

Abbey Square
FACADE TYPE 4- Used where the existing face of the connecting central block sits perpendicular to Abbey Square.

The existing upper floors will be retained and a new lightweight structure will sit on top with an altogether lighter feel. A rainscreen standing seam metal roof with large window openings framed by deep reveals will give the sense of lightweight structure. The window openings align with the levels below and the juliet balconies provide wonderful light opening for the occupants.

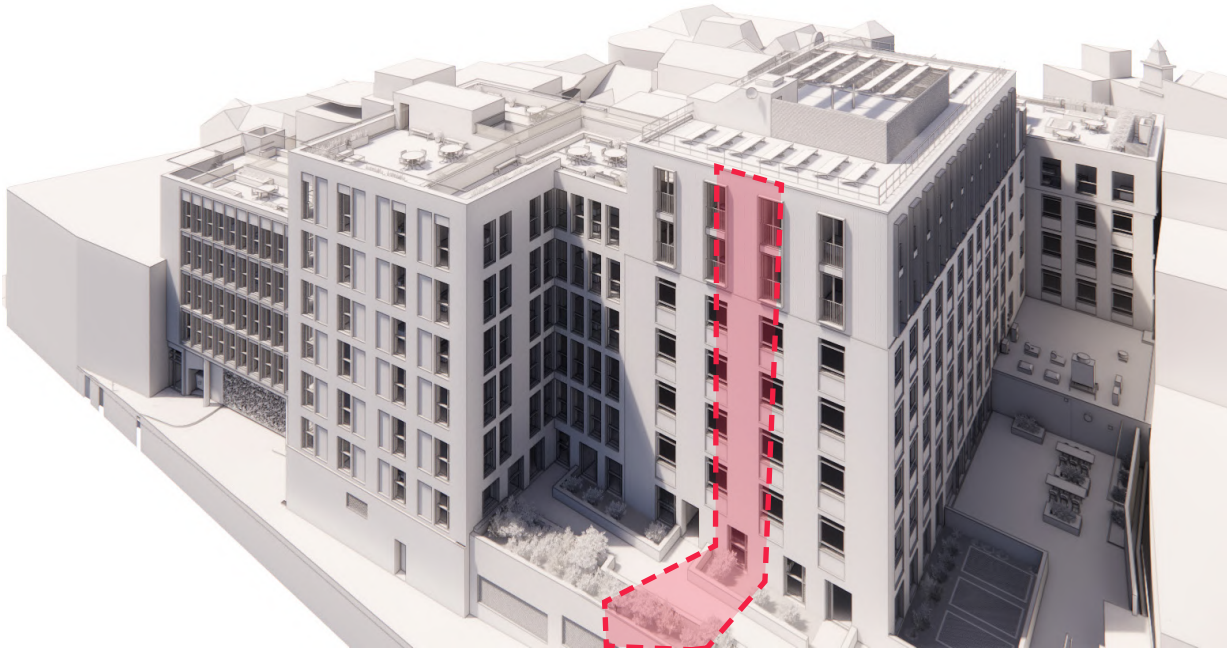


Type 5 - Existing



Facade Type 4

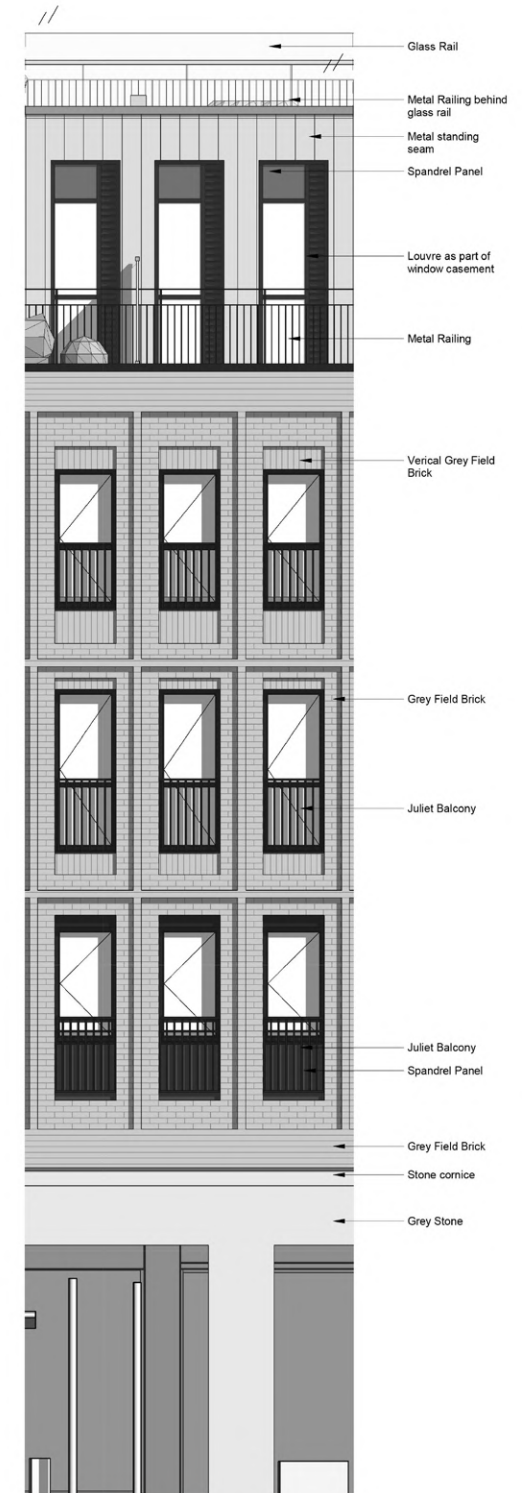
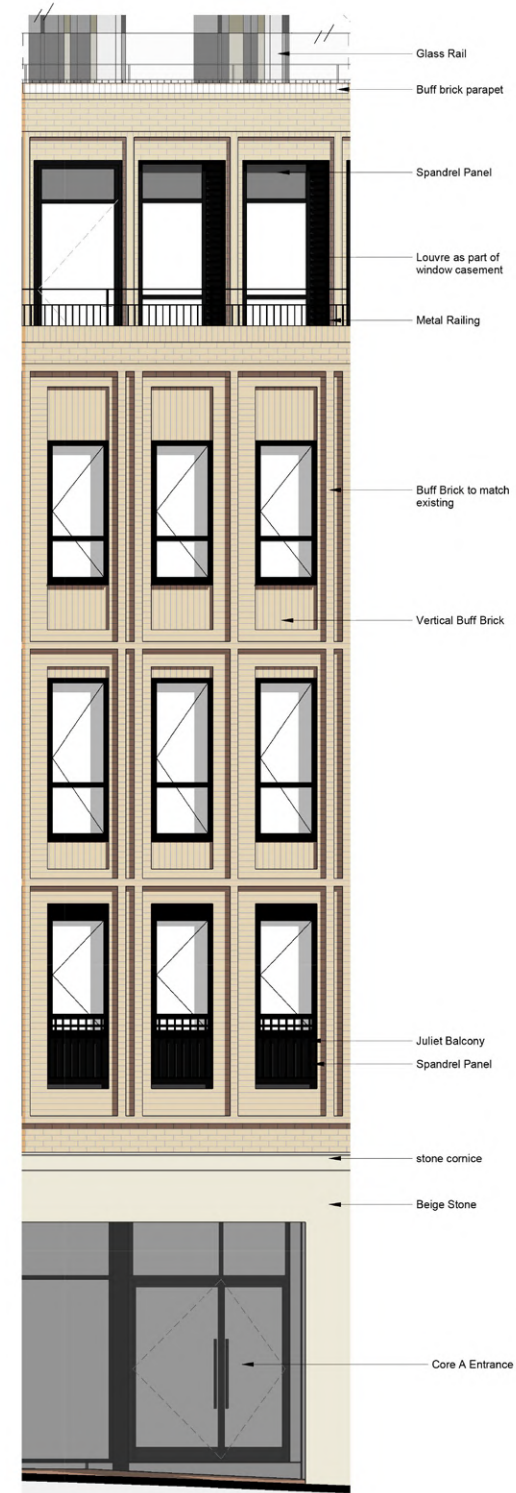
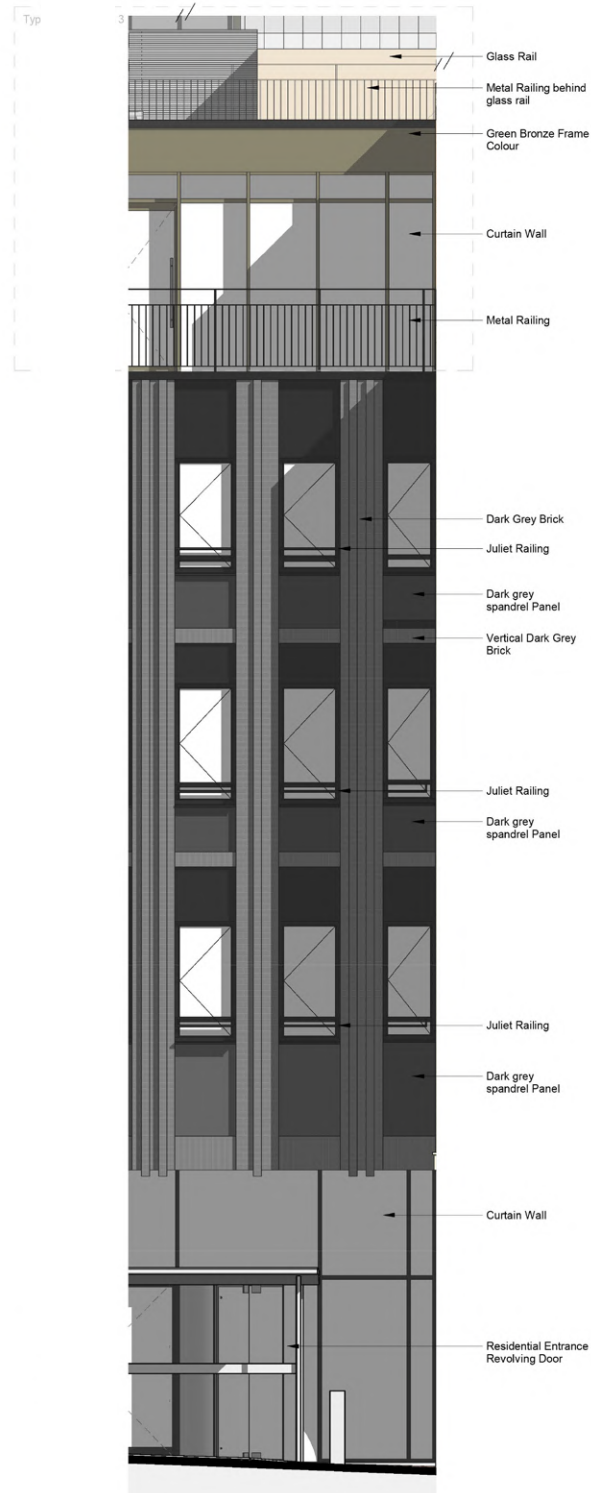
- Vertical mullions to accentuate structure
- Horizontal mullions to follow slab edge



Proposed East Facade



3D Sectional Study



3.6 Appearance & Materiality

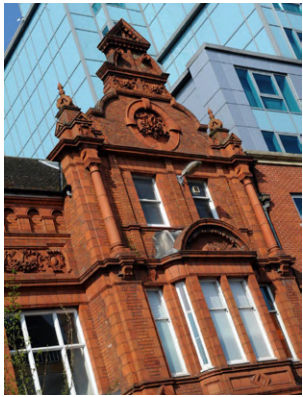
Surrounding the site is a rich collection of historic buildings which have influenced the approach to the proposed colour and materiality. Below highlights some of the key precedents used whilst approaching the sensitivity of recladding the existing west facing facade within the market place conservation area. Particular attention to brickwork, verticality and providing a set back 'roof element' were all points to consider following conversations at the DRP & Pre app workshops.



Drawing on the immediate context of the conservation area, the polychromatic brickwork evident in the town hall and the high street, have been chosen as a starting point for the design. The proposal aims to emulate the two tone brickwork in 3 key colours; Sand red, buff & field grey, in a simple yet playful manner.



Imagery to the top right: Examples of the use of polychromatic brickwork in the detailing of fenestration and horizontal and vertical elements. The use of fine detailing is often deployed to add further depth to the facades. Utilising this approach has allowed the design to be sympathetic to the context whilst also providing a modern design, steering away from the pastiche.



Imagery to the bottom right: Further examples of materiality execution. The far right; the use of copper/zinc cladding to the upper storeys of the building to give a mansard like roof effect. The far left; highlighting a uniformity of fenestration with different materials across the vertical & horizontal.



GREY



TOWN HALL

BUFF



42 MARKET PLACE

RED



I-2 MARKET PLACE

The palette of materials proposed for the external additions and alterations to facades (see right) has been inspired by the many fine examples of local architecture in the conservation area.

Local historic precedents show a strong theme that comes out in renaissance inspired architecture, with the classical architectural elements expressed in stone and the main field of the wall is in a fill material, sometimes plaster, sometime brick.

Gothic inspired architecture uses the strong red brick to articulate the main structural elements and a grey brick to act as the background field of the wall. It is the play on the expression of these two types of brickwork that is emulated in a modern idiom within the proposed design aesthetic.

The design will employ polychromatic brickwork in a way that takes into account the rhythm of the existing structure and the requirement for a user controlled mixed ventilation system.

In order to retain the building as principally naturally ventilated or mixed mode to reduce the reliance on energy, the façade needs to continue to provide ventilation operable by the individual.



1. Georgian Red Brick



2. Grey Field Brick



3. Buff Brick to match existing



4. Dark grey brick



a. Sage

5. Metal Standing Seam



b. Zinc

3.7 Key Views

As the building is situated in the conservation area, eight key views of the building from street level were picked to assess the visual impact of the additional massing to the surrounding context.

In the views, the designated heritage assets we have identified are visible.

Overall, the views demonstrate how heritage assets in the vicinity of the site would be conserved, and their significance either sustained or unaffected. They also show the potential to deliver “heritage benefits” that would enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets.

In terms of use and contribution to street character, the local distinctive town centre mix, vibrancy and vitality of the Market Place and conservation area is enhanced.

The new elevational design and use of high quality, locally referenced materials and detailing would improve the external appearance of what is considered to be the negative townscape impact that the existing building currently has.



Key View 1: Church view, looking south

This view is taken from the north next to St Laurence's church looking down towards Market Place.



Existing



Proposed

Key View 2: Butter Market, looking east

This view is taken from the furthest point to the west where the site is still visible - the facade onto Market Place.



Existing



Proposed

Key View 3: Jackson's Corner, looking north

This view is taken from the junction of Market Place and King Street looking north towards the church.



Existing



Proposed

Key View 4: The Forbury looking south

This view is taken from the service route and shows the secondary entrance to the building that will be created.



Existing



Proposed

Key View 3: Jackson's Corner, looking north

This view is taken from the junction of Market Place and King Street looking north towards the church.



Existing

Proposed

Key View 4: The Forbury looking south

This view is taken from the service route and shows the secondary entrance to the building that will be created.



Existing

Proposed

Key View 3: Jackson's Corner, looking north

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Proposed

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Existing



Proposed

3.8 Landscaping

Landscaping is integral to the creation of a healthy and sustainable living environment that enriches lives and underpins wellbeing.

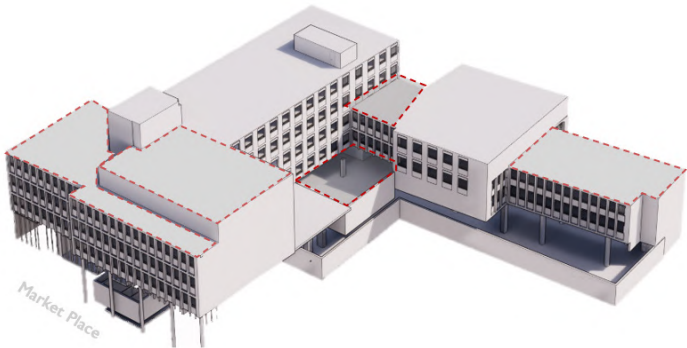
The proposals are designed to give those living in and visiting the building access to amenity and a connection with nature. It is part of the ethos of creating a sustainable community.

Space is utilised efficiently throughout the reformatted layout of the building and where opportunities exist, space has been allocated for amenity and landscaping.

Intimacy and visual connection
The centre of the site is currently dominated by highly visible tarmac, hard surfaced courts and exposed building services. It is a tightly enclosed space that is sheltered and intimate, but currently unattractive.

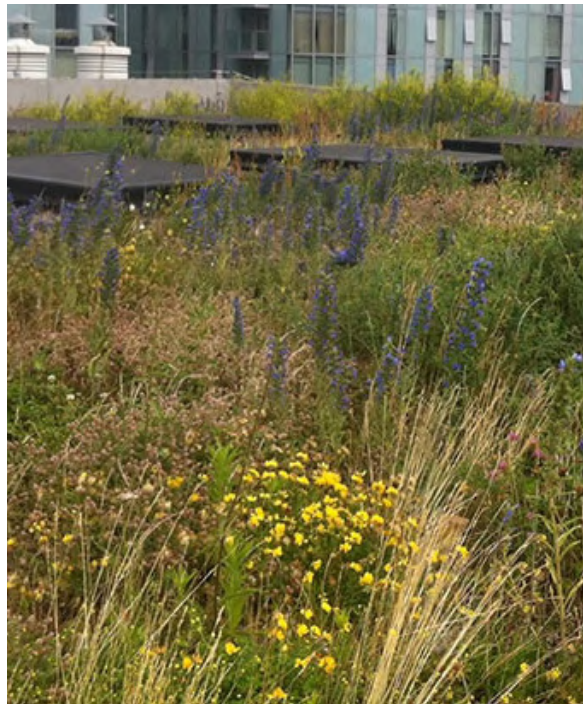
Part of the reclamation of car parking and forecourt is aimed at the creation of communal space as the social hub of the building, and it is an important element of the landscaping strategy for the proposals to give that important heart of the community a positive and restful outlook.

Landscaped amenity decks will be accessible to the south and north of the communal space with the northern deck accessible via the secondary entrance connecting to Abbey Square.



This page: The unique aspect of the location is the terraces at rooftop and their stunning outlook. They offer a rich setting for the proposed landscaping strategy of fostering wellbeing through connection with nature.





This page: Examples of terrace planting and biodiverse roof coverings found in urban locations

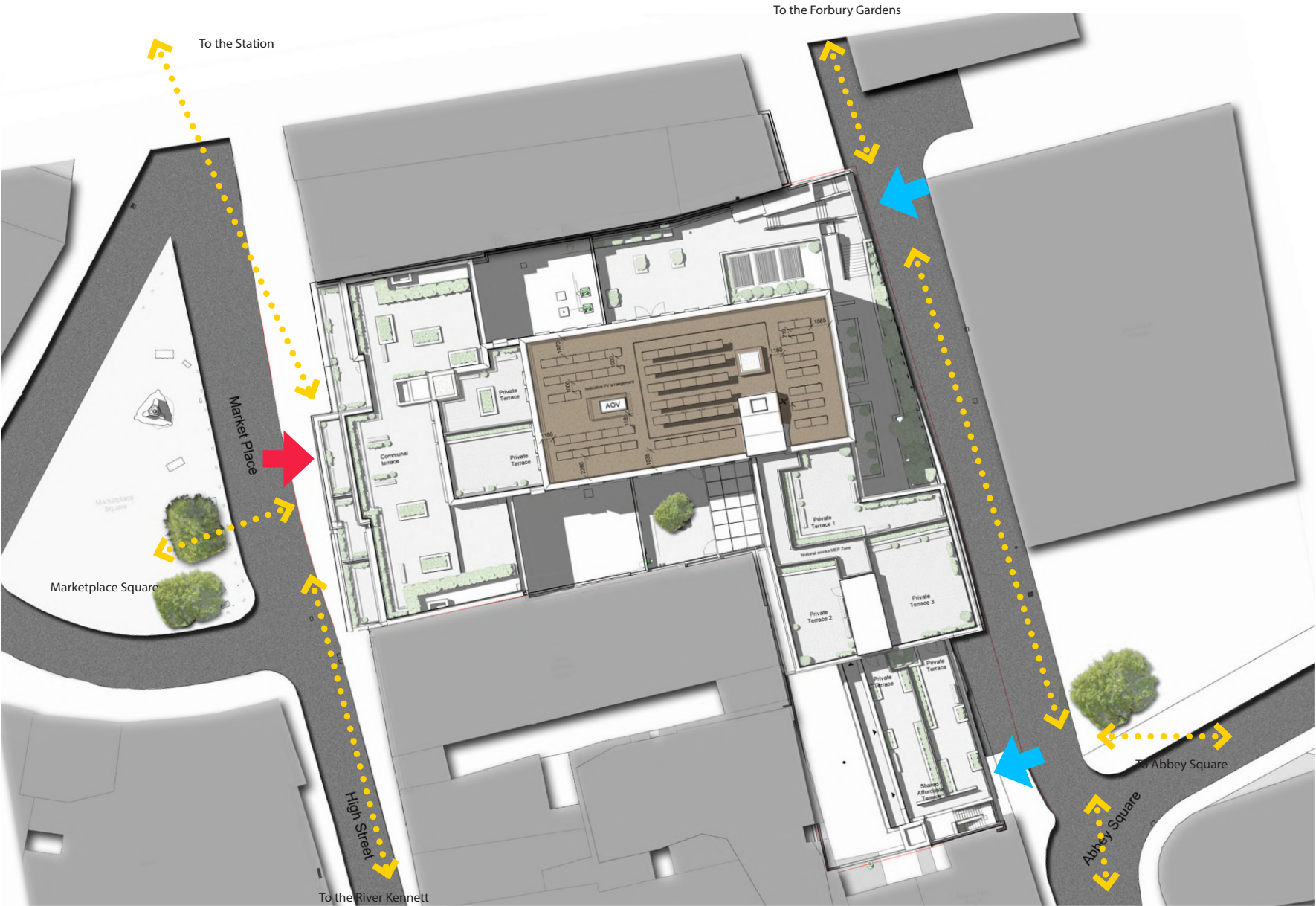
Roof top amenity & contribution to biodiversity

Gardens are envisaged above each of the residential blocks where stepped massing of the building at roof level allow their creation. Enclosed by glass balustrades, these spaces are designed to offer a variety of social spaces and private amenity for the residents with minimal furniture nestled between raised metal planters with multi-stem shrubs. These are under-planted with a mix of hardy perennials and grasses and sustained with a central irrigation system. The terraces will be paved with a ground finish paver on pedestals.

A green roof system is employed above ground floor and overlooked by the connecting block north facing upper level windows. Such spaces provide important habitat for insects and birds within the town centre. It also helps to reduce urban heat gain and slow watershed from the development in conjunction with traditional storm water attenuation currently in the town's drainage network.

Landscape enhancements at street level
 A secondary entrance is created connecting to Abbey Square and Forbury Square and Gardens. The importance of this new link is given due prominence in the landscaping strategy.

Due to the significant level differences across the site and the sloping ground at the rear, a substantial ramped area is required to achieve step free access. This will be landscaped to create the visual effect of a green corridor through what is currently a bleak and unwelcoming access route primarily designed for vehicles.



This page: The public realm around the site and connections to them including (right) a new entrance to the building from Forbury Square and Gardens.

3.9 Responses to Consultation

A summary of the consultaion responses to the second pre-app meeting and the DRP meeting are given below.

Observation 1) Significant narrative on the Site's development capacity is provided.

The narrative is contained within the planning statement. The site is within the town centre with excellent access to public transport and Town centre facilities such as shops retaturants and parks. It is therefore a prime location to increase the density to meet Reading's growing housing needs.

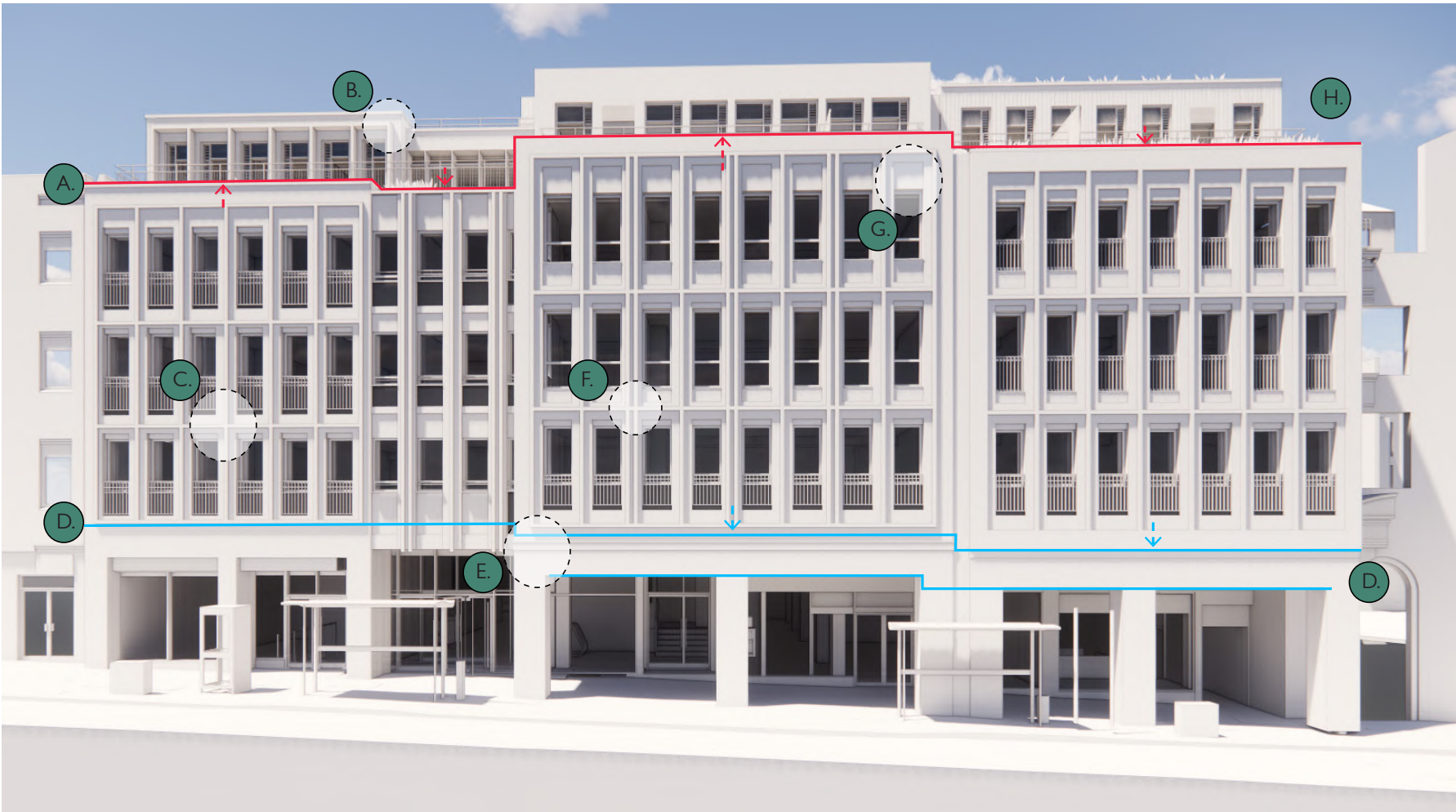
Observation 2) Officers retain the view that any proposals which seek retention/upgrade of the existing building needs to demonstrate a very high level of design quality in order to overcome the negative visual impact of the existing structure. How successful the proposals are at overcoming the previous officer concerns will depend upon selection of materials and ensuring the variations of the building parapet heights, window proportions and forward projection of the upper floor façade of each of the different sections of the buildings can be built out as indicated on the proposed plans/visuals and to a high quality.

The Market place designs have continued to be developed to respond to the expression of the variety of the burgage plot within the confines of the retained structure. We have:

- A. Increased articulation of the parapet heights.
- B. Introduced roofscape materiality to the new extension at 4th floor to provide variety
- C. Introduced the polychromatic brickwork prevalent in many of the notable buildings in and around the square
- D. Increased the expression of the stepping down the hill from North to South
- E. Introduce a reconstituted stone base to the building
- F. Created more variety in the projecting fins to pair windows in the central bay
- G. Introduced soldier course brickwork
- H. Introduced more railings at higher levels to introduce variety

Observation3) It is noted that the revised design pack submitted shows a side extension to the existing recessed top storey of the building that is set back toward the opposing top hat with the staggered building footprint and Market Place frontage. This results in a more subservient appearance to this part of the roof top extension from the pre app 1 proposals which would not appear unduly prominent to views from Market Place and within the Conservation Area.

The 4th floor extension is set back to minimise its impact on the square and is made from standing seam roof material to make it more subservient.



Alterations to 4th Floor Parapet



Above: 3D model of the proposals highlighting massing reduction to the proposed infill, in line with comments received from the design review panel consultation.



Observation 4) Based on indicative views drawings submitted with the pre-app, it is considered that the reduced massing and amended siting of the sixth and seventh storey extension would ensure these elements of the proposed extensions would not appear prominent to views from within Market Place and the conservation area and that the proposed development would reflect the predominant height of existing buildings within Market Place when viewed from within the square in line with the requirements of Policy CR14e.

As point (2) the design has continued to evolve so that there is no visible new extension from within Market Place above the 4th floor roof level. The parapet height at 4th floor roof level has been changed to create more variety to express the verticality

Observation 5) Officers and the LPA's Conservation and Urban Design Officer consider that the combination of all the detailed design features to the front façade results in a building which presents itself with more verticality and assists in reducing the dominance of the existing structure when viewed from Market Place.

Noted.

Observation 6) Reiterate the DRP comments with regard to verticality of the façade and historic references to the former burgage plots on the site could be further emphasised via greater variation to the parapet height, brickwork combinations and tones for each of the sections of the building with reference to the varying heights of the historic roofline of buildings to the site. It was also reminded that the Panel also noted that where the façade changes from one brick colour to another and suggested more asymmetry in terms of subservient and dominant blocks would help where colours are competing at piers.

As point (2) the polychromatic brickwork has been introduced to provide variety in the burgage frontages and provide differences to the plots and unify the design.

The Central prominent mass has been made wider so that the southern right hand mass is smaller

Observation 7) In addition to the above, officers also consider that the recessed fifth storey of the building would benefit from use of a different material such that the bronze/zinc cladding indicated for use to the proposed six and seventh storey extension elements to help distinguish this level of the building from the floors below and allow it greater visual subservience.

The new 5th and 6th floor element is now finished as a metal standing seam roof to distinguish it from the other elements. This element is only visible in the longer views. At recessed 4th floor level there is a mixture of standing seam and brickwork to further define the veritcality of the historic burgage plots.

Observation 8) The finish of the columns to the ground floor colonnade of the building also need to be reconsidered. A natural stone colonnade is recommended as this would reflect the stone finish to the ground floor frontage of a number of listed buildings set around Market Place.

The ground floor has been reconsidered to express the base as a reconstituted stone material and the arches have been removed to create a more coherent whole. The base has been expressed as three distinct elements: the dentist which is an autonomous element; the new residential entrance which is the infill between the two solid elements; and the main



Above: Detail facade section displaying level of detail and plinth to accentuate shopfronts & provide base for facade above.



Above: 3D visual representation of new secondary access from abbey square to external amenity space.