

3.DESIGN STRATEGY

3.12 BUILDING FUNCTIONS & ORGANISATION

The buildings will be laid out and designed to help create a community. There will be a strong focus on shared external and internal amenity spaces which will be set out in a clear and organised way.

There will be a single and identifiable 'front door' to Friars Walk on Plot E opening into a welcoming lounge, complete with concierge service, post room and the building manager's office. This space will include the management hub for both Plots E & F, though Plot F will have its own entrances and amenity spaces including a rooftop lounge that opens onto a south-facing roof terrace.

On Plot E an emphasis will be placed on creating a strong relationship between the internal amenity areas and the courtyards and edging of the public faces of the site at ground floor with retail and community spaces.

Main Entrance, Concierge & Lounge

The front doors will have a strong visual impact with the main entrance area to Plot E having a greeting space/concierge and lounge accommodating residents and visitors whilst also including leasing and management spaces. A concierge will be open 24hrs and will provide secure access.

Lobby & Circulation

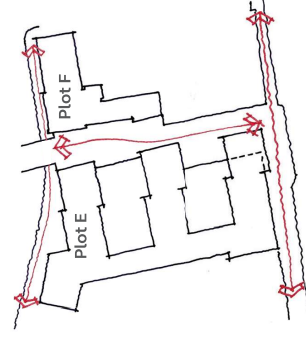
Lincoln's focus is on creating 'places for people to live', with amenity space arranged for programmed events that encourage interaction between residents, the development of a strong community and tenant retention. On-site staff will deliver high-quality management and to a strong social atmosphere. As such, flexibility and adaptability are key requirements in the interior design of these spaces.

Parcel & Post

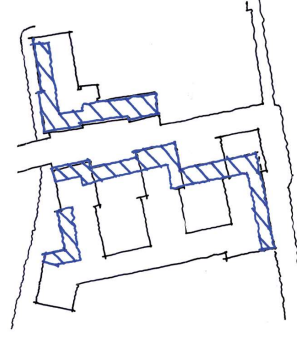
Parcel and post rooms will be close to the main entrances. Access for major deliveries will be provided at the lower level from the service yard off Garrard Street, with secondary deliveries through the main entrance of Plot E.

Resident Lounge

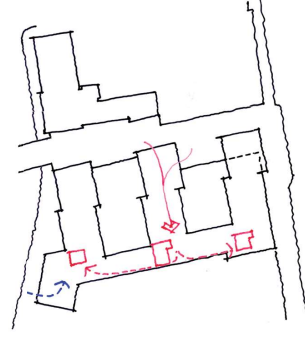
To activate the lobby and enhance the residential environment, small break-out areas with tables and chairs will be provided. The layout will allow privacy for many residents using the space at the same time. These flexible spaces will also provide areas for leasing discussions with potential tenants. Set back from the main lobby, they will be used to activate the corridor routes from the lobby to the lift cores.



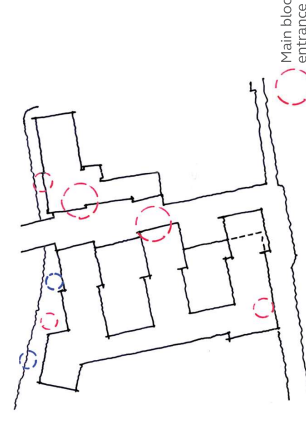
Plots E & F - Major Access Routes



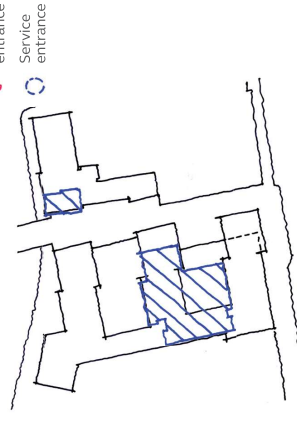
Active Frontage



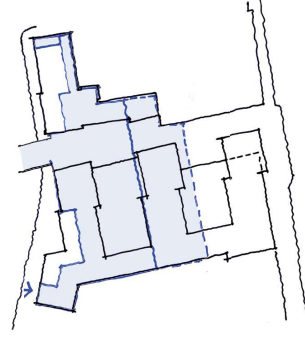
Lifts & Stairs to Upper Floors



Resident & Service Entrances



Residential Amenity, Managements & Back of House



Plant, Refuse, Move In/Move Out at lower ground and mezzanine level

3.13 ENHANCEMENTS TO PLOTS E & F

The major design alteration to the Consented Outline Application's illustrative proposal to this RMA Proposal is the change from a single, visually-enclosed courtyard to two separate, eastward opening courtyards in Plot E.

Benefits of the revised proposal include:

- Better quality public realm and placemaking;
- The new Friars Walk has more daylight and greater visibility of sky;
- It will feel more open, spacious and attractive than the approved scheme;
- The residential courtyards will be less inward-looking and provide greater visibility of the sky and wider context;
- The revised plan creates an active retail/amenity-fronted Friars Walk, Friar street and Garrard Street.

In addition, the scheme is less monolithic in form and this allows for greater articulation of mass and the creation of varied and interesting architecture:

- It is organised and planned to create a strong sense of community;
- It is easily managed for the benefit of residents;
- It creates a successful interface with the western party wall;
- It can be developed and let on a phased basis;
- The new Friars Walk has more daylight and greater visibility of sky.

3.14 PLACEMAKING & BUILDING A COMMUNITY (BUILD TO RENT MODEL)

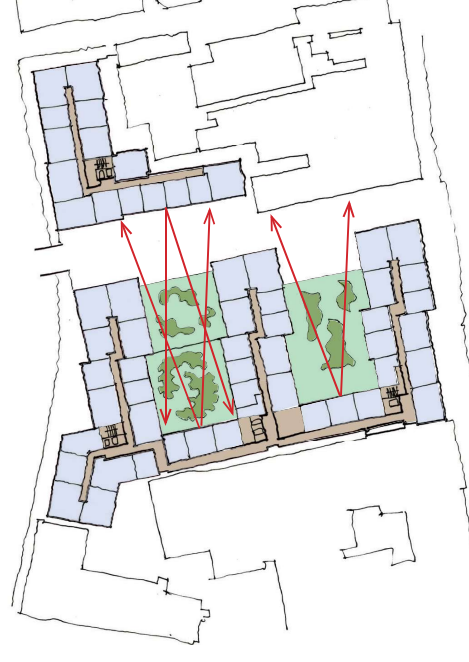
Design Outcomes

The proposal is to provide open-planned, ergonomic, practical and comfortable apartments with good daylight, aspect and visual amenity. To achieve this, the development will minimise the number of apartment layouts so that there is a clear range of unit sizes and typologies available to residents. This will ensure that the offer, marketing and take-up is clear for potential tenants, allowing them to upsize, downsize, choose aspect, view, specification and furniture, etc. This approach also enables clear operating and maintenance strategies for bathrooms, kitchens, wardrobes, utility cupboards, carpets, etc. which is key for managing an estate of the scale proposed. The outcome of this strategy is that typical apartments constitute about 70% of the units with the remaining 30% atypical apartments at external corners and close to lift cores. Window sizes are maximised to ensure all apartments have good daylight and they are positioned to ensure that visual amenity and privacy are maintained. It is recognised that not all units achieve the BRE guidance in terms of daylight and sunlight, a compromise this is a consequence of meeting wider design objectives.

Residential units are organised around wide corridors with access to three major stair and lift cores. The maximum length of corridors are within guidance for means of escape distances; they have been reviewed by fire engineers and comply with the Building Regulations. The organisation of residential units around shared corridors in this way is particular to the build-to-rent residential model with the reduced number of corridors and lift lobbies allowing for the highest quality of management and maintenance. The consolidation of the lift and stair cores into fewer groups than in a for-sale scheme ensures that most residents have quick and easy access to the main amenity and concierge hubs, providing residents with the opportunity to get to know the staff and to build relationships with other tenants. It creates, over time, a stronger sense of belonging and community within the development than would be normal in a for-sale scheme. This layout is seen as key for the success of the scheme at Station Hill.



Typical residential floor upper levels



Typical residential floor lower levels allow for long views and good quality amenity

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3.15 ELEVATION STRATEGY

Facades & Elevations

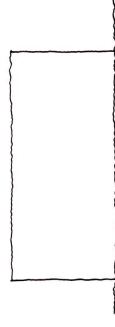
Plots E & F will together constitute a large-scale development in the centre of Reading and will have significant regenerative impacts. To ensure that all of the scheme's potential benefits are realised, the design has focused on the overall form of the building and how it can create a great public realm. The strategy for this has been set out in the previous section.

The following sections set out how the form is articulated to reflect the uses of the buildings and how those uses address the public realm. It will further illustrate how the architectural expression of the buildings have been developed and how it relates to its particular context, Reading.

The architectural objectives are to ensure that the design is:

1. Context specific. It should relate to the historic and neighbourhood context of the town centre whilst acknowledging the emerging larger scale developments to the north of the site.
2. A scaled response. The design of the buildings, their uses and elevations should work at the human scale at street level; a building scale at neighbourhood level and a city scale when viewed and experienced from further afield.
3. Uniquely Reading. In relating the architecture of the proposed buildings to the forms, materials and detailing that give Reading its unique identity, whilst still delivering buildings that have design integrity, are firmly rooted in the 21st century and Reading's vision for its future. The design should reinterpret and appropriate the concept of 'lantern' used in the historic architecture of the town (see page 34) and develop a brickwork expression that references historic colour combinations and framing devices to windows and doors in a new and exciting way.

The following images show the strategy for breaking down the massing on Plots E & F so that each block has a more legible scale and relates to the surrounding context. This picks up on strategies used throughout Reading that place a vertical emphasis on what are, in essence, horizontal blocks:



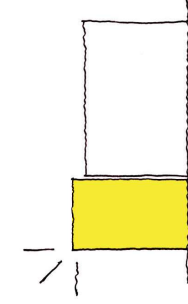
Block elevation

Massing of a typical wing of Plot E.

By introducing a strong vertical break the emphasis is changed to a more vertical one, creating greater opportunity for architectural articulation and elegance in the elevations.

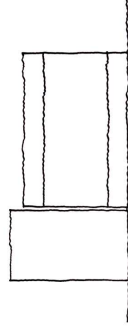


Block elevation broken into horizontal & vertical components



Vertical component emphasised - The Lantern

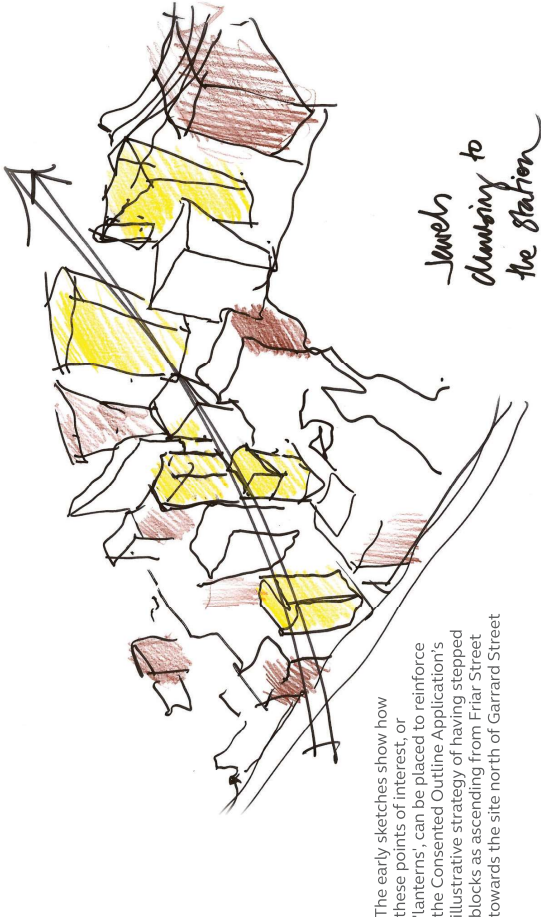
This vertical strategy can be further enhanced by raising the roofline on parts of the buildings to create points of interest and focus. These points are placed to create 'moments' in the massing of the buildings and within the wider public realm. These raised elements have the potential to infuse the buildings with variety and excitement and a number of options for developing this strategy were explored prior to setting on the final proposals. This presents an opportunity to develop a contemporary lantern form that references to historic forms used in the town centre.



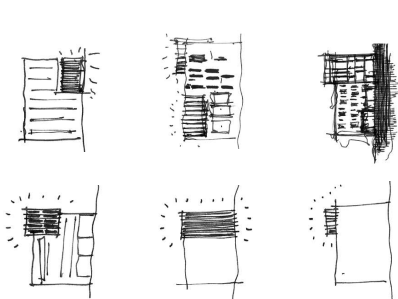
Horizontal component divided into base, middle and top

Adjacent to these point of emphasis, the more horizontal parts of the buildings are divided into a classic format of base, middle and top. The base can be adjusted in different parts of the site to relate to the scale of its immediate context, or the roofline of the town. These parts of the buildings will be quieter in expression, with clearly organised elevations and well-mannered expression.

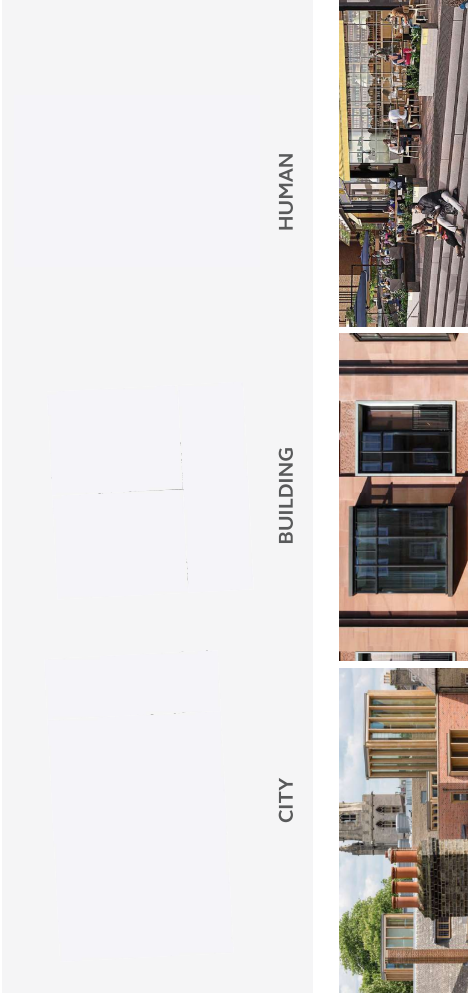
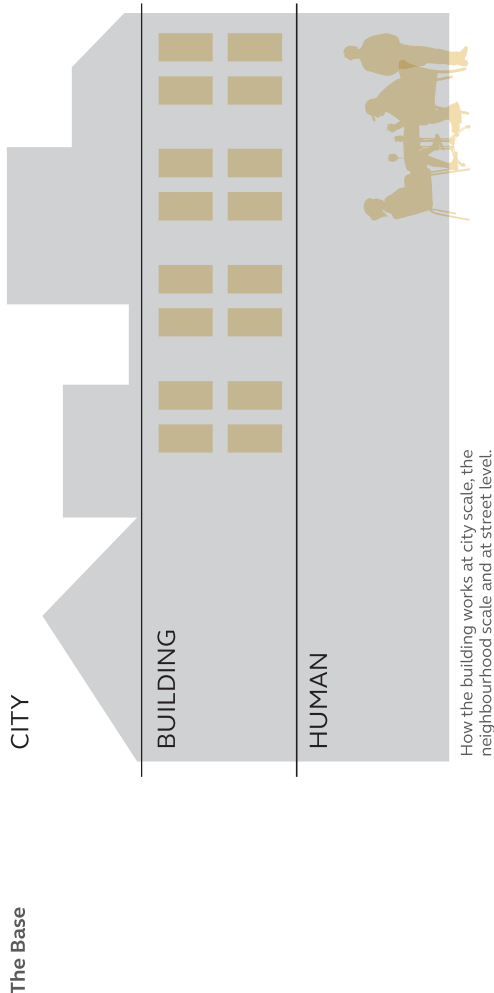
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Initial sketch of the lantern concept that has guided the design of the scheme, illustrating how these can be used to mark significant moments within the development and the townscape

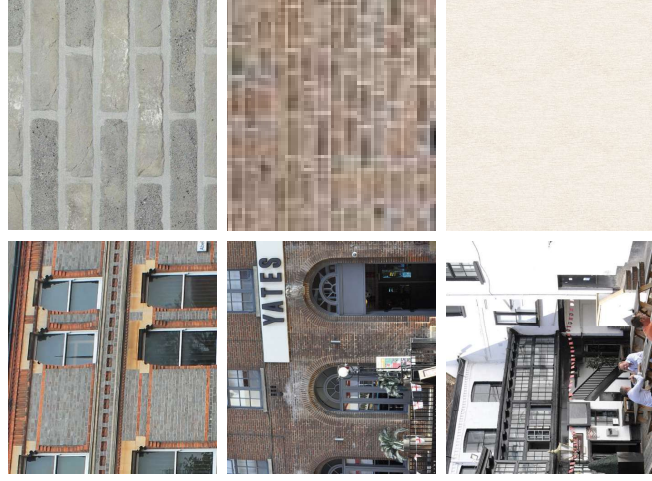


Studies of options for locating lanterns on different parts of the building



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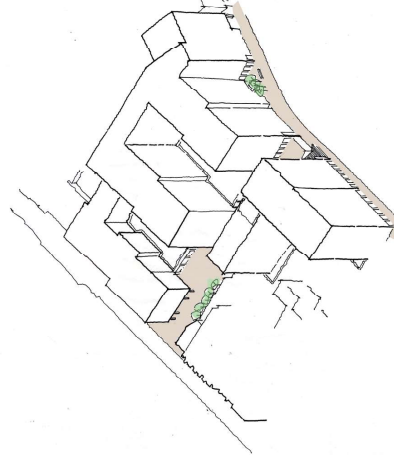
The following sequence of diagrams explain how the architectural strategies set out on the previous pages have been developed in relation to each part of the two buildings and how they specifically relate to the wider strategies for setting the buildings in their immediate context.



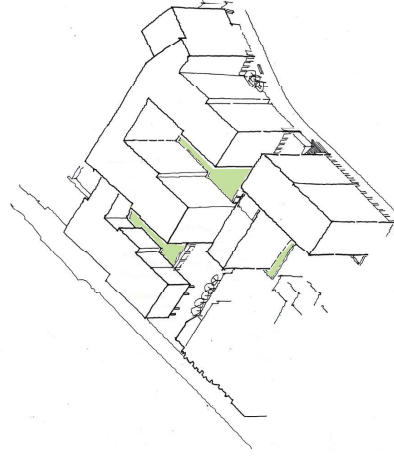
Grey brick, red brick, render and local precedents



Active frontage at street level: Stone-coloured cement-based cladding
1. The lower floors of the buildings accommodate uses that will ensure that the scheme has active edges and close-grained and neighbourhood-scaled shopfronts to Friar Street and Friars Walk. On Garrard Street, significant effort has been made to place street fronting activity onto the façades and to express this at an appropriate scale to the heights of the two blocks, with two- and three-storey arcaded elevation at street level.



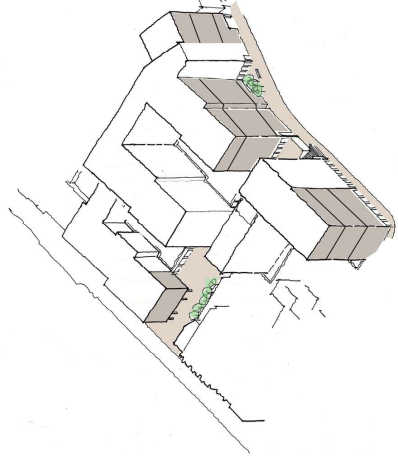
High-quality public realm: Concrete paving and planting
2. The public realm is a key component of the architectural strategy. Working closely with the landscape architect and the lighting consultant, the design ensures that the uses facing the public realm relate closely to the landscape strategies. The detail of these strategies is set out in Section 7 of this document.



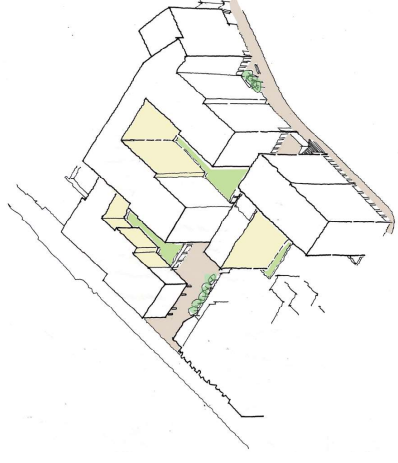
Soft landscape dominated courtyards
3. Within the development are a number of landscaped courtyards and roof terraces. These will be amenity spaces for residents and will provide visual interest and enjoyment; they become the 'fifth elevations' of the buildings. The detail is set out in Section 7.



Lanterns: Stone coloured cladding & metal panels
4. The large-scale vertical lanterns/jewels give particular emphasis to key moments in the buildings - major entrances and corners - and act as urban markers. The lanterns will be lightweight in appearance, with a grid or lattice structure encapsulating lighter material finishes.



Brick to Friar and Garrard Streets
5. The outward walls of the background buildings will have a more modest expression, clad in brick and divided into base, middle and top stratifications. Windows will be organised into clearly-expressed rows with visual interest provided through articulation of detail and material.



Soft, light coloured render to courtyards
6. The courtyard facing elevations will be predominantly rendered in response to the need to maximise reflectivity and to provide a softer and more residential appearance into these domestic courtyards. Again, interest will be provided through the use of contrast in texture, finish and detail.

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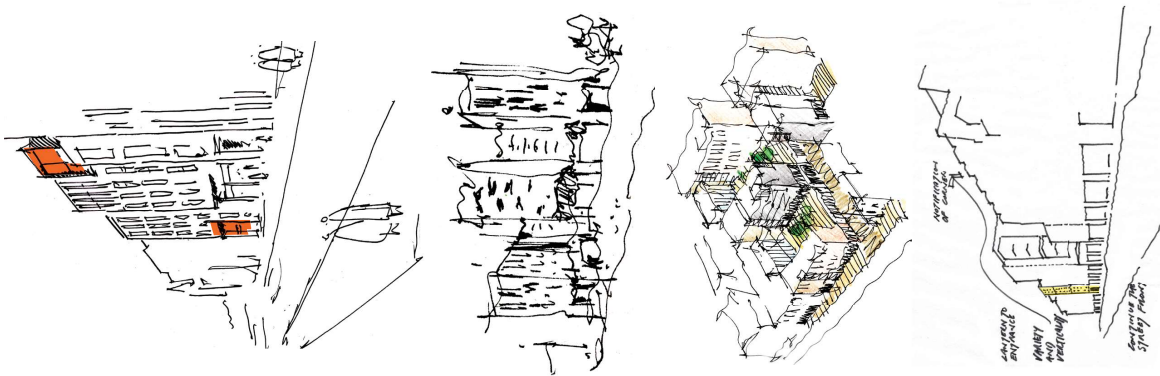
3.16 ARTICULATED MASSING

As the scheme was developed options were explored as to how the massing could be further adapted to create visual interest and relate more granularly to the surrounding streets.



Bird's eye view from the south east showing how the massing has been broken down into more scaleable and legible parts. The use of contrasting materials, colours and textures reinforce this strategy

Strip elevation of north side of Friar Street with the proposal site highlighted. The length of the latter elevation is broken down vertically and the roof line articulated to ensure the development relates to the scale and the grain of the street



Early sketches that tested how the massing of the building could be broken down to relate to the context

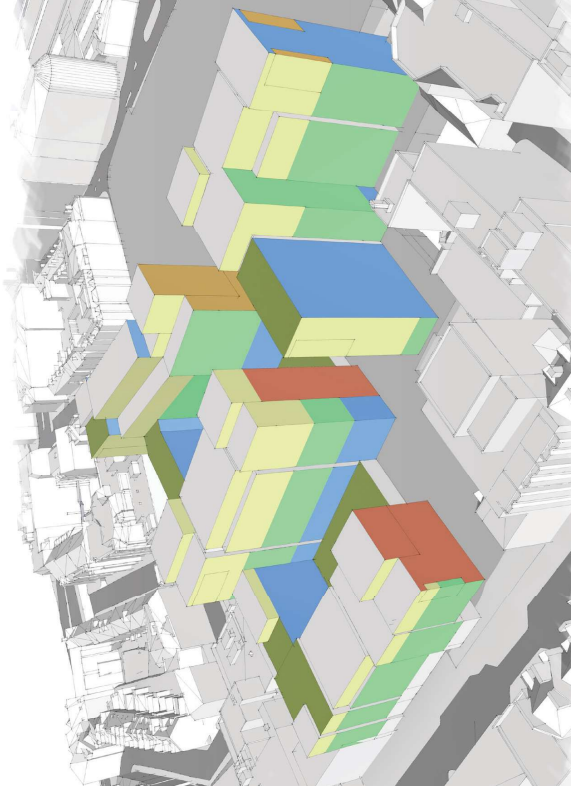
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3.17 FACADE ORGANISATION & DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The façades of each elevation will be organised to:

- Reflect how the residential units behind have been stacked to deliver well-organised, efficient and elegant plans and elevations.
- Express amenity spaces differently from residential units.
- Maximise the quality of daylight and sunlight reaching each apartment. Window sizes vary from top to bottom and in relation to orientation.
- Reflect the specific circumstance of each apartment in relation to the buildings' orientation and aspect including: direction, visibility of streets, courtyards, skyline, longer distant views, etc.
- Maximise the number of balconies including Juliet balconies.

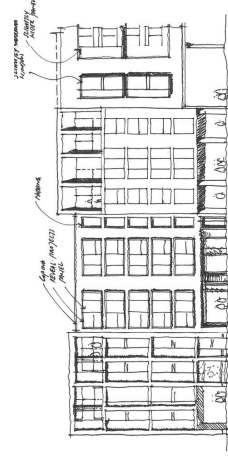
The design synthesises the various organisational strategies and design objectives into a coherent architectural strategy for each of the buildings. This strategy formed the basis for further exploration of opportunities to express interest, variety and delight through the refinement of detail and articulation.



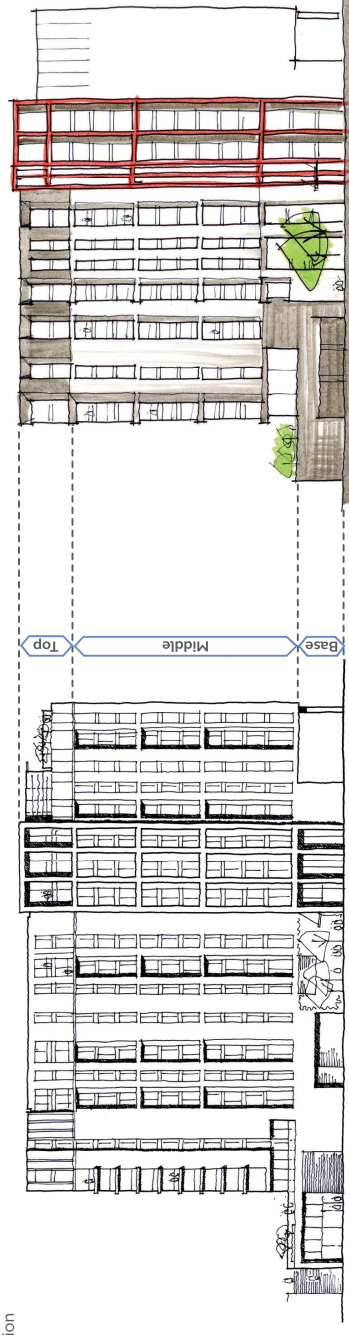
Study of the different conditions within the building which can be reflected in the organisation of windows, finished and details. Yellow highlights south facing façades with long distant views; light green south-facing façades with more constrained views; etc. Each condition suggests different approaches to fenestration



Early study of how new solid and void could be organised



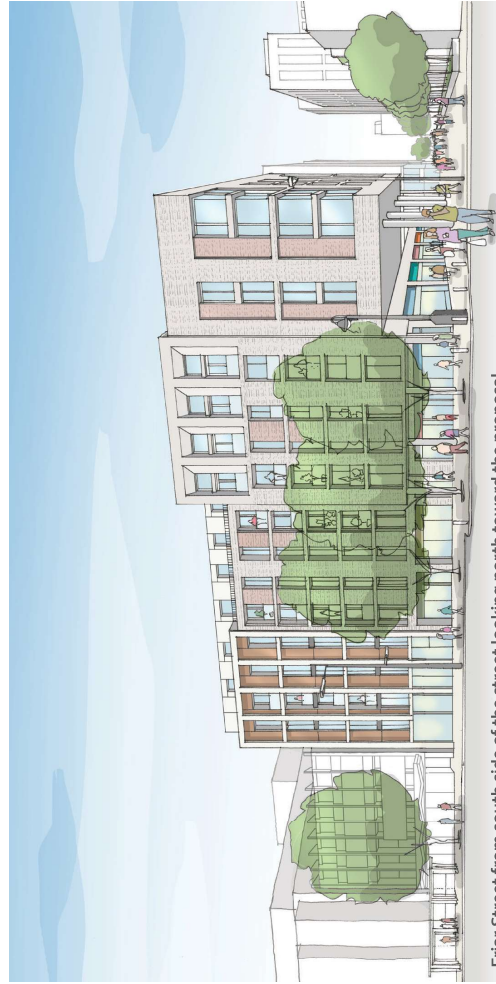
Study of the Friar Street elevation and opportunities for articulation



Study of Plot E to Garrard Street showing base, middle and top

Sketch reflecting stacked internal organisation and emerging ideas for use of colour and framing of windows

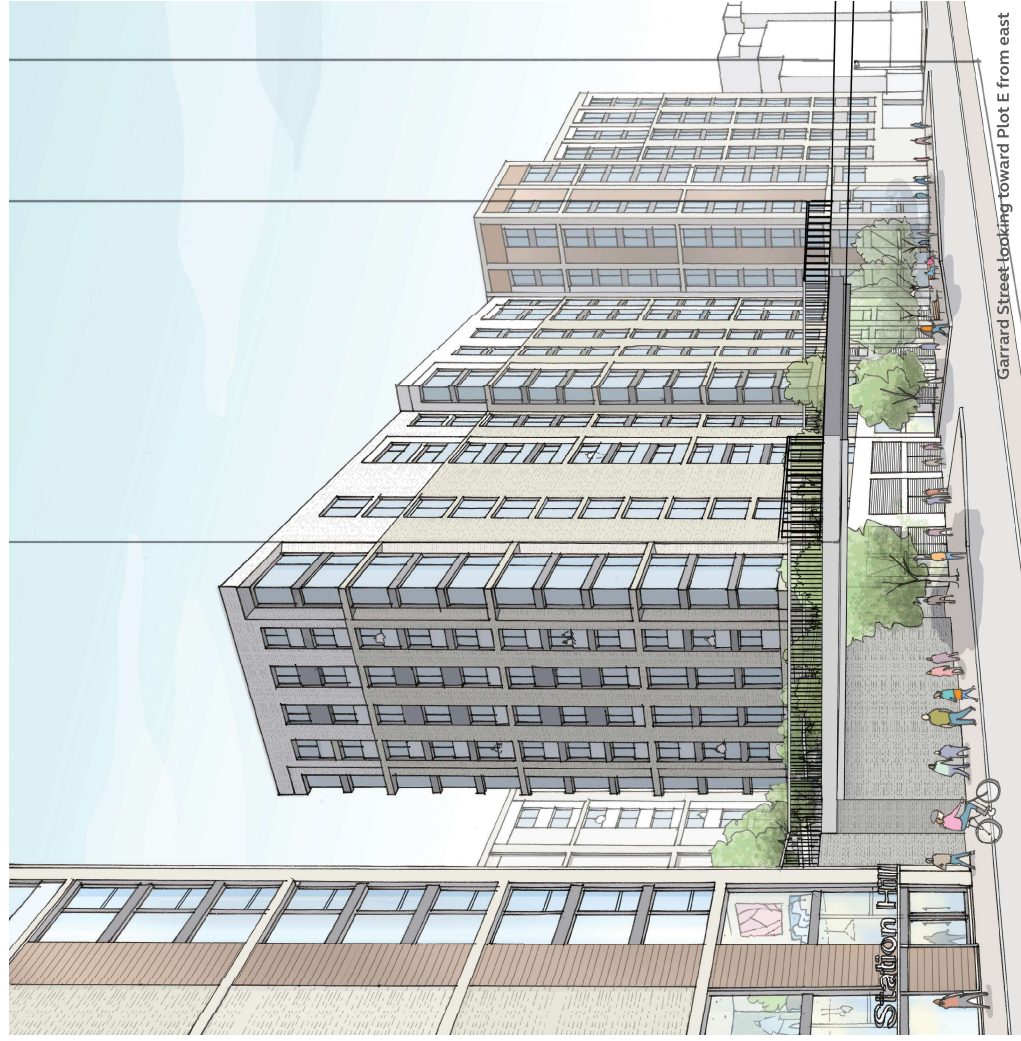
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Friars Street from south side of the street looking north toward the proposal



Friars Walk looking south



Garrard Street looking toward Plot E from east