



4th Floor Plan (Typical Lower)



5th Floor Plan (Typical New)

- Shared spaces
- Building Cores
- 1 bed 1 Person flat
- 1 bed M4(3) flat
- 2 bed 3 Person flats
- 2 bed 4 Person flats
- 3 bed 5 Person flats

3.4 Scale & massing - additions to the building

The proposals aim to add new dwellings, respecting the sensitivity of the conservation area, the key location within Market Place and exploring its adjacency to Abbey Square and the business district.

The proposals have been modelled in 3D to examine their relationship with existing and future buildings in the townscape setting in the vicinity of the site (see right).

A series of studies from key views have been undertaken to develop the design of the massing particularly in relationship to Market Place and Jacksons Corner, which have both been identified as key views in discussion with Council officers.

In order to reflect the prevailing height of Market Place, the proposals aim to produce a smooth transition in mass by maintaining the building line & height of the immediate context on the Market Place frontage whilst locating the more extensive additions to the rear fronting Abbey Square.

Below and on the next page is a summary of the proposals as they relate to the scale and massing of the additions to the building:

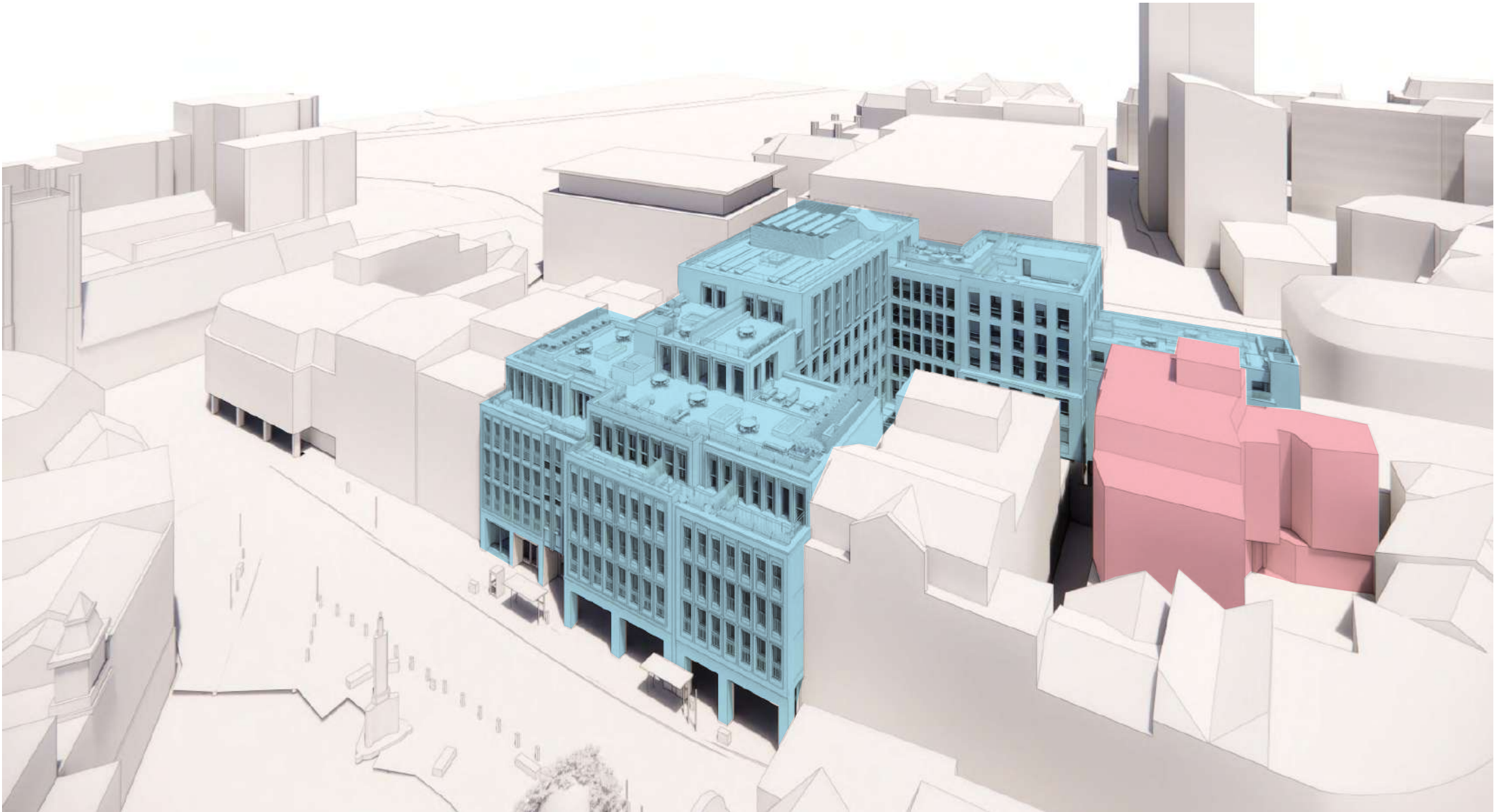
Block A:
It is proposed to add 1 storey to in fill the existing terrace area with the height to match the existing 4th storey roof. This has been set back so as not to rise above the adjoining building and to reduce the impact to Market Place Square.

2 new storeys to be added along the main wing of the building perpendicular to Market Place, extending the existing stairwell but set well back from the main elevation. The Forbury building height has been used as precedent at the rear.

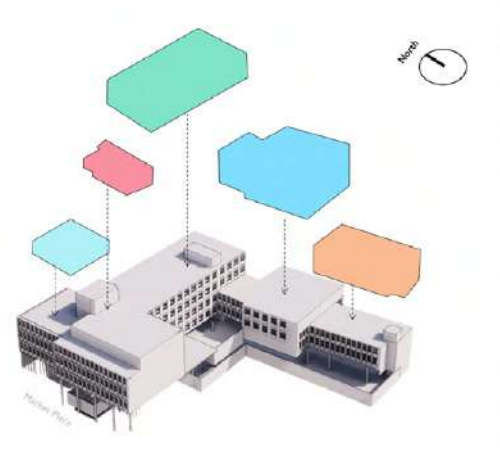
Block B:
3 new storeys to be added with proposed floor to ceiling heights to match existing. The existing stepping down in massing has been preserved.

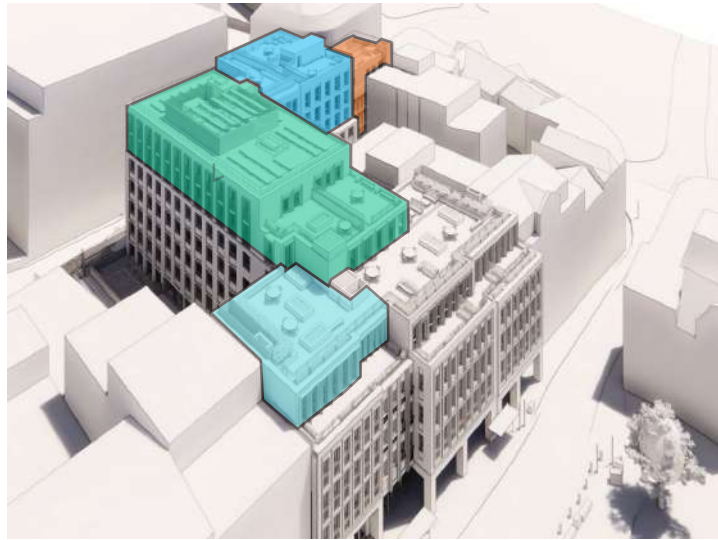
Block C:
2 new storeys to be added to the block facing Abbey Square with proposed floor to ceiling heights to match existing.

This will give the building more prominence on the square and will play down the existing service entrance to the site. These two floors will be adjacent to the new development at 1-9 Kings Road.

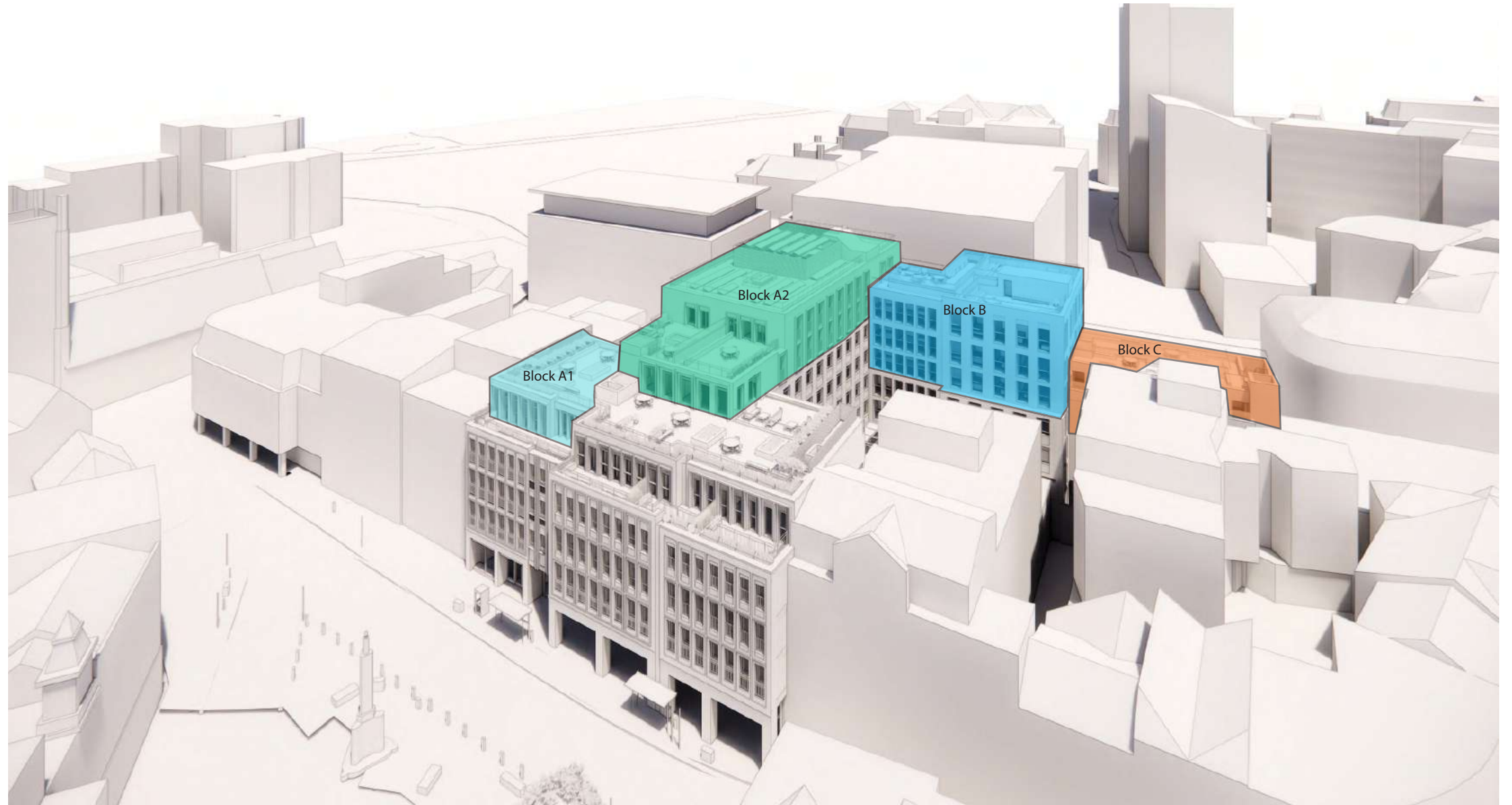


Above: A model of the proposed additions to the building shown in context, with the emerging townscape (approved adjacent schemes) shown in red





This page: A model showing the different elements of additions to the building block by block

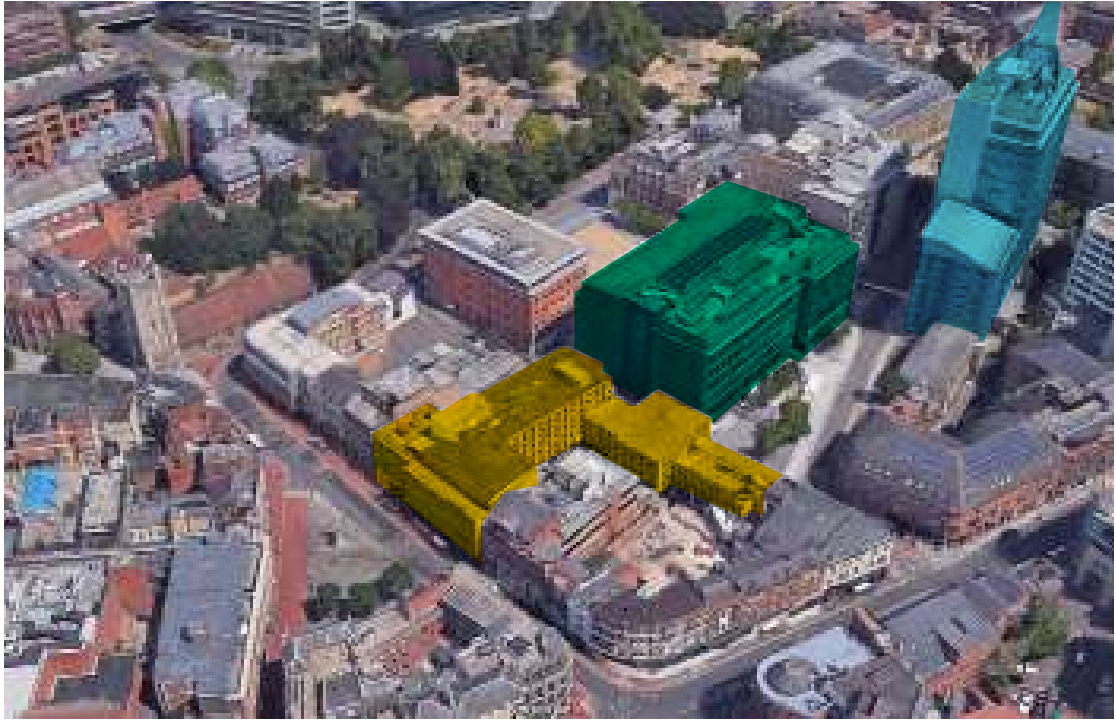


The current building at its eastern frontage has a feeling of finer grain verticality in contrast to the western Market Place facade. This is an attractive and sympathetic quality worth protecting and enhancing.

It is important to respect the prevailing burgage plot scale of buildings on the Market Place elevation, and make sure that no new massing was visible above the 4th floor roof level. The disjointed existing frontage, split both vertically with a central break and horizontally with a step back and uneven height, has less scope for significant change to its mass and careful consideration needs to be given to the appearance of the elevation treatment to provide the variety of scale and stepping to provide a sympathetic approach to enhancing the conservation area.

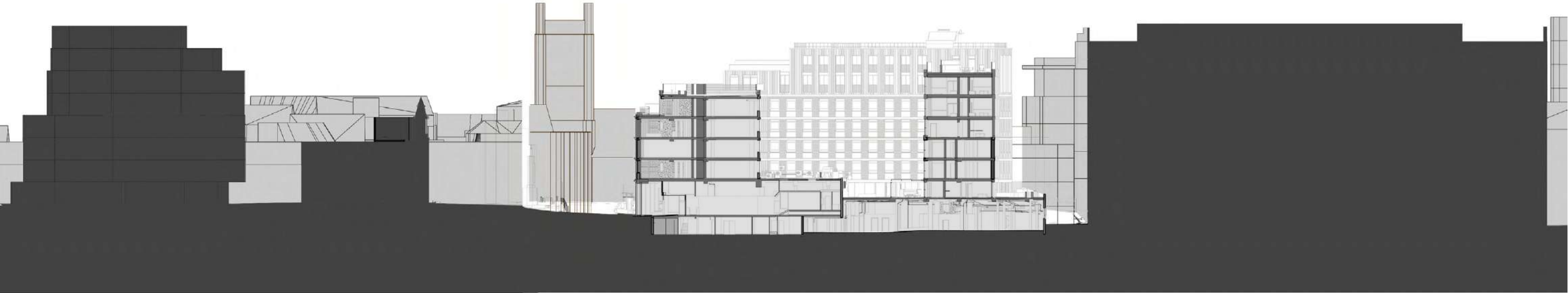
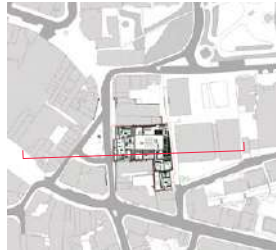
Within its immediate surroundings are much taller and bulkier buildings, to the east and west, prominent landmarks in the church and Town Hall to the north and recent development proposals for Kings Road to the south.

The proposed building mass has in response been sculpted to respond to all aspects of urban mass and grain around it, by stepping back to the west, building up and enclosing space to the west and creating a stepped roofscape seeking to unify the blocks currently within the site.



This page: The proposals will sit within a mixed townscape in terms of scale, height and massing, both within the conservation area and also its immediate setting. The Bristol Arcade proposals are visible from within Market Place (see above), but the business district to the east is less of a presence.

A more intimate street environment is appropriate given the increase in scale and height of buildings to the east of the site (shown in the section below and in the diagram top right)



Proposed site Section

Bringing elements of massing, scale and appearance together, the key benefits of the proposals are:

- a fine grain elemental approach, with a variety of architectural treatments within the same aesthetic family that works with the existing structure and the existing palette of materials
 - breaking down the mass of the building complex into individually identifiable elements and giving the appearance of a family of related buildings on the Market Place frontage
 - a more imposing facade fronting Abbey Square, animated by replacing car parking with dwellings and a secondary entrance and removing an unsightly blank concrete wall
- a western frontage that breaks the horizontality, stepping back at roof level to prevent the additional height becoming too dominant, and to ensure the additional floors in the centre of the site are screened from view within Market Place at ground level
 - introducing a limited palette of new materials to the building derived from a locally distinctive look and feel found in historic precedents around the site



This page: How the proposals will appear in approach views from within the conservation area. The scale and mass of the centre of the site is not perceived on approaching the site. The existing Market Place frontage is visually prominent when close to, but the new treatment is designed for it to blend more sympathetically with the original plot widths that are characteristic of the area



3.5 Appearance - alterations to elevations

To create a fresh image for the building it is proposed to replace the façade facing Market Place Square and elements of the façade facing Abbey Square (2). The new areas of mass will also have a light weight façade to unify the whole building. The redesign of the façade will be in keeping with and reflect the immediate context of Market Place Square.

The existing building façade comprises a series of concrete bays. Each bay features a metal framed window with an openable middle section of glass, with vertical concrete fins either side that run the height of the building from the 1st floor upwards.

The right hand portion of the façade pushes outward towards the street, away from the existing line of buildings and is supported by a series of blue coloured columns.

The ground floor is split into 4 distinct units and step down in relation to the slope of the site. The dentist surgery and Tesco store sit either side of the main entrance into the building, with majority of this frontage being curtain wall accompanied by signage.

At the 4th floor the floor plate reduces and is used as a roof terrace space. The facade design has responded to a tightly constrained set of existing conditions. The existing 1960's building is made up of a mixture of failing concrete facades on the main elevation and more functional brick work facades at the rear that have been built over a period of time.

The strategy is to replace the existing concrete facades and build new brickwork and metal clad facades over and above them. We can then retain the existing brickwork elements and design deliberately contrasting facades above it. This allows a substantial upgrade of the facade performance both for the new and existing elements.

The facade approach varies depending on the orientation. The polychromatic brickwork with the rich red brick responds to the mercantile opulence of the market square. The back of the building has a more muted feel with the use of buff accent brick that ties in with the existing stock brick at the back of the building.

The bay design has to respond to the constraints of the existing structure. Behind each of the concrete fins of the main facades are insitu concrete columns that need to be retained and constrain the rhythm. Behind each of the brick piers there is a pre-cast concrete blade that restrains them that also needs to be retained.

The new window openings need to respond to the functional requirements to retain natural ventilation. The windows are domestic in style with a louvred side panel that allows control of permanent ventilation. The windows themselves are openable to allow purge ventilation and cleaning and maintenance.



This page: How the proposed family of facade typologies will appear on the proposed extended building:

- Type 1 - A used exclusively for the 1st -3rd floor of the Market Place frontage and based on the existing strong structural grid of the existing facade
- -B
- -C
- -D
- Type 2 - used on 4th floor setback to Market Place frontage, and the Abbey Square frontage where the existing frame is glazed and panelised, with the new look providing a more open aspect
- Type 3 - used to modify the currently blank concrete wall overlooking Abbey Square
- Type 4 - a lightweight structure that sits above the existing building in Abbey Square
- Type 5 - the existing buff brickwork left and renovation of existing windows

Market Place Square

The key aspects of the proposals to alter the existing elevations are:

- to introduce 4 identifiable facade elements that have a vertical emphasis, breaking down the unsympathetic horizontality of the existing building and giving the appearance of conjoined buildings on narrower plots
- to introduce a locally distinctive and contemporary aesthetic that provides an identity lacking in the existing building without disrupting the existing setting
- to utilise the existing structural framework of the façade
- to keep the rhythm and grain of contextual elements already present, and enhance them through the use of a limited palette of sympathetic new materials, borrowing on the polychromatic brickwork of the local buildings
- to enhance the conservation area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings

In order to build a new architectural language for the building, a family of facade types will be employed on different parts of the building as it is proposed to be extended (see right)

Creating a material connection

Much of Reading's Victorian heritage, local vernacular and examples of listed buildings owe their architecture to the ornamentation of the everyday. The expression of the window or the structure creates relief to the facade and an articulation that describes how the building is put together. This is not a new technique and Michaelangelo, perfected it in his renaissance composition of the Laurentian Library in Florence, where the columns and structure are expressed in stone and the field is rendered with stucco to emphasise the proportions of the space.

Borrowing from the articulation of the nearby Town Hall, and other local notable buildings, there is the opportunity to create to create a new architecture that is intrinsically linked to Reading and compliments the conservation area, but expresses the new functions of creating modern homes. Creating depth to the facade to shade east and west facades from overheating with vertical fins, expressing the structural rhythm of the building behind

The choice of brickwork as a material is inherently Reading. The design can play both with the choice of colour and the use of polychromatic brickwork to express these simple ornamentation. These bricks are derived from the local architecture so that is forms an inherent sense of place.



Proposed Bay Option



Bay study iterations



Reading Town Hall



Michelangelos' Laurentian Library



173 Friar Road



Jacksons Corner



The Burgage Plot

The historic rhythm of Market Place is built on the burgage plots stemming back to the Medieval origins of the Market Square. This creates an architecture that is rich with variety and the narrower frontages give a sense of verticality that is lost with the 1970's building.

Although historically much of the land behind this west face of the Victorian facade was given over the Suttons Seed factory, the narrow frontage had different uses that helped create the variety.

The composition of the new design of the proposed facades attempts to emulate this rhythm and scale by dividing the frontage into 4 bays that replicates this more vertical emphasis. The framework for this is still the structural order of the 1970's architecture that gives the overall composition an underlying sense of unity within the 4 individual bays.

Variety is recreated by articulating the 2 prominent projecting bays; creating a new recessed entrance bay and a bay that blends with the line of the main street frontage.

Although from Market Place, all 4 bays have 3 residential storeys above ground floor retail with a recessed roof level 4th floor, variety is created in the massing by stepping the roof line and playing with the parapet heights, window lines and floor heights. A more classical approach to proportion sees a piano nobile with large openings that reduce as the levels rise,



Above: Elevational study creating variety to reflect plot widths



Above: Elevational study of historic plot widths against current site.

Building a language

The natural order of the 1970's structure with its series of concrete columns behind every pier, mean that it is really important to get the basic window unit right to allow flexibility in the placement of windows to create the articulation behind each of the four bays.

Within each of the four bays we play with the cill height, the window height and the depth to recreate the idea of a Piano Nobile at first floor with the taller windows which diminish in size as you reach the top.

The repetition creates a recognisable sense of identity between the bays much like any Victorian development.

The image to the right show early studies for how these basic units might be articulated within the composition of a wider facade.



Above: Design explorations for facade compositions based on the burgage plot widths

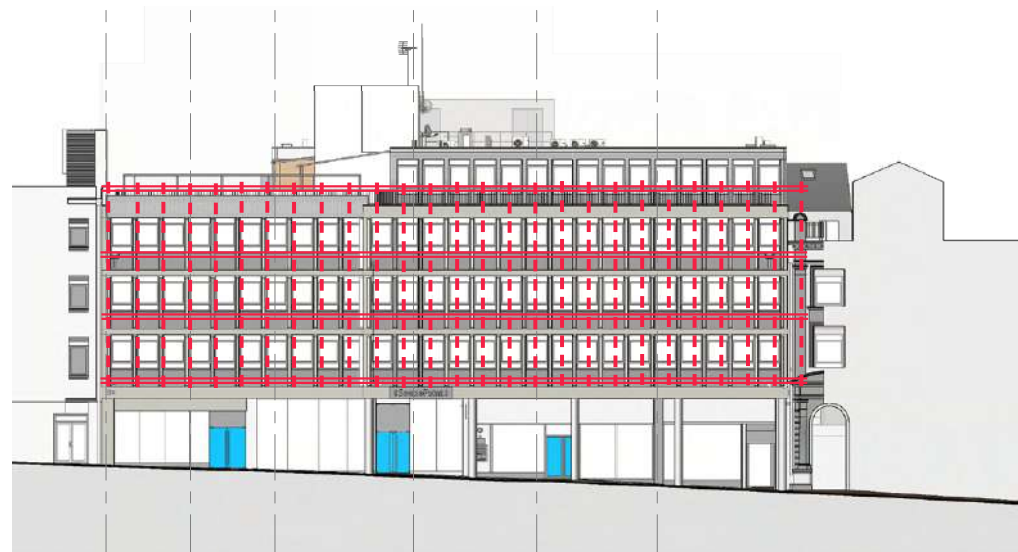


Right: 3D bay study of rationalised facade design following comentary from DRP & heritage

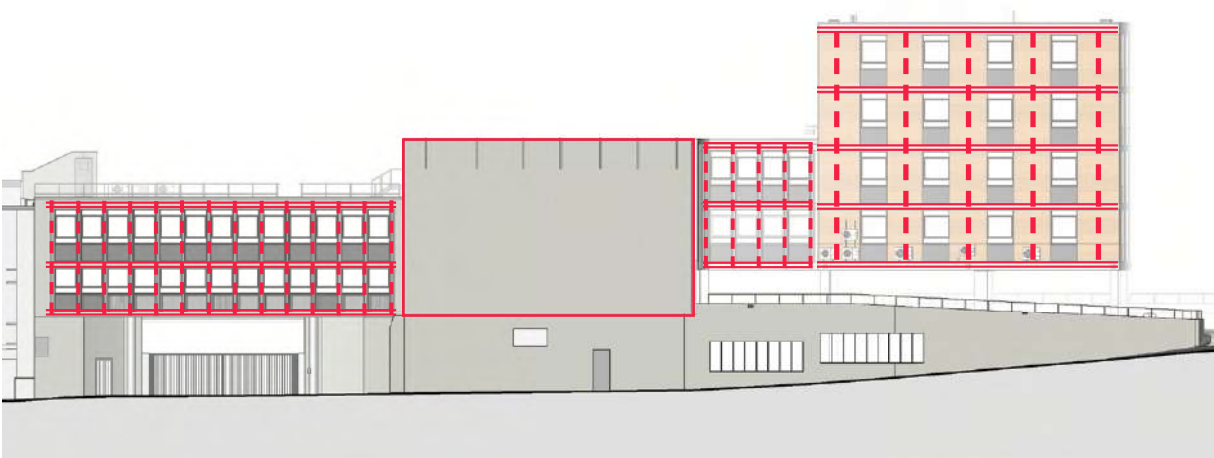
Above: 3D bay studies of brickwork detailing around window openings

A similar language from Market Place to Abbey Square

Although the Abbey Square elevation is less eminent within the conservation area, nonetheless it is an important elevation with a real opportunity to enliven the square. The building is naturally broken down into large bays that reflect the industrial scale of the historic sheds, but a similar approach is taken to the expression of the bays, articulating depth and pattern with polychromatic brickwork



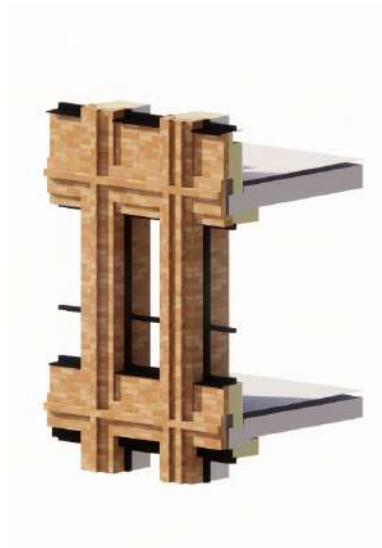
Existing West Facade



Existing East Facade



Facade Type 1A - Brickwork



Facade Type 1B - Brickwork



Facade Type 1C - Brickwork



Facade Type 1D - Brickwork



Facade Type 2 - Brickwork



Facade Type 3 - Brick work



Facade Type 4 - Standing seam roof



Facade Type 5 - Existing

Market Place frontage

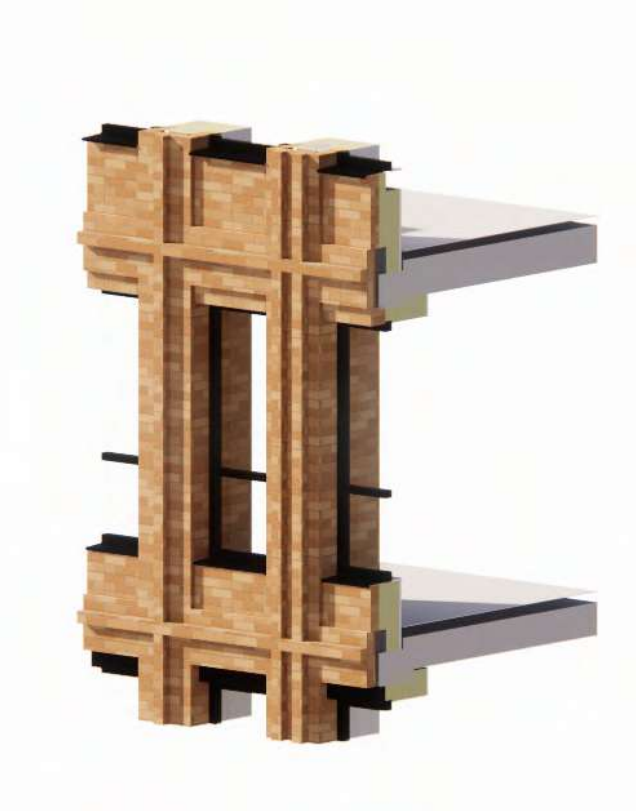
Keeping faithful to the structure of the building, the grid is retained and the brutalist character of the facade is carefully stripped away leaving a simple and elemental expression of the burgage plots that would have previously been reflected in the Victorian buildings that used to occupy the site. By adding to upper floors, variety is added and a complexity of detail reminiscent of its diverse surroundings is brought to the building. The materials are kept simple and locally appropriate.



Market Place
 FACADE TYPE 1B - a strong grid is created in a bolder red brick and a lighter grey brick infill. The structure underneath is retained, but will no longer be visible. This applies to the existing three upper floors.

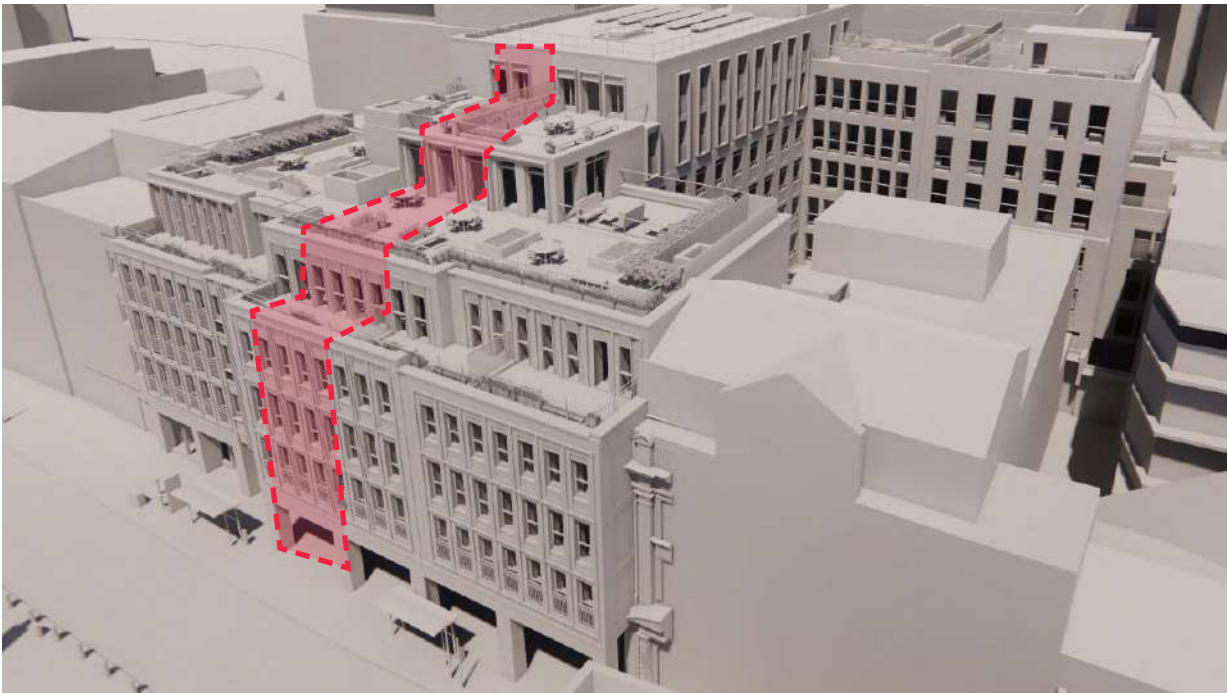
A glassier more lightweight feel is then used above existing 3rd floor where the mass of the building steps back successively until the top (sixth) floor.

This gives a depth of visual interest to the facade currently lacking in the brutalist existing building.



Facade Type 1

- Single full height window
- 1/2 brick red corbel
- Grey brick surround
- Full height louvre ventilation



Proposed West Facade



3D Sectional Study

Abbey Square frontage

There is more scope for variety in this frontage. The existing building resembles a collection of plot frontages already and the design strategy builds on this grain to bring a family of facade types together, appropriate to the underlying form of the building's existing elements. In contrast to the Market Place frontage, this is more transformational in effect, creating a new identity for the street.



Abbey Square
FACADE TYPE 2 - used for the southernmost part of the site, continuing with a grid but with a simpler and sharper outline in overall massing. A strong rhythm is continued across the frontage, with access underneath the building (to basement parking) retained and finished in a complementary brick colour



- Facade Type 2
- Single full height window
 - 1 brick grey corbel
 - Grey brick surround
 - Full height louvre ventilation

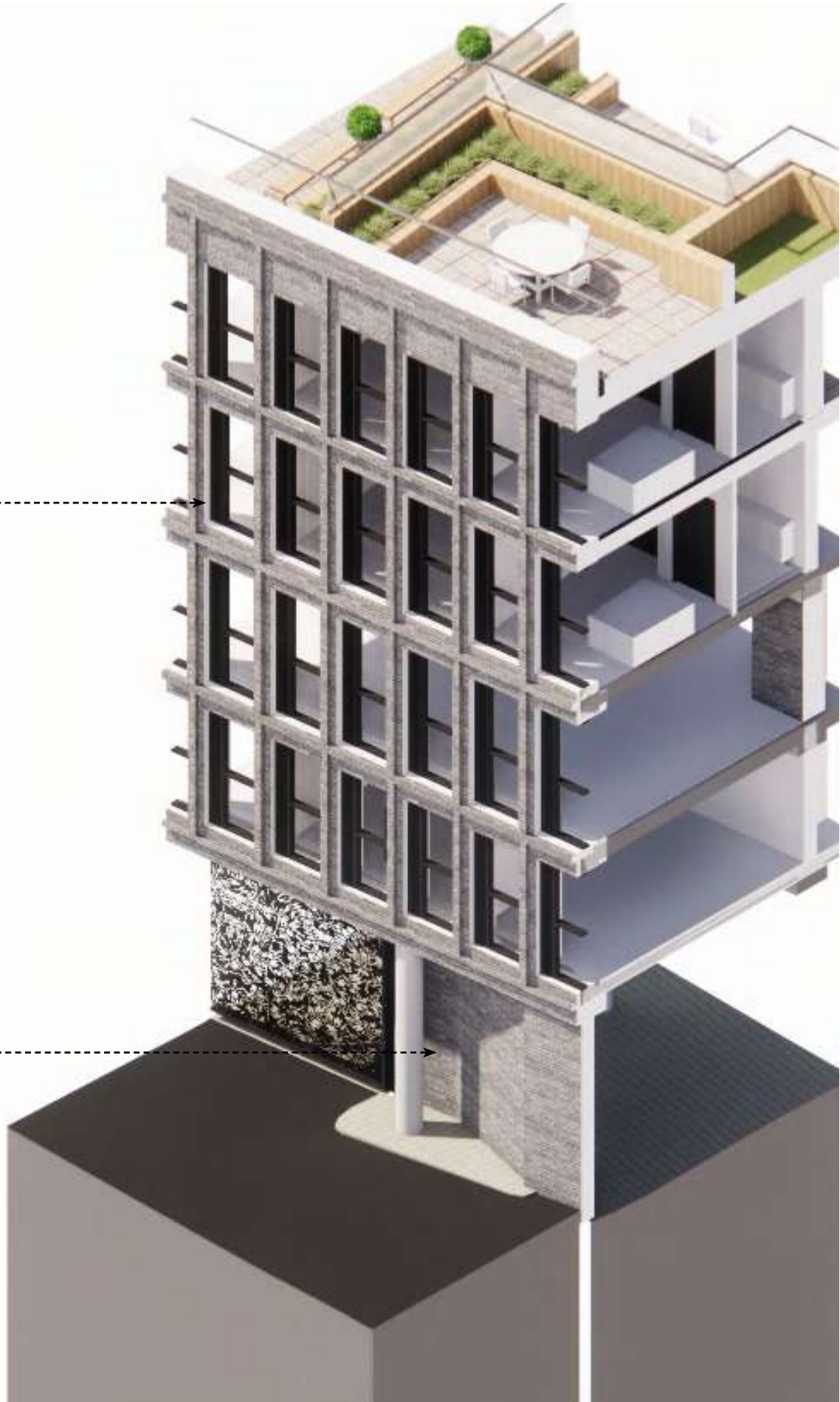


Proposed East Facade

- New facade following same brick pier type as West elevation

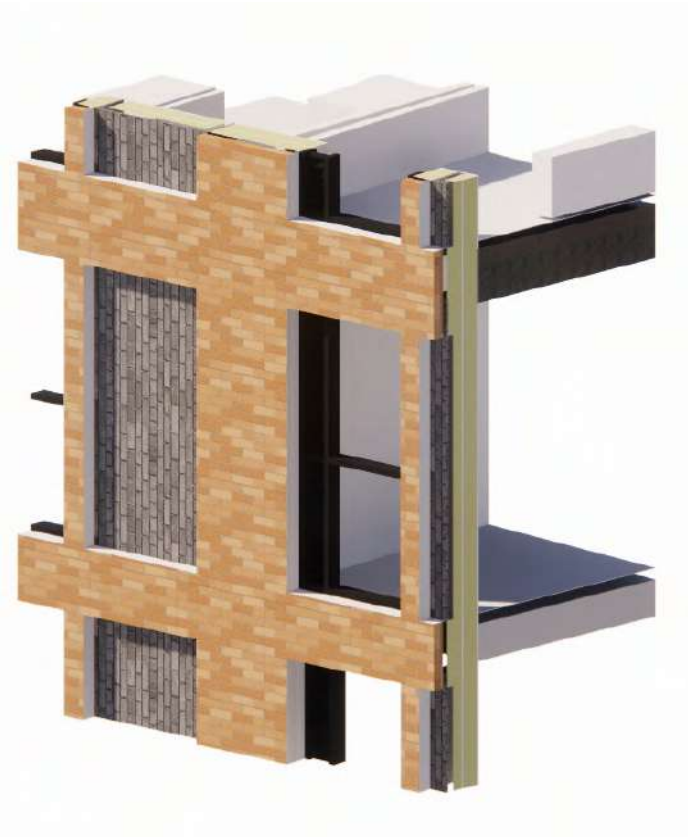
- Single brickwork cladding to the column & existing concrete walls

3D Sectional Study



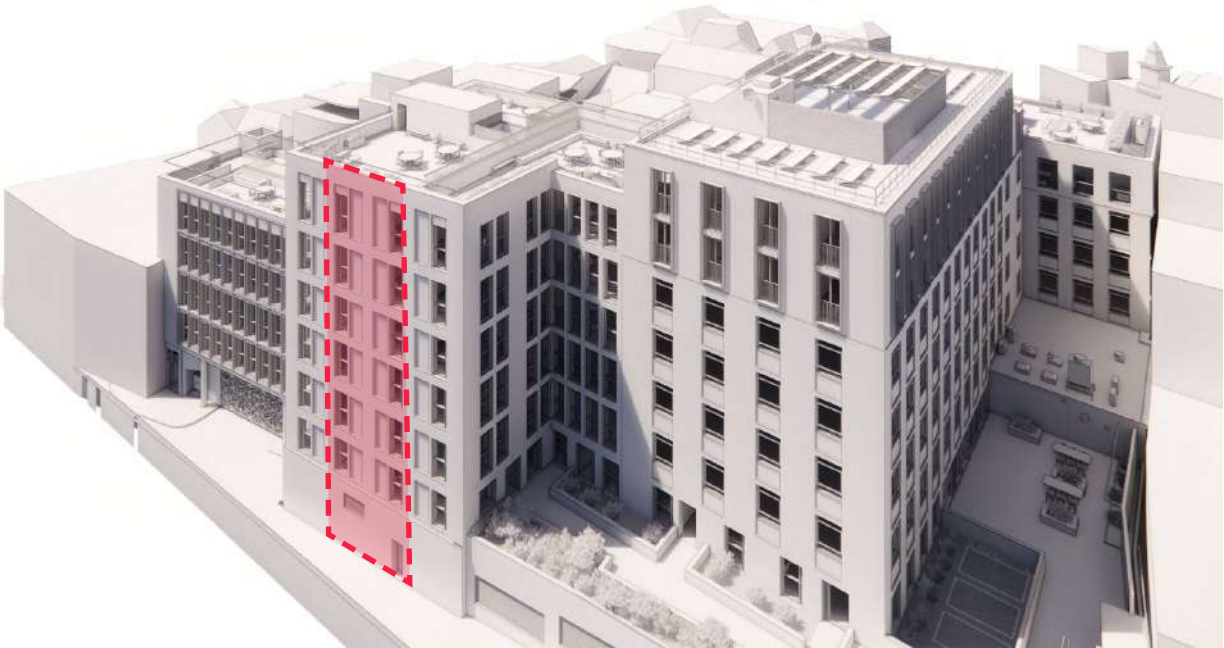
Abbey Square
 FACADE TYPE 3 - creating a new facade where a blank rendered wall exists, but tying into the buff brick material currently on the inner facades of this block. Blind recesses made from vertically bonded maintain the regular grid pattern

The rhythm is syncopated with its immediate neighbours, overall vertical in emphasis, with the buff now the framing material and grey brick as the setback infill.

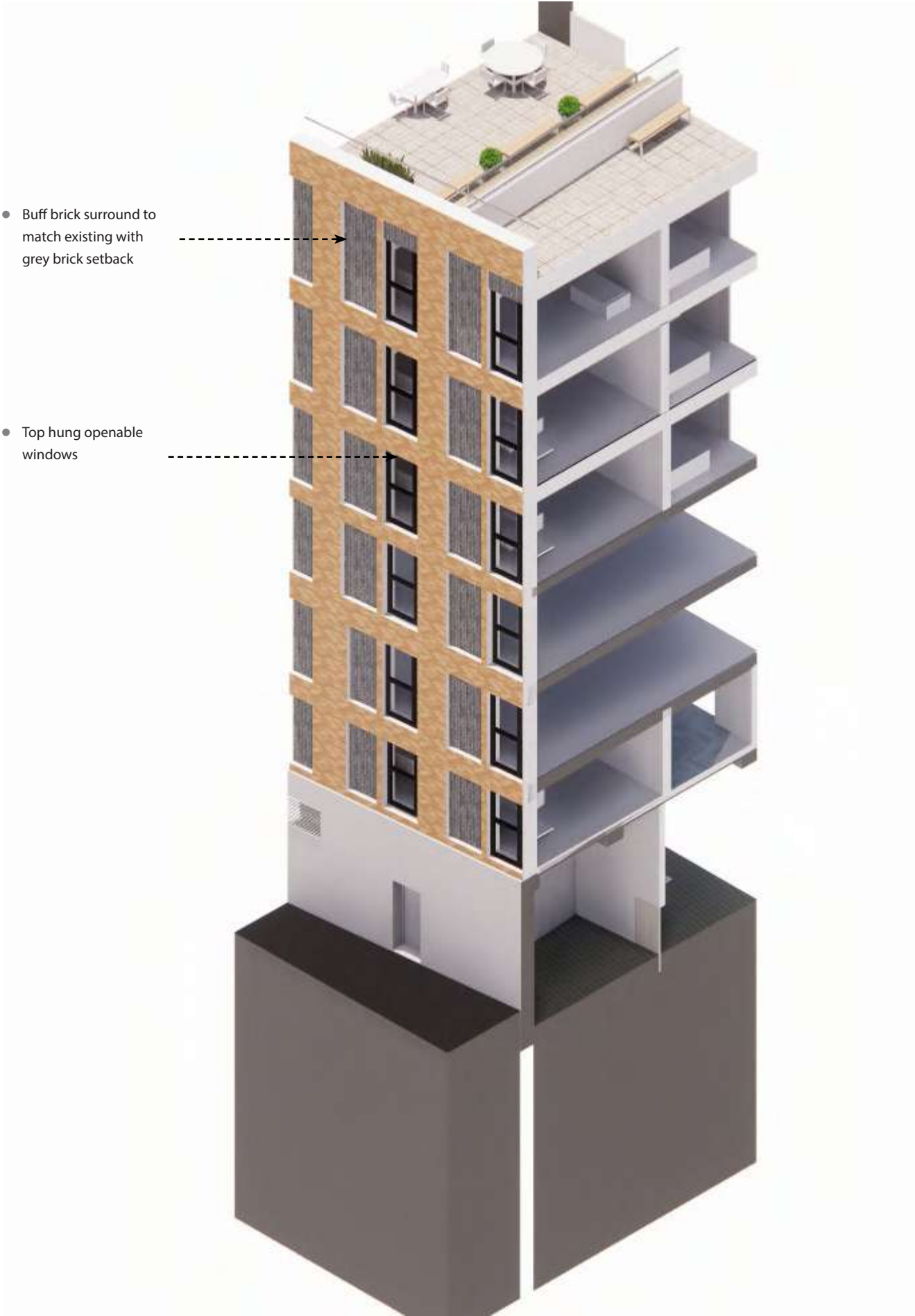


Facade Type 3

- Full height window with louvre ventilation
- Buff brick corbel
- Grey brick surround



Proposed East Facade



3D Sectional Study