history of research, design iterations, and planning consultations.

It assimilates important parameters from the Reading Station Area Framework, while embodying an additional focus on viability and the value of the public realm. Its main aim is to describe a feasible development that will enrich and enliven the area North of Reading Station, and to set basic principles for design quality to be further developed at reserved matters.

Further detail on the public consultation process and feedback can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement.



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4.2 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

FIRST PUBLIC CONSULTATION

118 people attended the first Public Consultation and 220 feedback forms were completed.

The majority of Feedback received after the first exhibition was from residents of Caversham.



POSITIVE COMMENTS:

- Walkways/pedestrian & cycle access linking the Railway Station to Vastern Road and River Thames and around the site
- Green spaces/trees/public space
- Good use of the site for mixed-use redevelopment
- Improvement to the area
- Retail space: shops/restaurants
- Predominantly car free development
- Design: mix of high/low rise and high quality
- Landscaping
- Provision of more housing

CONCERNS RAISED:

- No need for any more office space - lots already empty
- Design - boring/no wow factor/ugly/soulless
- Too many flats - don't need more housing
- Traffic congestion
- Height of tallest building
- Lack of/impact/strain on local services e.g. GP surgery, schools
- Lack of car parking
- Loss of retail stores especially Aldi

SECOND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

79 people attended the Final Public Consultation and 173 feedback forms were completed by the 4th of November.

More local residents living closer to the site attended the exhibition.



POSITIVE COMMENTS:

- Open Public Spaces, play areas for children;
- Improved landscaping and tree planting;
- Car Club spaces;
- Reduced height of building;
- Link from Station to River Thames;
- Mixed -Use Development;
- Dedicated cycle routes.

CONCERNS RAISED:

- Buildings are too tall;
- Lack of GP surgery / Healthcare;
- Lack of parking;
- Loss of Aldi;
- Too many apartments and too much housing;
- No need for more office space;
- Traffic congestion.

4. INVOLVEMENT

4.3 QUESTIONS RAISED

Question raised	Response
What type of planning application are you planning to submit?	We will be submitting an outline application, which deals with the broad principles of the development, such as what the site will be used for. This allows us to later agree with the Council and local community a more detailed future proposal, called a reserved matters application. This will allow us to finalise aspects such as the design of the development, housing numbers, parking spaces and landscaping.
How many of the flats will be affordable? Is there social housing or reduced rent accommodation?	We are uncertain how many flat will be affordable as we will agree a level with the Council. At this stage social housing providers have not been approached about taking part of the development as it is too early in the process. At present it is not Aviva's intention to rent out the accommodation, but this may be reviewed nearer the completion of the development.
Why do we need more office space, when there are lots of empty locations already in Reading?	We do not know the reason for vacant office space. It could be that it is not providing the specification that tenants who are occupiers seek, or it might have a tenant who are not occupying the space. We are advised by Savills, our investment agent, that in the future there will be demand for office space. What's more, providing multiple uses enables the space to be more sustainable, with people around at all times.
Where will visiting family and friends of the new residents park?	Many visitors will use the train or bus services, however anyone using a car can park in the adjacent multi-storey car park. There are also over 4 other public car parks within walking distance of the site.
Where is the parking for the residents?	There will be parking facilities for blue badge holders. The current Government policy is that inner town/city developments, with good transport links should not be provided with parking for all.

Question raised	Response
What is the plan for the existing shops already in situ?	To deliver the development all the existing shops will need to be demolished. In the new development, most of the ground floors will offer space for shops, restaurants, offices and other nonresidential uses, which means the existing retailers could be accommodated.
Where are residents expected to shop for groceries and access amenities like schools and leisure facilities without putting more strain on local transport infrastructure?	We would like a shop selling groceries to be one of the shop occupiers. In relation to schools, we will be required to pay a Community Infrastructure Levy to the Council when the works start so that they have the money to provide school places. As for leisure, we see this as a good addition to the completed project and will have space for a gym or similar facility if sought.
What provision for dentist/ health services will there be?	We will provide space for community uses which could include dentist or health uses if sought. During the consultation with the Local Planning Authority, the need for new health services will be identified through their consultation with Berkshire West Primary Care Trust.
Will mature trees actually be planted not young trees?	We will seek to provide a variety of landscaping. We will have to agree with the Council on the types of trees to be planted, and those selected need to be sustainable. We will consider the provision of suitable mature trees in the development.



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4.3 QUESTIONS RAISED

Question raised	Response
What limitations are there/will there be for public access to the green spaces within the site?	Green spaces for public access will where possible be incorporated into the ground level external areas of the buildings.
Does Reading have a plan for encouraging independently run businesses to open and flourish in the secondary and tertiary areas of the town?	We are unaware of a plan that specifically focuses on independent businesses in secondary and tertiary areas of the town. However, the current Reading Economic Development Plan (2016-2020) www.livingreading.co.uk/doing-business/economic-development-strategy was written by Reading UK CIC in collaboration with Reading Borough Council and mentions maximising investment through promotion, business engagement and in micro start-ups and workplace provision.



4.4 STATISTICS

Question	Statistics	
Our aspiration for the site is to deliver high-quality housing and office space to help make the new station quarter an enjoyable place to work, live in and to visit. Do you agree with the overall approach to this scheme?	19% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the site could deliver high-quality housing and office space to help make the new station quarter an enjoyable place to work, live in and visit. 64% disagree or strongly disagree. 14% were neutral and 3% did not comment.	
New pedestrian routes through the site will extend public access from the town centre, through the site to the riverfront and beyond. Do you think this is a good idea?	Just over a half of respondents (55%) agreed or strongly agreed that it was a good idea to have new pedestrian routes through the site that will extend public access from the town centre, through the site to the riverfront and beyond. 27% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. 17% were neutral with only 1% of respondents choosing not to comment.	
The provision of open space, landscaping, cafes, restaurants and retail is important for new and existing residents. Do you think this will be an improvement to local amenity provision?	36% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the provision of open space, landscaping, cafes, restaurants would be an improvement to local amenity provision, with 14% remaining neutral. However, 49% disagreed or strongly disagreed, with 1% choosing not to comment to this question.	
New premium office space will make a significant contribution towards Reading's established position as the 'Capital of the Thames Valley.'	The majority of respondents (60%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that new premium office space would make a significant contribution towards Reading's established position as the 'Capital of the Thames Valley'. 19% either agreed or strongly agreed with 19% remaining neutral on this question. 2% chose not to comment.	