

Current condition of the building

The site is occupied by a single building of conjoined blocks at various heights, straddling a storey height level change between Market Place and Abbey Square.

The key issues with the existing building is as follows:

- Dated façade treatments - an unsympathetic appearance given the Site's sensitive heritage setting
- No clear entrance to existing building - a confusing and unattractive arrival experience for visitors to the building
- No building identity as a prime location in Reading Centre - within its location the building represents a major under utilised asset
- Lacking connection to public square - a poor visual presence on the street and unwelcoming outward appearance
- Inefficient massing configuration - the complex changes in floor levels across the site mean the spaces inside are not well integrated
- Poor aspect and inactive frontage facing Abbey Square
- Blank concrete wall facing Abbey Square is an unattractive aspect and missed opportunity for more engaging and active frontage to the street

Facing Market Place, the west block (01 below) presents ground plus 3-storeys to the street, with a set back top floor and roof terrace on the southern part of the block. A series of concrete columns support an overhang of the upper floors over the Market Place pavement.

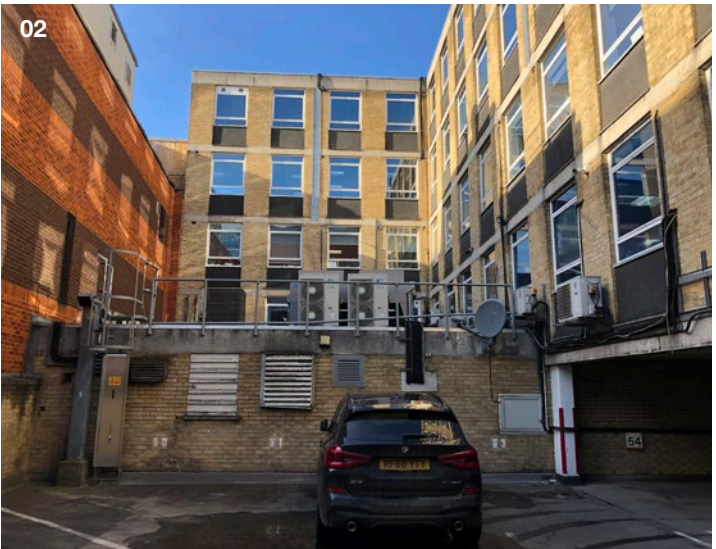
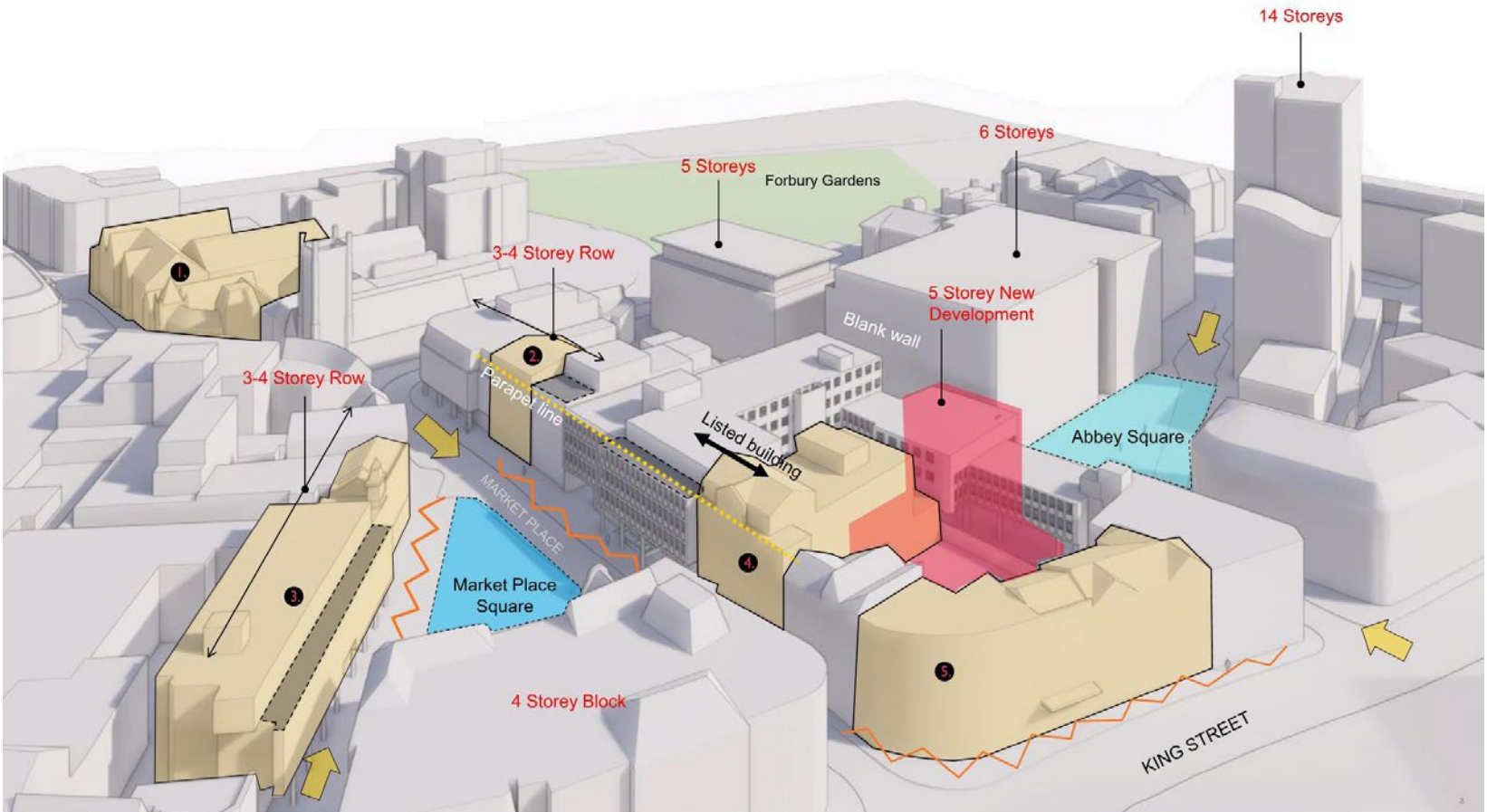
On Abbey Square, to the rear, the east block presents a height of ground plus 5-storeys with a ground plus 2-storey element at the southern end (03 below).

There is a connecting block between the west and east blocks which includes a single-storey plant room above the office levels (02 below).

The building was constructed in the 1960's in a brutalist architectural style incorporating a concrete façade on Market Place (see p.15). An active ground floor frontage includes a retail store and a dental practice, separated by the main office entrance which is recessed.

The remaining façade elevations revert to a contrasting simple brickwork with punched windows that sit in floor to ceiling height bays.

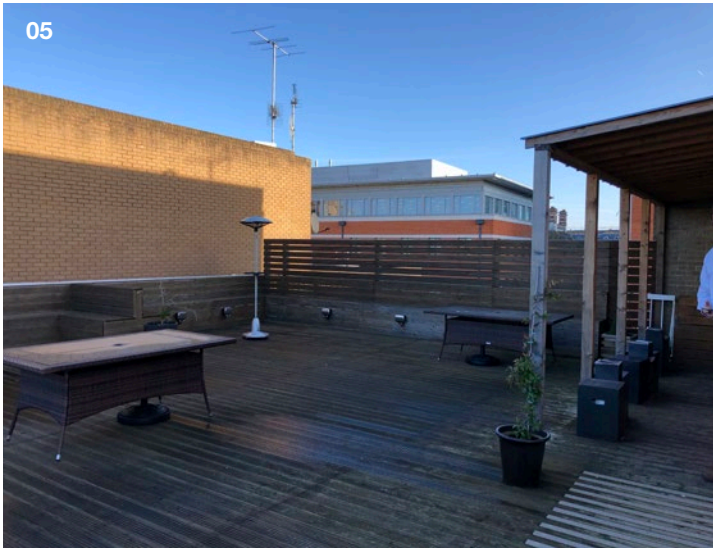
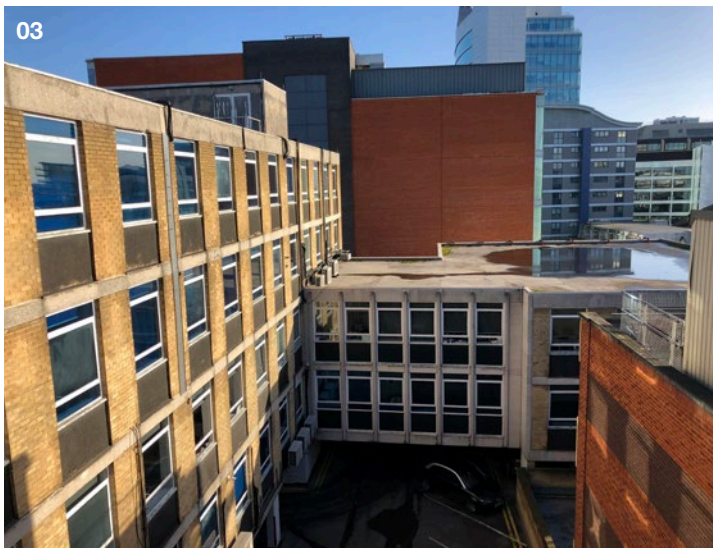
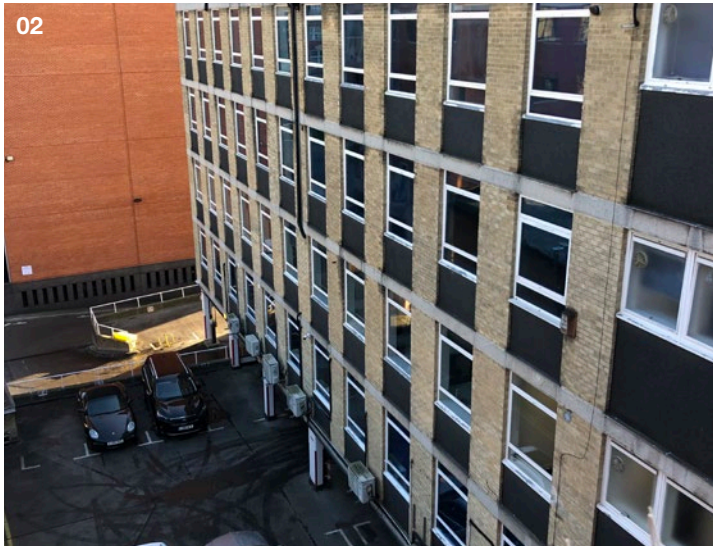
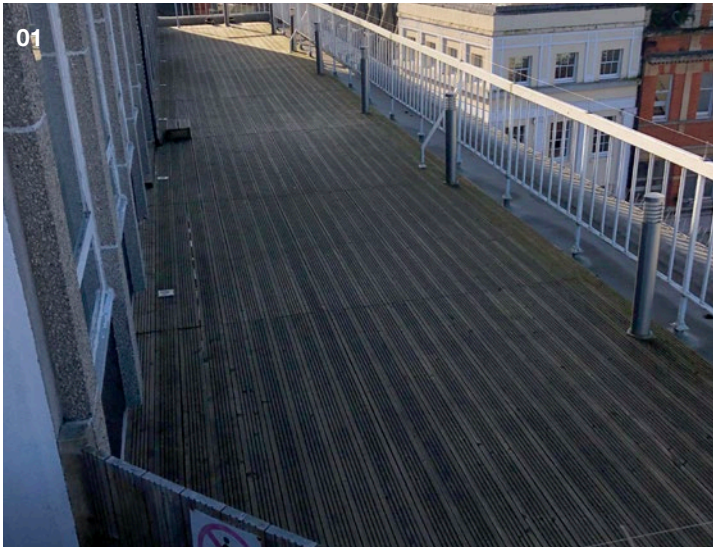
Overall, the condition of the building is poor to fair, with its concrete facade deteriorating with spalling concrete and exposed reinforcement (see 04). Brick work remains in reasonable condition.



A feature of the existing building is the open terraces at roof level (01, 05 and 06, right). They offer attractive spaces with panoramic views across the town centre.

Within the heart of the Site there is a parking deck as well as roof mounted building plant above ground floor uses (see 02 and 04).

As a combination of architectural elements, the existing building presents a disjointed collection of forms and uncoordinated overall appearance.



2.3 The design brief

The objective of the proposed works is to transform the office accommodation in the building helping it meet current Building Regulations and contemporary best practice standards in terms of internal environment quality and ancillary facilities. This is required to re-let the space and help ensure a long term sustainable economic use of the building.

The operational brief

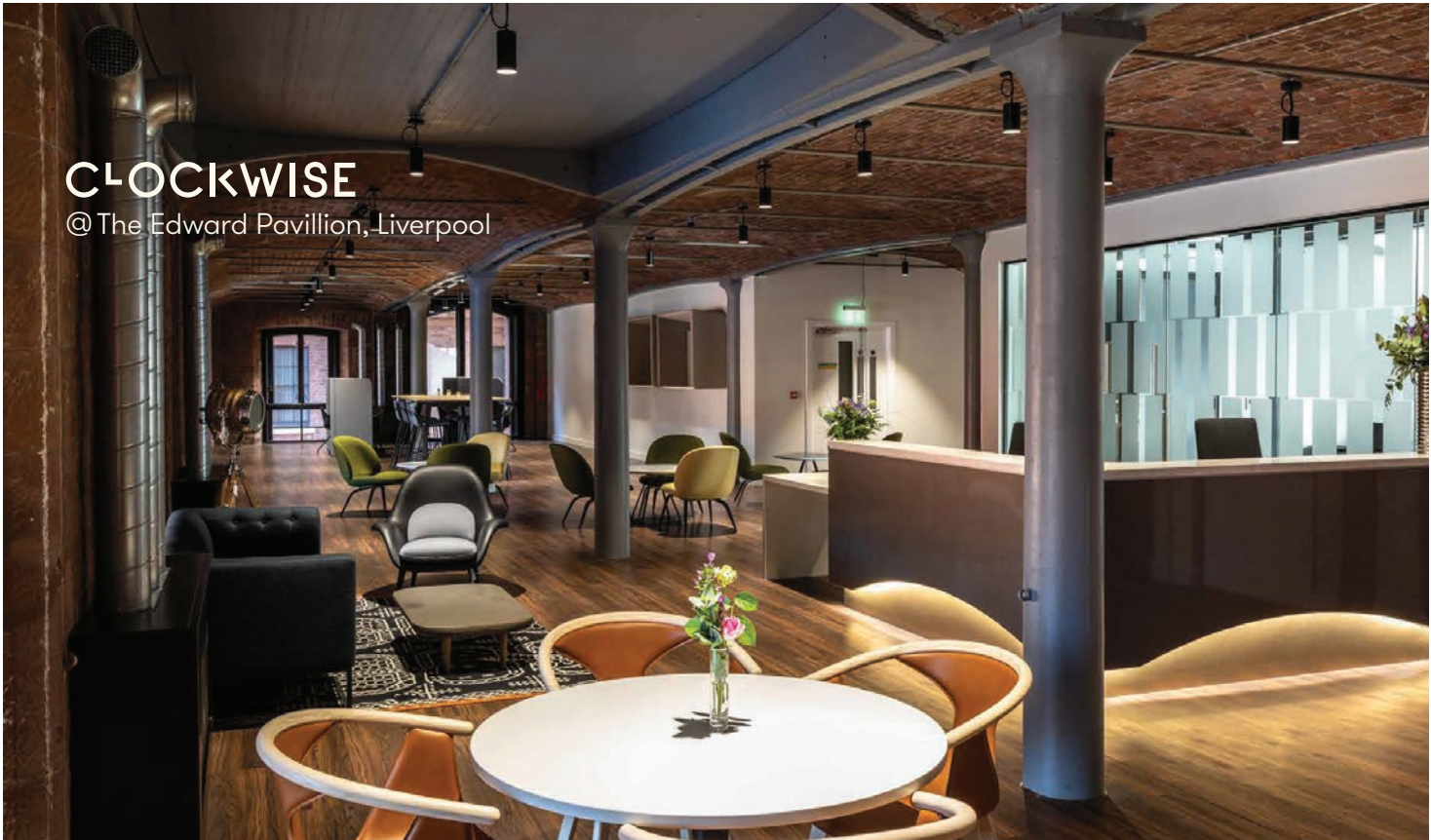
The applicant, Castleforge Partners, is a UK real estate investor that specialises in the refurbishment and repositioning of buildings across a variety of sectors and geographies.

Clockwise is the co working brand and serviced office platform that has been built up by Castleforge. It is a response to the fact it has become increasingly clear that, in order to flourish, modern businesses require the ability to expand and contract in the same location saving them cost, time and disruption to their operation rather than being tied into long and onerous traditional leases.

Clockwise provides well designed contemporary offices, workspaces and meeting spaces in convenient, city centre locations. The business aims to provide a mix of flexible workspace solutions that target predominantly local, small and growing businesses rather than larger more corporate occupiers. It is precisely these smaller developing businesses that need the benefits that flexible occupation offers, and are increasingly dependent on this to ensure their business grows and thrives.

Clockwise is expanding throughout the UK with sites open in major regional cities across a diverse range of buildings from UNESCO heritage sites to modern office properties. The focus in on measured, rational and sustainable growth, with existing operational sites in Glasgow, Belfast, Edinburgh and Liverpool with a number of further openings scheduled in carefully selected locations throughout the UK.

To meet the operational brief, the Market Place building must provide fully fitted office accommodation and come with furniture provided so a customer can walk in, plug in their laptop, and start working at their own allocated desk in an open plan communal, collaborative and buzzy environment.



Right: Examples of existing Clockwise workspaces in Liverpool (top) and Edinburgh (bottom)

Flexibility of space is key to delivering something that is appealing and appropriate for small businesses but also practical and efficient as workspace. By creating this mix of spaces and varying sizes of office, the brief is for the building to become embedded in the local business community, contribute to its development and be part of its success.

The design must meet the space needs of a small one-person business, offer that person a single dedicated desk, then retain them as tenants as the business grows within Reading with flexible occupier options.

Business support is a key part of this office environment; organising networking events to foster a cohesive business community that is creative and inclusive. Encouraging the development of a culture that is entrepreneurial, collaborative and supportive is a core objective for the project.

A bespoke design approach is adopted for each and every building in order to establish its own character and identity within its host town or city, with a design team that is hand-picked.

Client requirements

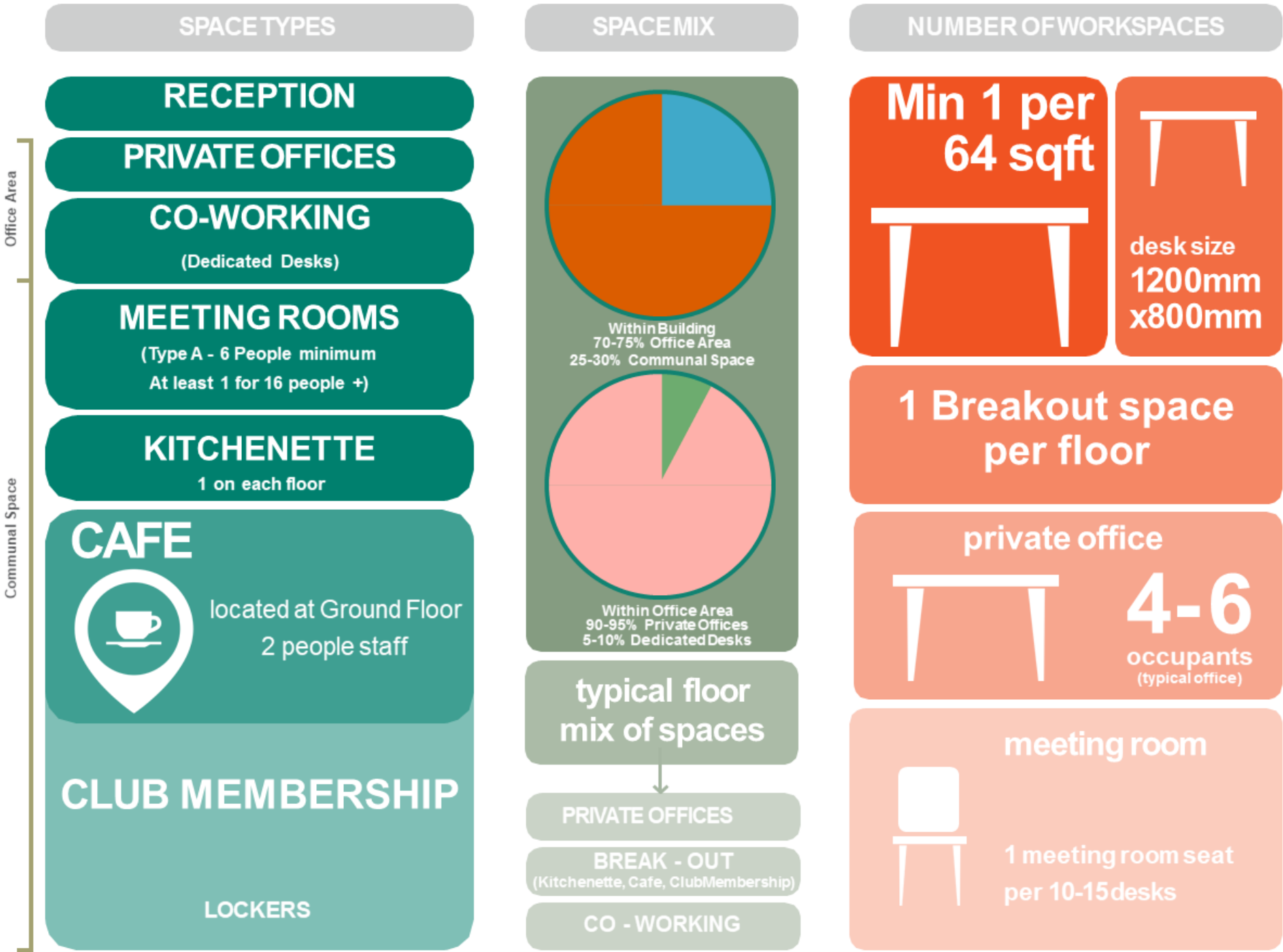
The arrangement and format of the workspaces are outdated and not attractive to potential occupiers. The opportunity exists to radically improve the working environment through refurbishment of the building.

The diagram on the right gives an overview of the target space requirements for a Clockwise facility operating from within the modified building.

The design strategy is to:

- provide a sustainable, community focused new business hub for the town with a mix of small private office spaces for business between 2 and 14 people, allowing occupiers to grow their space as their business expand
- manage the overall design aesthetic and explore ways in which the character and history of the setting can be better protected and enhanced by retaining the existing structure
- explore scope for additions to increase the amount of usable workspace within a more integrated Site circulation strategy to provide 900 desk spaces within a Cat A office fit-out
- allow space for a dedicated desk offer allowing individuals often self employed workers to occupy their own allocated desk in an open plan communal, collaborative and buzzy environment
- provide a club area that includes a high quality café with breakout seating where occupiers can drop in to hot desk, relax, meet new people or swap ideas
- explore the distribution of uses across the Site and the potential connections to street
- review the access needs of the current Site and adopt a strategy that encourages more sustainable forms of travel to and from the building
- provide a mixed, user controlled ventilation system - review heating, cooling and lighting installations and renewing outdated existing building plant where necessary
- renew building cores, install new lifts and washrooms and reconfigure existing spaces to achieve provision ratios that meet BCO standards

The proposals, and in particular, the Clockwise offer, should align with the Council’s strategic aims for Reading Town Centre and help to achieve two of the Council’s primary economic objectives to provide an increase in office floor space (Local Plan Policy EM1) and provide a range of types and sizes of employment space, including for start up and grow-on space (Policy EM4).



2.4 Planning policy context

The design approach and brief have been led by a thorough site analysis and informed by an appraisal of the current planning policy context. This application has been prepared and submitted in light of pre-application discussions with Reading Borough Council and relevant engagement with stakeholders. Reflecting on comments during the pre-application process, the applicant has altered the design of the scheme to address comments received.

A full account of these discussions is included within the Planning Statement that accompanies this planning application. A summary of the key planning issues and relevant policy as they affect the design and access proposals is included here.

The Development Plan comprises the recently adopted Local Plan (November 2019). On the adopted Proposals Map (November 2019), the Site is allocated as a ‘Site for Development’ (residential/office development with retail uses at ground floor) (Policy CR14e). It is also located within the: - Primary Shopping Area - Office Core - Central Core (Policy CR1);and - Proposed designated primary frontage (Policy CR7).

Of particular relevance to the proposals is Policy CR14e, which relates to the Site specifically. It states:

‘Development for retail and related uses on ground floor with residential and/or offices on upper floors, designed to enhance contribution of site to Conservation Area. Possible pedestrian link between Market Place and Forbury Square/Abbey Square. Rear servicing and preservation of historic building line.

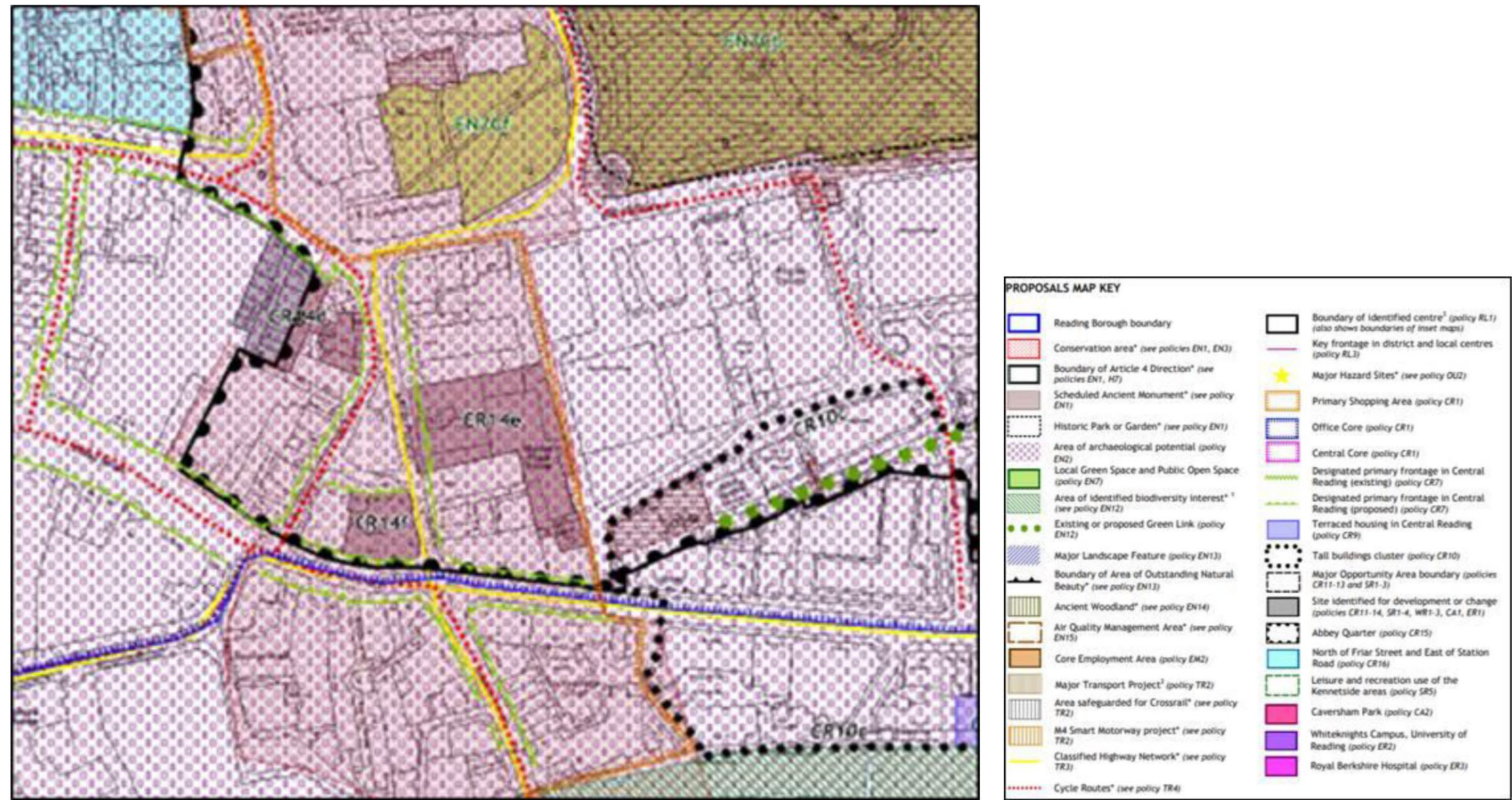
Development should:

- Enhance the Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent listed buildings;
- Reflect the prevailing height of Market Place;
- Take account of the high potential for archaeological significance;
- Address noise impacts on residential use; and
- Address air quality impacts on residential use.
- Site size: 0.29 ha 46-70 dwellings plus ground floor town centre uses’

The proposals have been developed taking a positive and collaborative approach, designed to address the inherent constraints and opportunities presented by the site and its surroundings and in response to adopted policies contained within it the Development Plan.

It is a previously developed site with a high level of accessibility and within a main opportunity area for the town centre. The proposals have been robustly justified within the planning application content and suite of technical studies, none of which have identified adverse impacts.

Overall, the application accords with the adopted Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework, which support a presumption in favour of sustainable development.



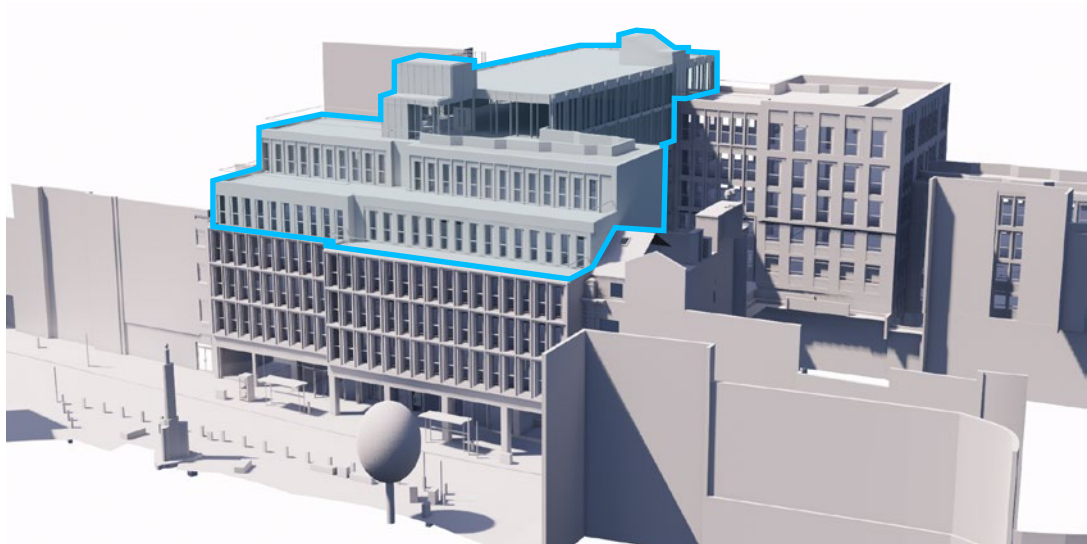
Extract from Reading's Local Plan proposals map

Pre-application discussions with the Council

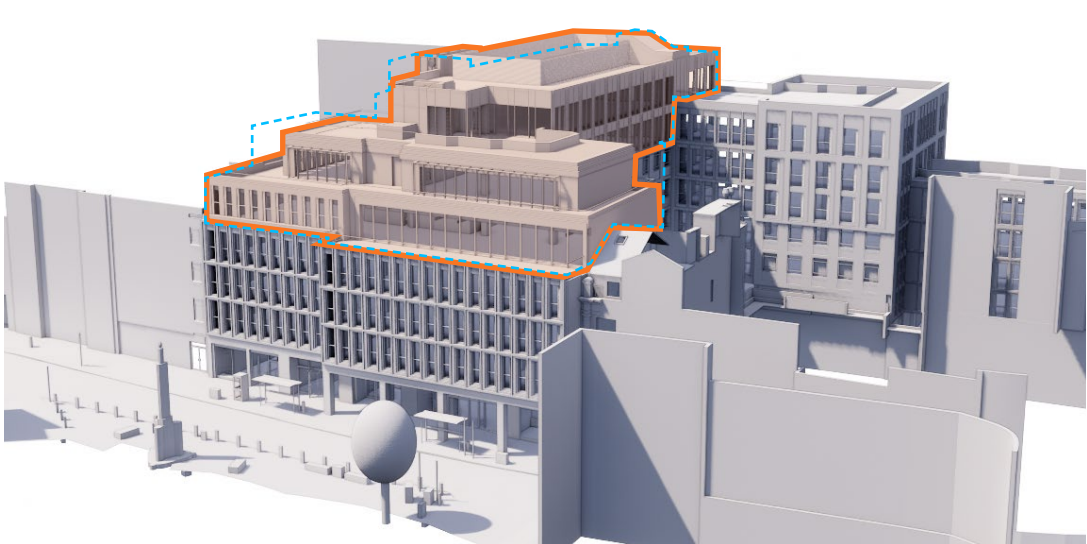
A pre- application advice meeting was held on 14th May 2020 followed by a presentation to the local Design Review Panel (DRP).

In summary, the advice given was largely supportive of the adopted design approach and analysis with further comments focused on heritage, the proposals within the conservation area setting, provision of information for the planning application and how elements of fine detail might be represented. These related to:

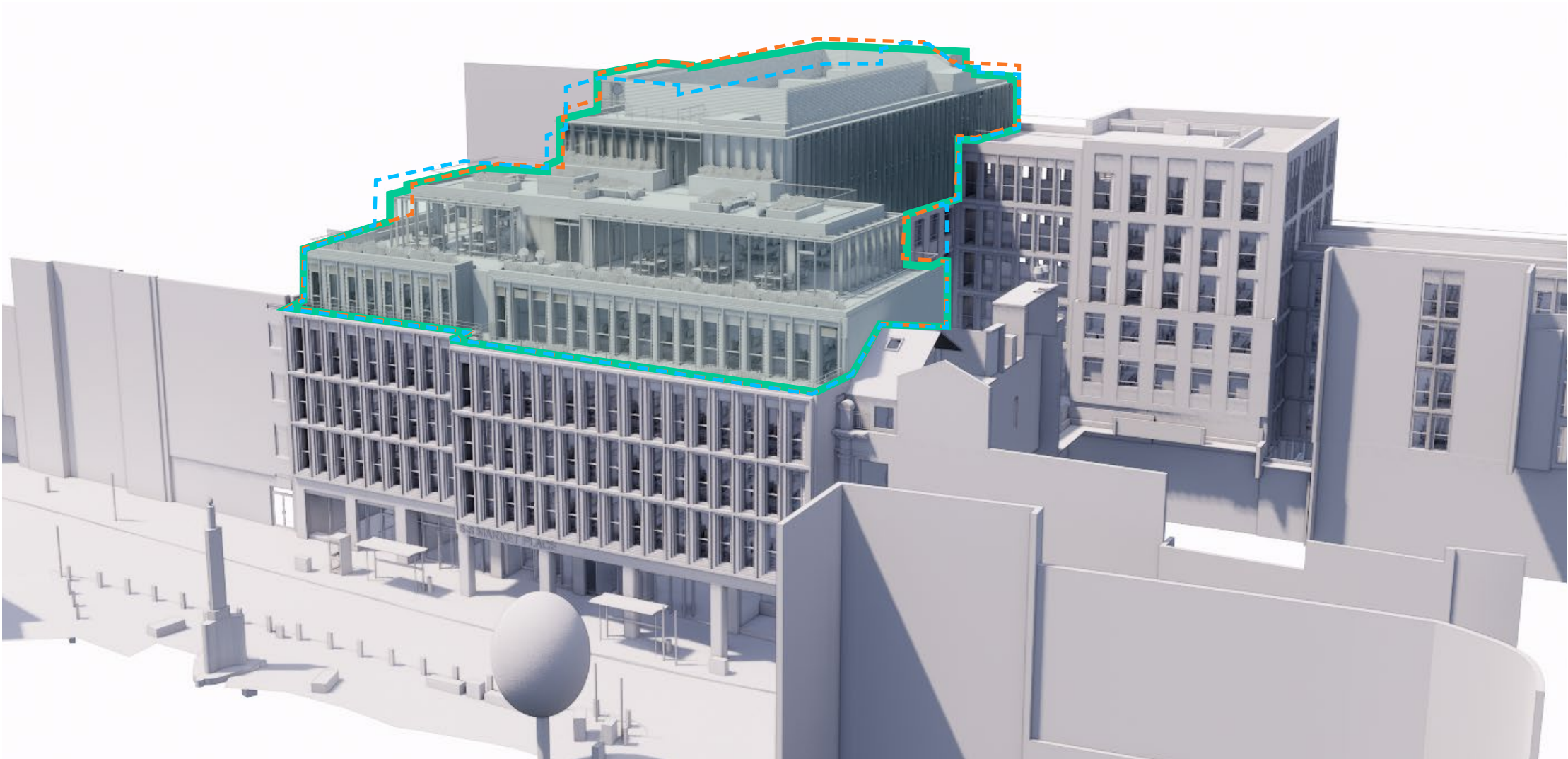
- 1) The visible nature of the proposed 4th floor infill & 5th floor from Market Place - Key views from Market Place have subsequently been produced, assessed addressed and discussed with the DRP demonstrating the minimal visual impact of the proposals as seen from Market Place
- 2) The visibility of the 6th floor addition in the centre of the site and its impact on the conservation area setting - Assessed in key views and addressed within the heritage statement that accompanies the planning application
- 3) Proximity of the additional 3 storey block at the rear (Abbey Square frontage) and its relationship with the rear of the listed building to the south of the Site - This block has been stepped back from the party wall line by approximately 1500mm to allow maintenance access



Original Proposal



Pre Application Feedback



DRP Feedback & New Proposal

Right: 3D model of the proposals highlighting the areas of change to the initial design through the process of dialogue with Reading District Council planners and the Design Review Panel

2.5 Summary of Site constraints & opportunities

The appraisal of the site and its context has helped identify a series of opportunities and constraints for the Site in meeting our development brief. Discussions with the Council and Design Review Panel have also informed our understanding and proposed design approach.

A summary of the Site constraints and opportunities is described here and illustrated on the opposite page, with a series of recommendations for the design strategy to consider.

Landform, landscape & town structure

The Site's location within the town centre is part of the historic core and on sloping ground near the river. This natural underlying landform is distinctive and presents challenges for the existing building which are inherited. The level difference across the site is a constraint to integration for the uses on the Site and connection between basement, ground and upper floors. Circulation needs to be considered in three dimensions.

Development pattern & building form

The urban structure surrounding the site is mixed, but within this context is the most recognisably medieval part of the town centre's streets and spaces. In this unique position, the location benefits from the historic gathering space of Market Place.

In order to knit regeneration of the Site back into the town centre, the proposals will need to sit harmoniously within this network of streets, maintain and support their continued prosperity and investigate ways in which the re-use of the site can contribute.

Movement & legibility

Wider issues of connection could be addressed by re-animating streets and forging new connections, introducing variety and an element of permeability.

Land use pattern

In terms of use mix, it will be important to retain a retail edge to the site on its western frontage (Market Place) and reanimate the eastern frontage to protect the commercial character of those streets.

There would be scope for diversifying within the building and some of the previously more private aspects of its office use could be expressed on the outside of the building to help reinforce and animate spaces and streets around the Site.

Conservation Area setting

The Site location requires a development that builds on the positive aspects of urban form that remain directly adjacent to it. Its proximity to attractive and characterful parts of the town is a huge asset but it serves to emphasise the importance of unifying a disparate set of elements that are unsympathetic to overall historic character.

The varied type and character of buildings in the historic context do not offer a strong architectural template or typology to follow. The urban design cues from context are more strongly heritage driven and development needs to protect and enhance the key characteristics that define Reading today.

This would suggest that the protection of the urban fabric and street frontages will be important to get right, more intensity and activity at the heart of the Site and efforts to reflect a new aesthetic more in-tune with the finer grain traditional appearance of historic buildings around it.

Townscape character & quality

A variety of architectural styles, building types, ages, layouts, plot widths, detailing and materials exist within streets surrounding the Site. From our study of the heritage assets in the vicinity and the character of the Conservation Area, we understand that building variety is a key aspect explaining heritage significance too.

Bearing in mind the current condition of the Site and its negative impact upon its setting, there are significant opportunities to deliver transformational benefits to enhance the local townscape context. Key viewpoints from surrounding streets can be used to consider how best to exploit these.



FORBURY GARDENS

Opportunity for secondary access to Forbury Gardens

Opportunities for increased mass

ABBEY SQUARE

Key views from surroundings

Break down the facade horizontality to reflect historic grain of surroundings

Enhanced active street frontage

Enhance conservation area with new facade

Retained & improved access to Market Place

Key views from surroundings

Key views from surroundings

BUTTER MARKET

BROAD STREET

KINGS ROAD

03 Design proposals

3.1 Design approach

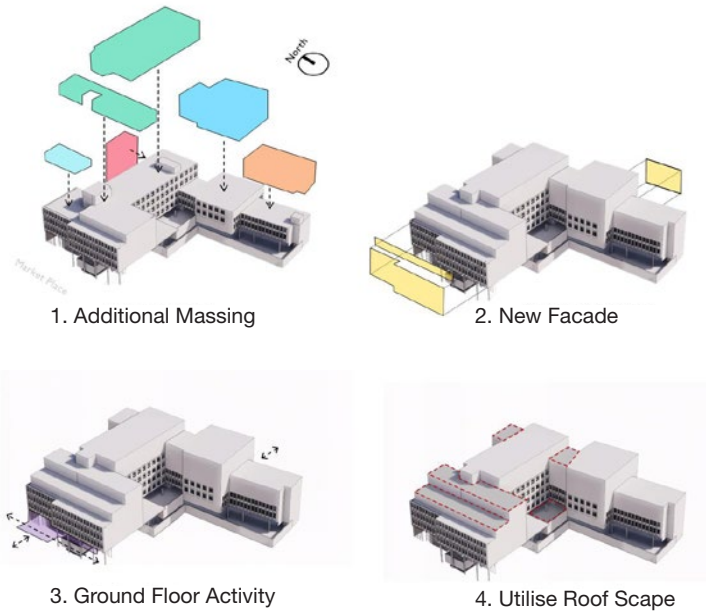
The primary purpose of the works is for a Cat A fit-out of the currently vacant building. A multi-discipline team has put together these proposals.

A summary of the design strategy:

- **Maximise flexibility in occupation** - adopt an approach that allows the buildings to be used by multiple occupiers to bring a flexible product to market
- **Revealing and reconnecting interior space** - strip back internal divisions that compartmentalise the spaces and introduce a balance between open-plan and cellular space depending on occupancy
- **Reconfigure circulation** - improve floor to floor ease of movement, reconnect the office floors with street level, animate the street with active and legible arrival points front and back
- **Review scope for more space** - identify areas of the existing building that are not contributing usable space, examine the building's contribution to the spaces around it and consider how adding to or removing existing elements might positively contribute
- **New aesthetic informed by history** - inspired by the history of the setting, find a suitable contemporary approach, within the simplicity and honesty of the original structure, to better relate to the public spaces around the building. Review any additions and alterations in reference to key views from its surroundings
- **Sympathetic palette of new materials** - choose new materials that are locally distinctive, letting the character of the area and its history be the foreground

The remainder of this section is devoted to a more detailed description of the design proposals, the proposed finishes and lastly of the technical aspects of services and other interventions.

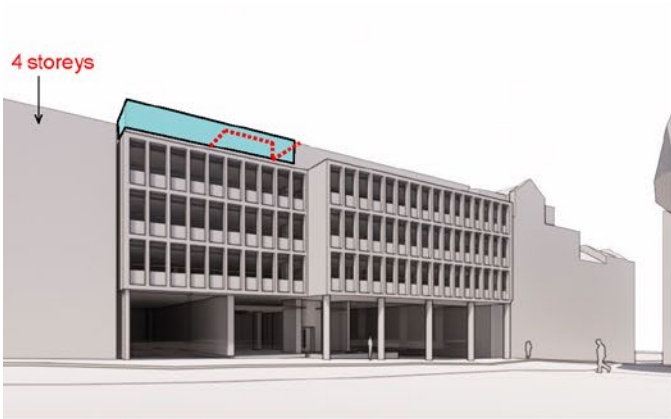
An appraisal of the proposals against relevant planning policies is included in the Planning Statement that accompanies the planning application.



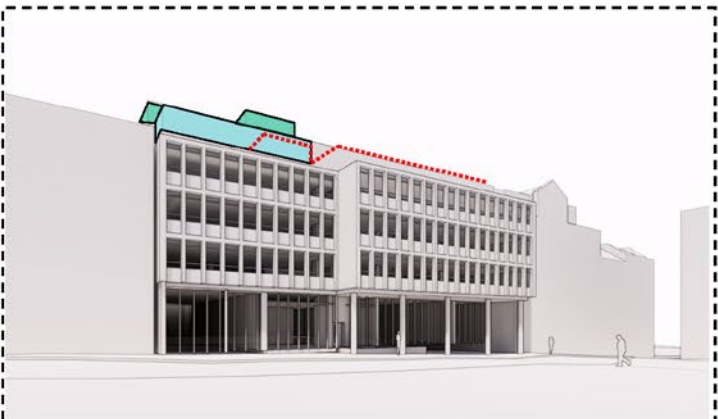
Design Approach Summary



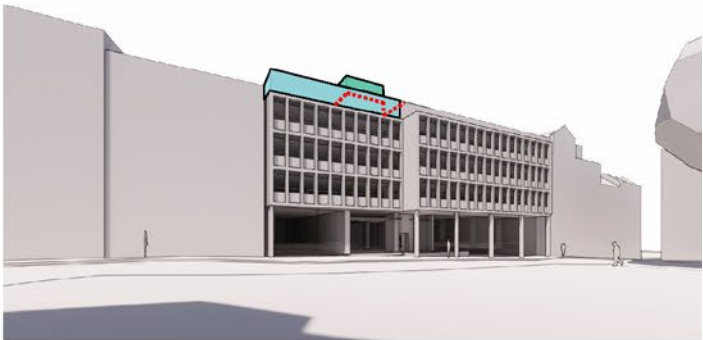
Proposed Massing



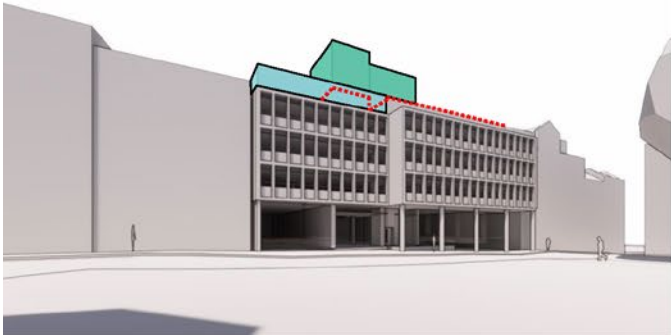
Massing Study 1



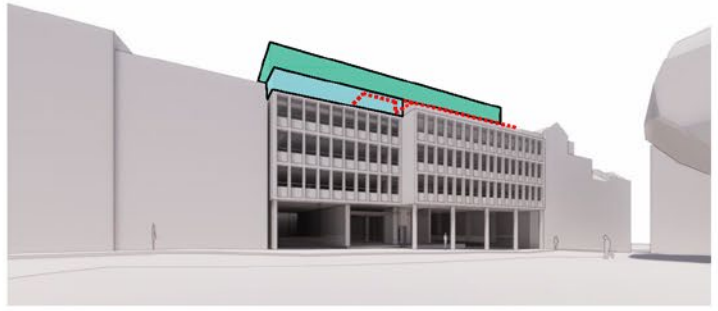
Massing Study 2



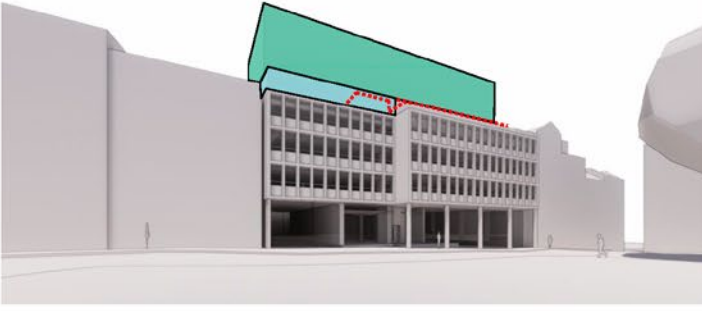
Massing Study 3



Massing Study 4

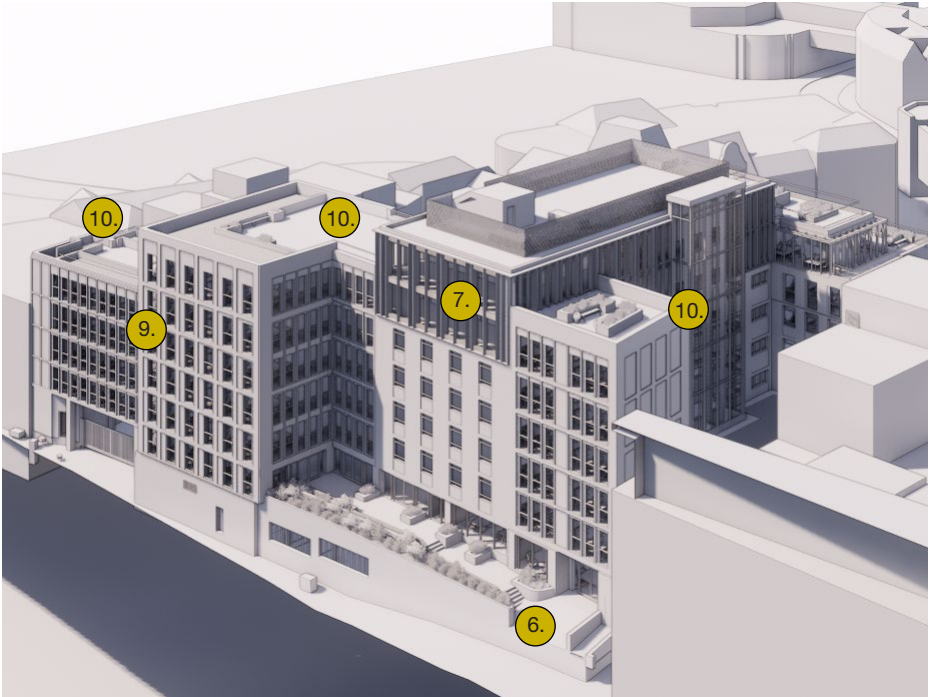


Massing Study 5



Massing Study 6

Right: Summary of the key elements of the proposed design approach and the development studies undertaken by the design team
Opposite page: Summary of the final design



1) At ground level, fronting Market Place, the existing dentist surgery and Tesco store to be retained whilst improving the office reception presence on the street

2) New architectural facade treatment bringing the different elements together in visual terms

3) 1/2 storey addition set back from market place at 4th and 5th floor level over the northern part of the Market Place frontage, stepped back from the street

4) The new lift core located centrally within the plan to create a central circulation route and animate the facade

5) A two storey addition to the Market Place block facing the inner courtyard, further stepped back from the Market Place frontage

6) Creation of a more prominent secondary entrance on the eastern elevation (rear) including the conversion of existing car parking at ground level to office space (access to basement parking is retained)

7) Internal circulation within the building rationalised to accommodate a flexible workspace format, incorporating a new social hub space and installation of new lifts serving upper floors of the workspace

8) Existing outdoor courtyard in the centre of the site to be retained and landscaped with direct connection to the adjoining workspace communal areas

9) A part two and part three storey addition to the rear block and a new 'wing' containing 6 levels of accommodation to create a continuous integrated frontage on the eastern edge of the site

10) A network of landscaped roof terraces created to improve the amenity of the workplace

3.2 Layout - arrangement of uses

The Site is just over 0.25 hectares in size and occupied by a single building containing a mix of uses. Examples of the existing floorplans are shown below.

The limitations of the existing layout are evident, with a dominance at ground level by non-active frontage and the amount of space devoted to car parking and other ancillary uses, and on upper floors, the compartmentalisation of office space with poor internal circulation.

The existing uses are:

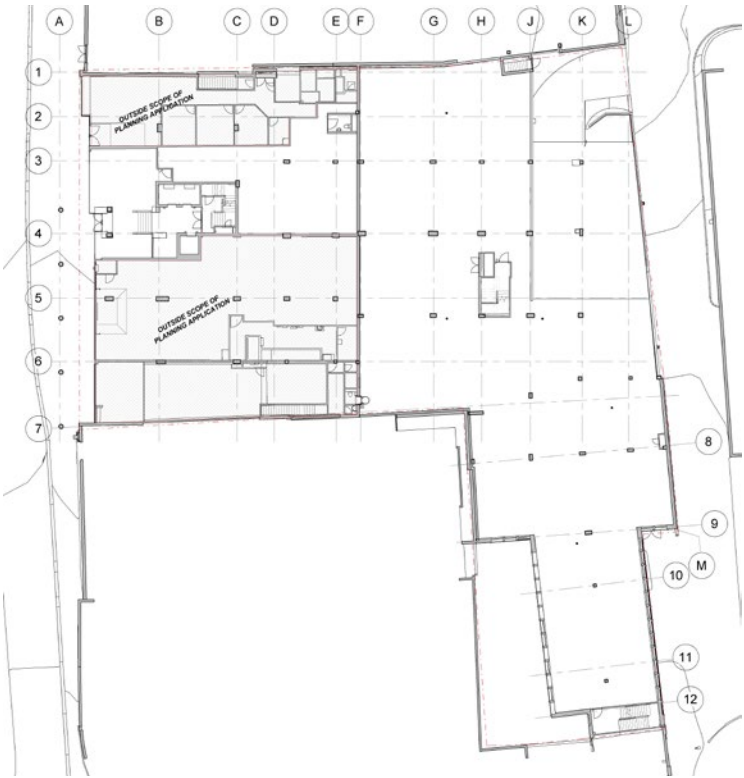
- Offices (B1) - occupying all floors, but with a footprint at ground level that is limited to the main entrance on Market Place, a secondary (service) entrance on Abbey Square and connecting block through the centre of the site
- Retail (A1) - a Tesco Metro store currently occupies the unit fronting Market place at street level to the south of the office entrance and reception. It remains in place as part of these proposals
- Dental Surgery (D1) - this occupies the Market Place frontage north of the office entrance and reception. It is retained under the proposals
- Car parking - a part undercroft and part basement car park is accessed from the Abbey Square frontage. The proposals result in the removal of 57 car parking spaces, with the space to be used for offices.

A schedule of existing and proposed uses is shown on the right.

The proposals will result in an overall increase in floorspace of approximately 2,700 sqm (GIA) resulting in a net increase in office floorspace of over 2,000 sqm.

Area Schedule																		
	Existing						Proposed Scheme						Additional Area					
	GEA		GIA		NIA		GEA		GIA		NIA		GEA		GIA		NIA	
	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft	sqm	sqft
Basement	152	1,636	82	883	47	506	319	3,434	234	2,519	120	1,292	167	1,798	152	1,636	73	786
Ground & Podium	304	3,272	284	3,057	161	1,733	1,478	15,909	1,398	15,048	962	10,355	1,174	12,637	1,114	11,991	801	8,622
First	1,749	18,826	1,641	17,664	1,274	13,713	1,891	20,355	1,736	18,686	1,371	14,757	142	1,528	95	1,023	97	1,044
Second	1,529	16,458	1,445	15,554	1,028	11,065	1,882	20,258	1,740	18,729	1,374	14,790	353	3,800	295	3,175	346	3,724
Third	1,153	12,411	1,098	11,819	965	10,387	1,871	20,139	1,729	18,611	1,367	14,714	718	7,729	631	6,792	402	4,327
Fourth	828	8,913	828	8,913	647	6,964	1,555	16,738	1,424	15,328	1,117	12,023	727	7,825	596	6,415	470	5,059
Fifth							1,332	14,338	1,226	13,197	943	10,150	1,332	14,338	1,226	13,197	943	10,150
Sixth							593	6,383	526	5,662	364	3,918	593	6,383	526	5,662	364	3,918
Seventh - Roof																		
Eighth																		
Ninth																		
Totals:	5,563	59,880	5,296	57,006	4,075	43,863	10,602	93,399	9,779	86,403	6,191	66,640	5,206	56,037	2,731	29,396	2,116	22,777

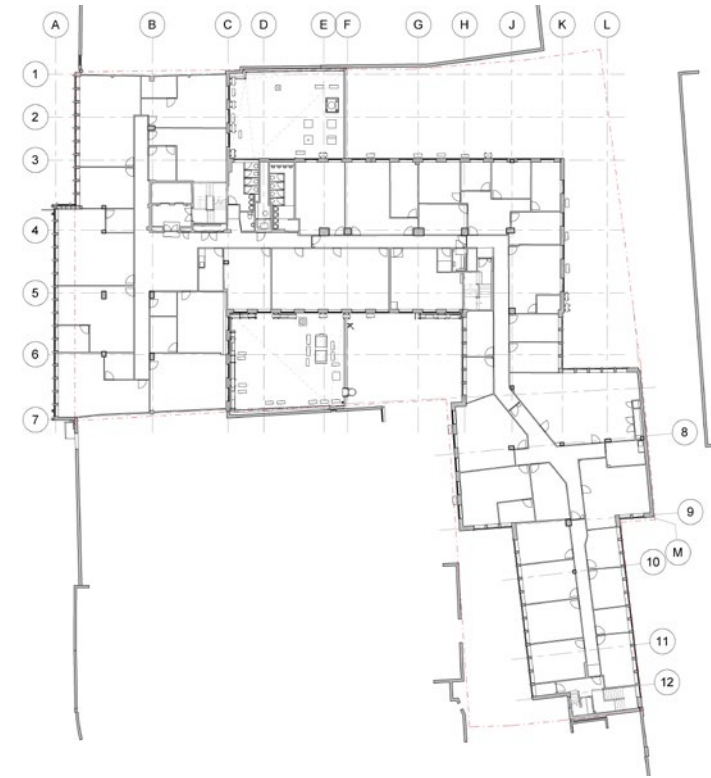
Podium level (existing ground in Market Place)



Basement level (existing ground in Abbey Square)



Existing office floor (Level 2)



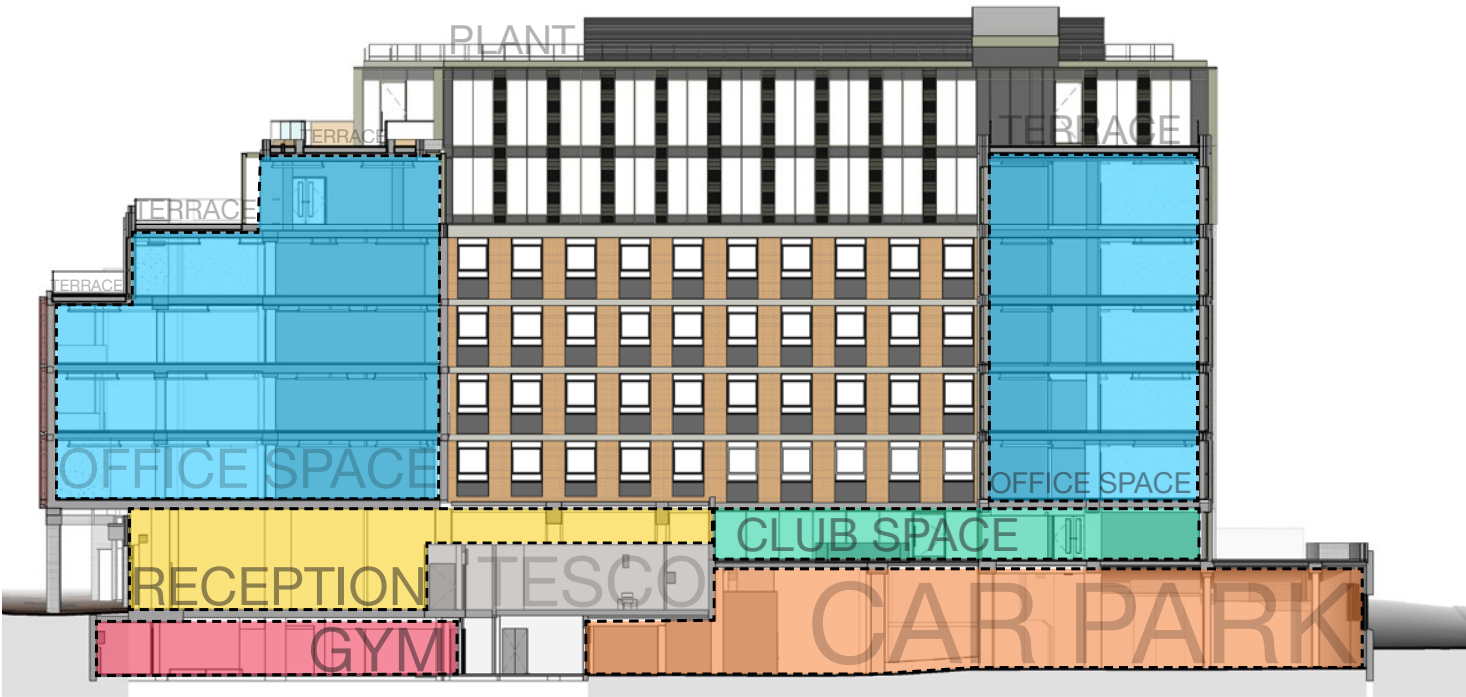
The amount and location of floorspace for retail and dentist surgery uses does not change, however the amount of ancillary space for car parking and other operational floorspace does.

The diagram on the right shows the relationship of uses at street level.

The office reception area becomes more prominent and links through a central hub space at the heart of the building to a secondary entrance connecting with Abbey Square.

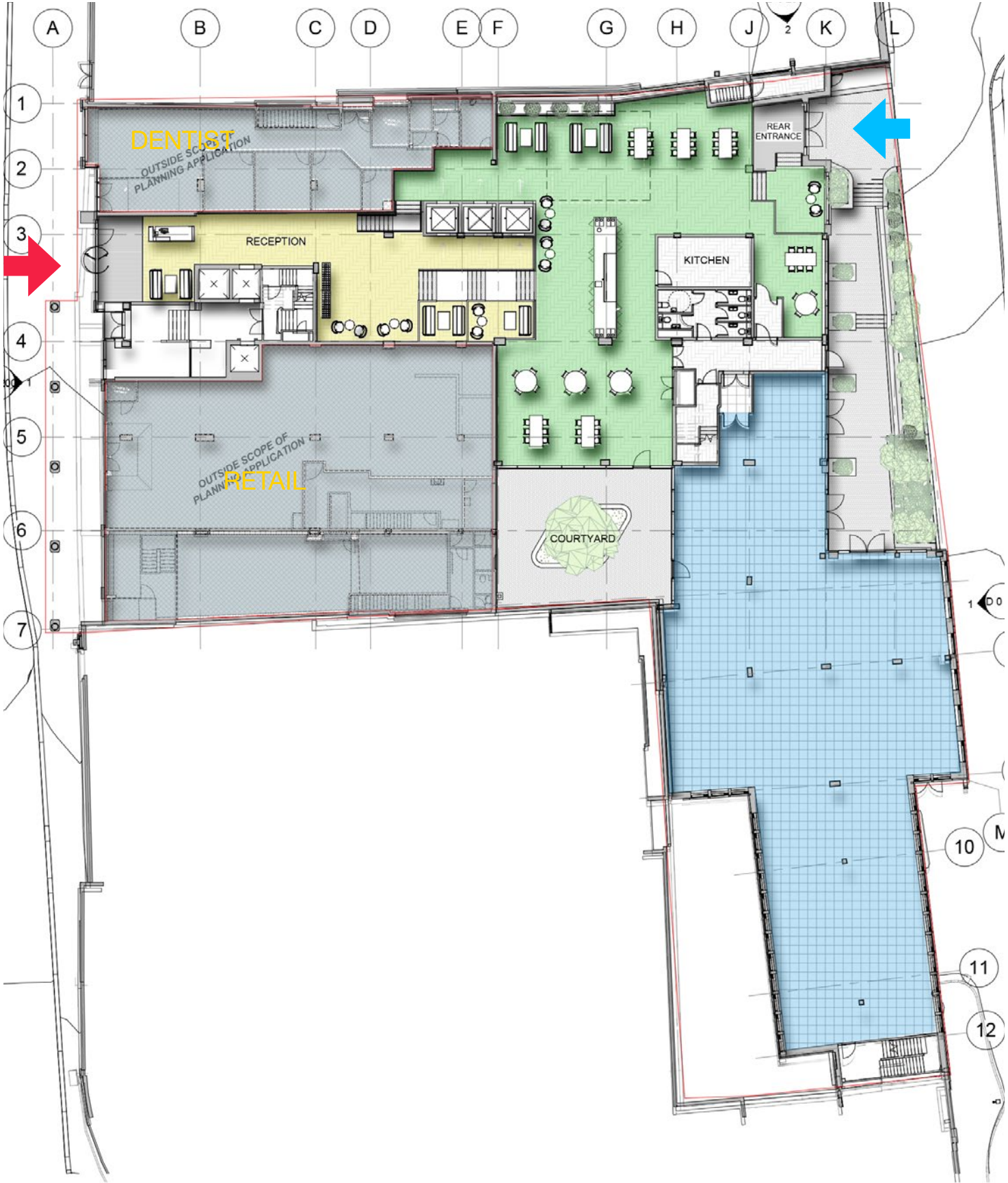
The current upper deck of car parking space is then occupied by offices, making a much larger presence at ground level for office space than currently exists.

The circulation strategy (see next section) then introduces vertical as well as horizontal connection between uses.



*This page, right: ground floor layout explaining the distribution of uses at street level
Above: vertical distribution of uses throughout the building shown in section*

- Office Space
- Building Core
- Reception
- Club Space



3.3 Layout - internal and external circulation

The design proposals for circulation are as follows:

- 1 - Orientation and active frontages** – the streets and spaces surrounding the Site will be animated in order to protect their function, vibrancy and commercial viability
- 2 - Building entrances, exits and communal spaces** – footfall is spread around the building perimeter to allow activity to provide its own passive surveillance and security
- 3 - Managing traffic** – the network of roads around the Site will be used as existing to maintain their function and pattern of use, to enhance or strengthen existing connections and manage the reduced vehicle traffic generated by the development in an environmentally sustainable way
- 4 - Amenity space within the development** – occupiers will be provided with a connection to natural spaces for their use, health and wellbeing. The existing outlook across the town, which is an attractive feature of the building currently, will be protected and enhanced
- 5 - Ensuring privacy and minimising general disturbance** – the development proposals are sited within an existing business community that enjoys amenities and levels of light, air quality, ambient noise and privacy that will be respected



Internal re-organisation of space

A new core will be installed within the existing building that provides added lift capacity. This enables a more efficient subdivision of space on upper floors, making it more compatible with a multi-user shared or cellular office environment.

The diagram on the right shows how this creates a central hub space, which will become the social and meeting place of the new business community.

Market Place connection

The reorganisation of internal circulation presents an opportunity for the building to have a better and more interactive relationship with the street.

The proposals will result in the office entrance becoming more prominent which allows the office workspace to have the social workspace hub to have a direct connection to the street. This creates a more pleasant welcome experience for visitors and provides a new more interactive visual relationship with the street from within the building.

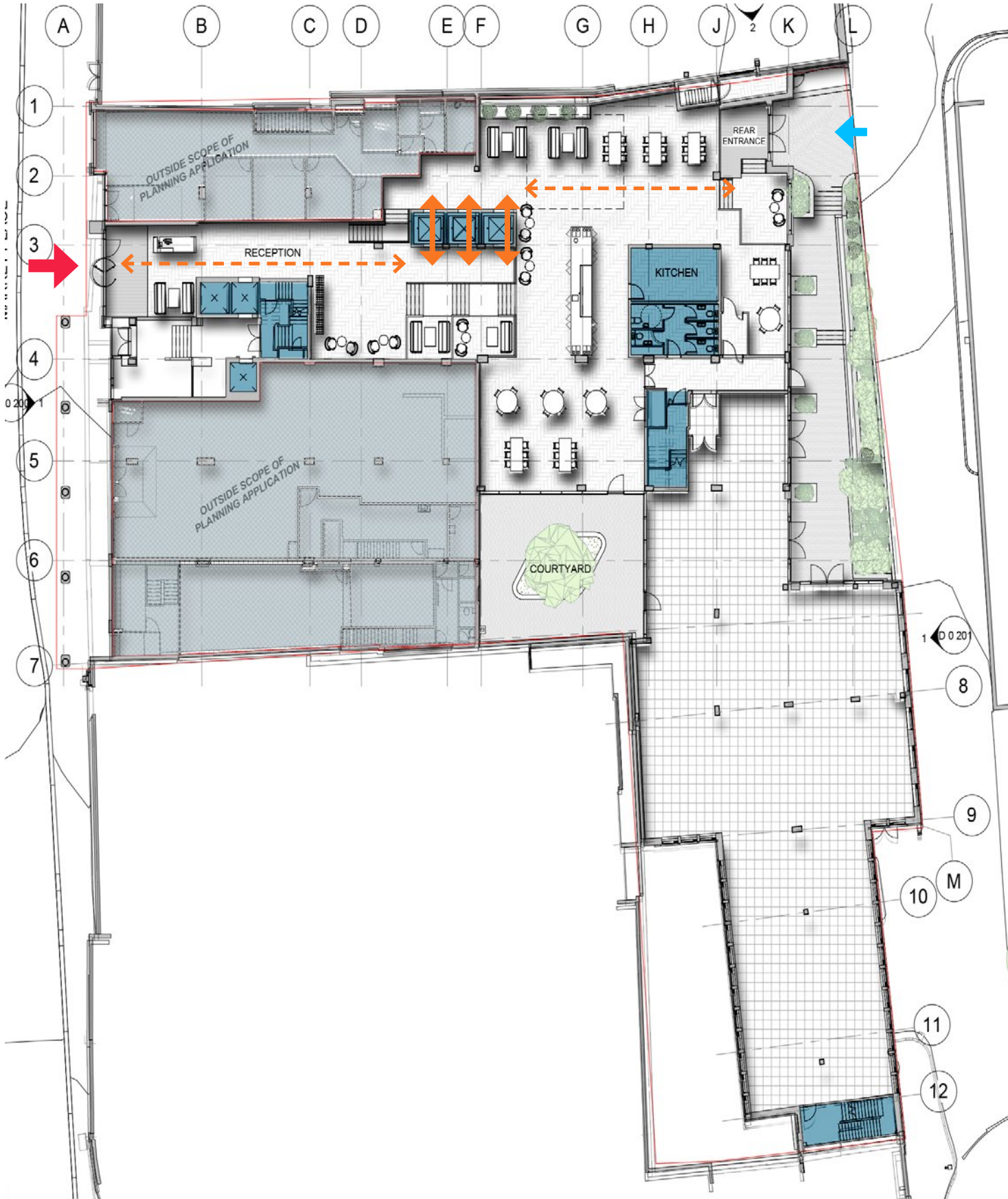
Abbey Square connection

At the entrance to the site from the east, the proposals tie in with the relatively new Abbey Square. The existing layout helps frame an open space to create a secondary but still high profile frontage.

Currently blighted as a rear access in status, the proposals will re-animate this frontage with additional height and a commercial presence facing the town's business district and public square.



*Far right: Internal re-organisation at ground level
Right: The building's presence on the street will be enhanced by the proposals, with clearer and more welcoming points of entry*



Basement floor

The basement floor will be reformatted and partly re-purposed to provide a gym (1) and new facilities for cyclists (2), that includes shower and changing facilities (4). The new lifts will extend down to this floor to serve them (3).

Car parking is retained at this level (5) as is the vehicle access to it (6). A new refuse collection point is incorporated near the existing vehicle entrance (7), along with 4 new electric car charging points.

Proposed Development

Retained Existing

Refuse Store



Typical upper floor

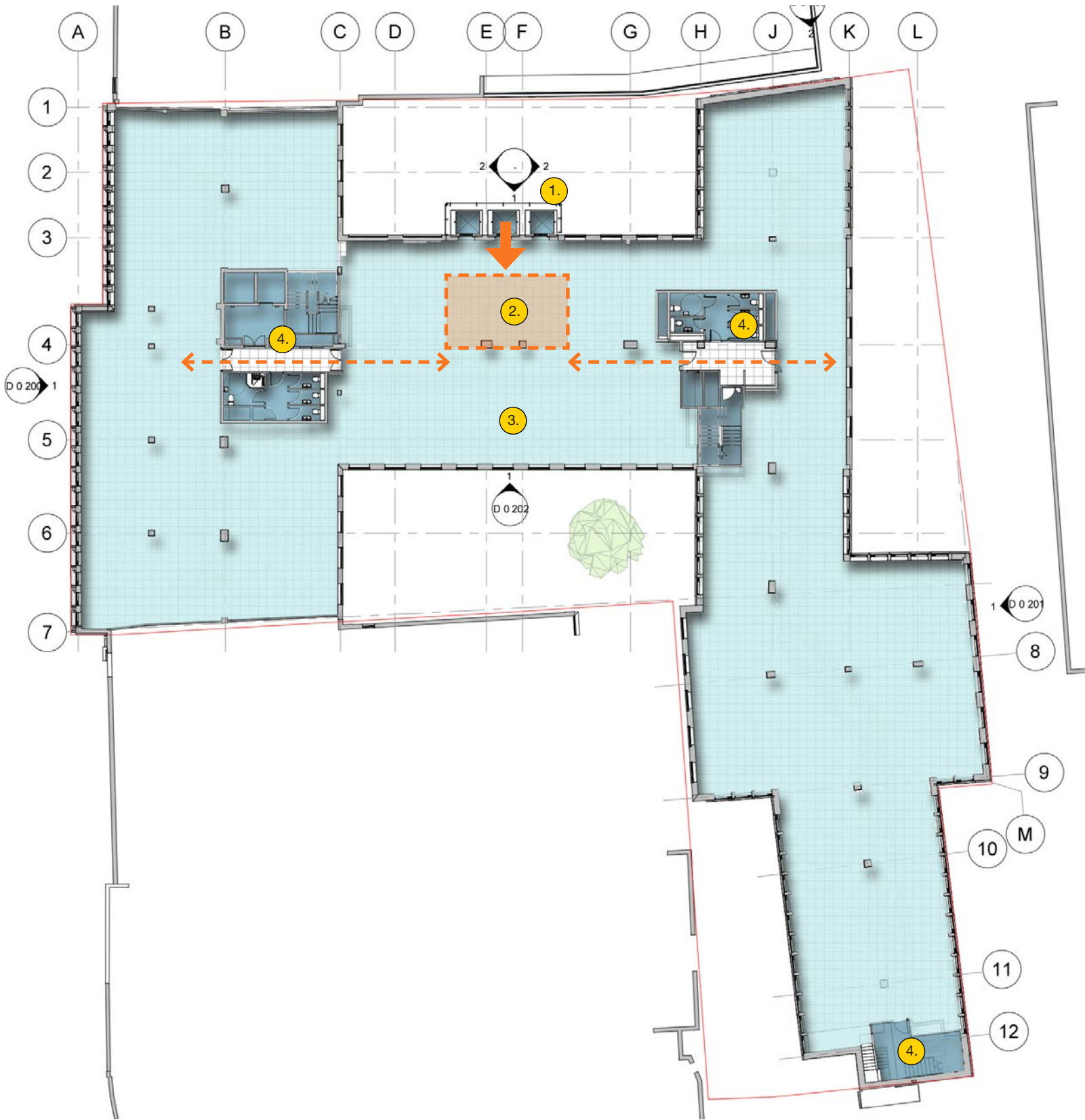
The existing compartmentalised office layout is abandoned and a fresh new look is introduced based on shared space, but with scope for some business unit accommodation too. This is done whilst retaining the existing floor plate (3).

New lifts serve all upper floors (1) centrally located and connected directly to the communal areas of the building at podium level (Market Place street level). Adjacent to the arrival point is a breakout space (2) that encourages business interaction. This will become the social hub for each floor.

The change in circulation this establishes means that sanitary provision can be relocated and distributed more evenly across the building, but focused around the existing stair cores and service risers (4).

Office Space

Core



3.4 Scale & massing - additions to the building

The proposals aim to add density to the office accommodation, 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 opposite page is a summary of the proposals as they relate to the scale and massing of the additions to the building:

Block A1:
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.

Block A2:
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 Regus 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 here and this proposal needs to be tested against the structural limitations of the existing structure.

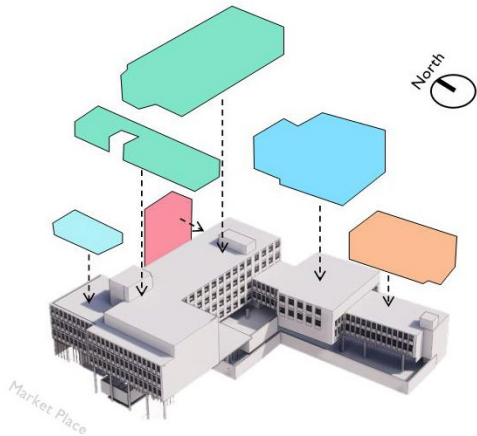
Block C:
2 new storeys to be added to the block facing Abbey square with proposed floor to ceiling heights to match existing.

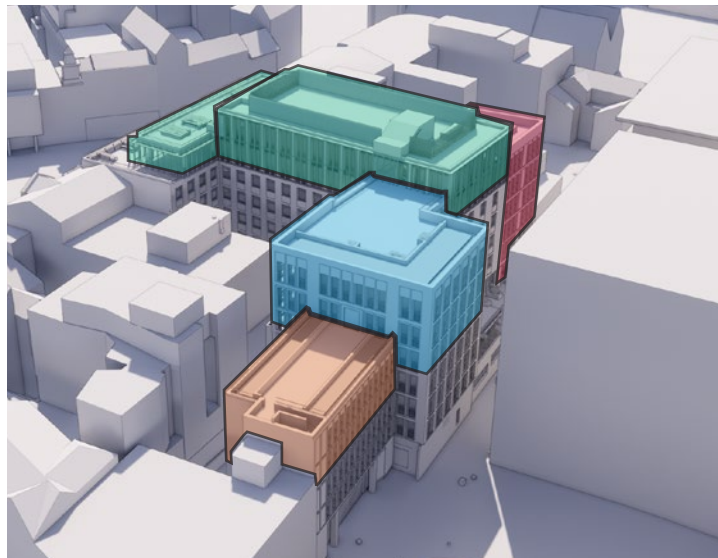
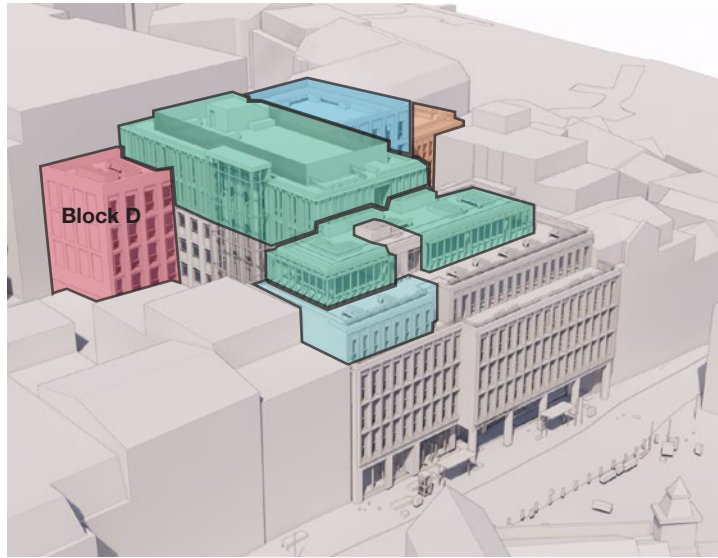
This will give the building more prominence on the square and will play down the existing service entrance to the site. These two floors will be adjacent to the new development at 1-9 Kings road and will be subject to a daylight sunlight analysis.

Block D1:
Ground + 5 storeys to be added as a new wing on to the existing. All floors will be made to match existing floor to ceiling heights and will tie in visually with the Regus building immediately opposite the proposed new wing. A step down has been incorporated to provide a small terrace area to overlook Forbury Gardens.

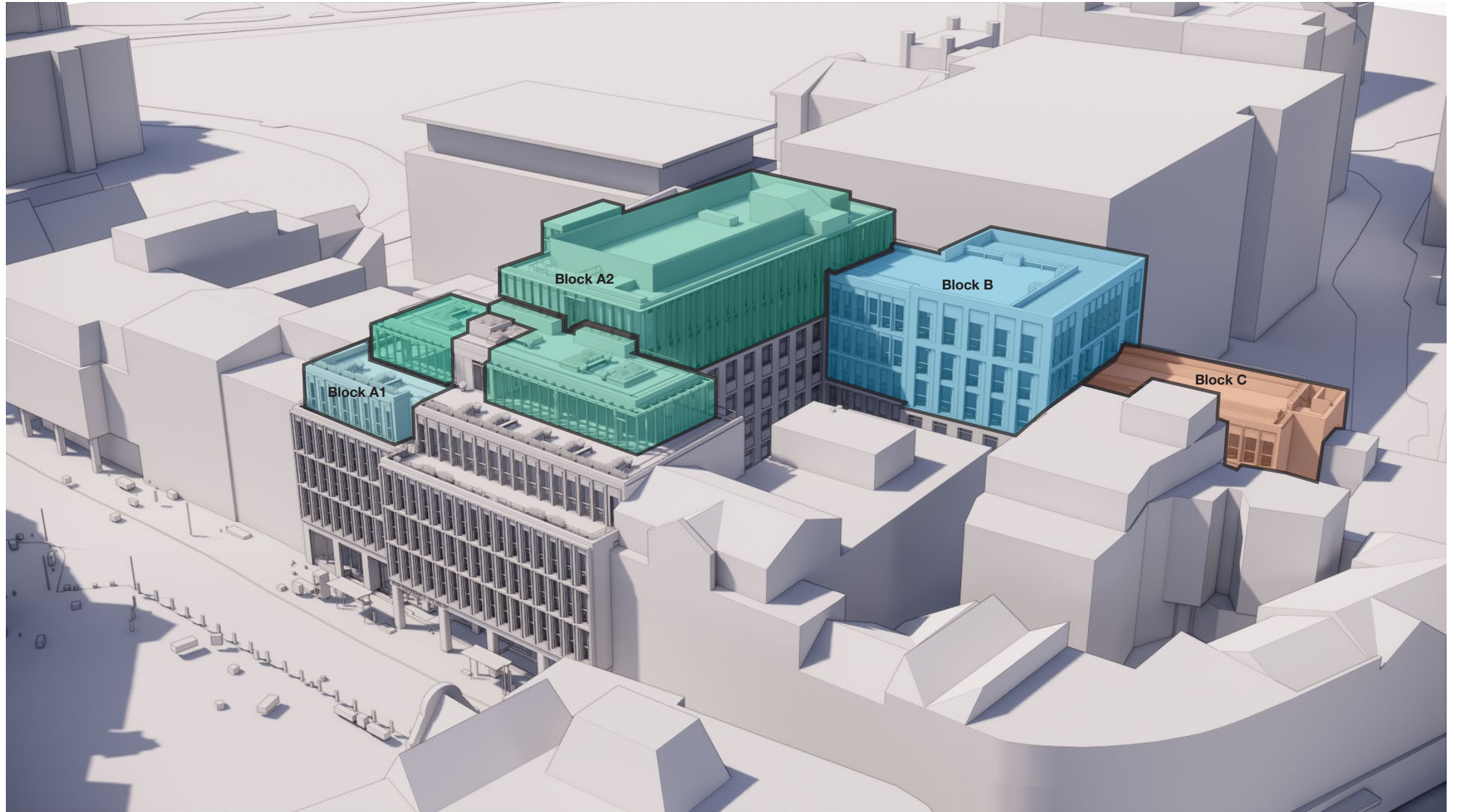


Above: A model of the proposed additions to the building shown in context, with the emerging townscape (approved adjacent schemes) shown in red





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

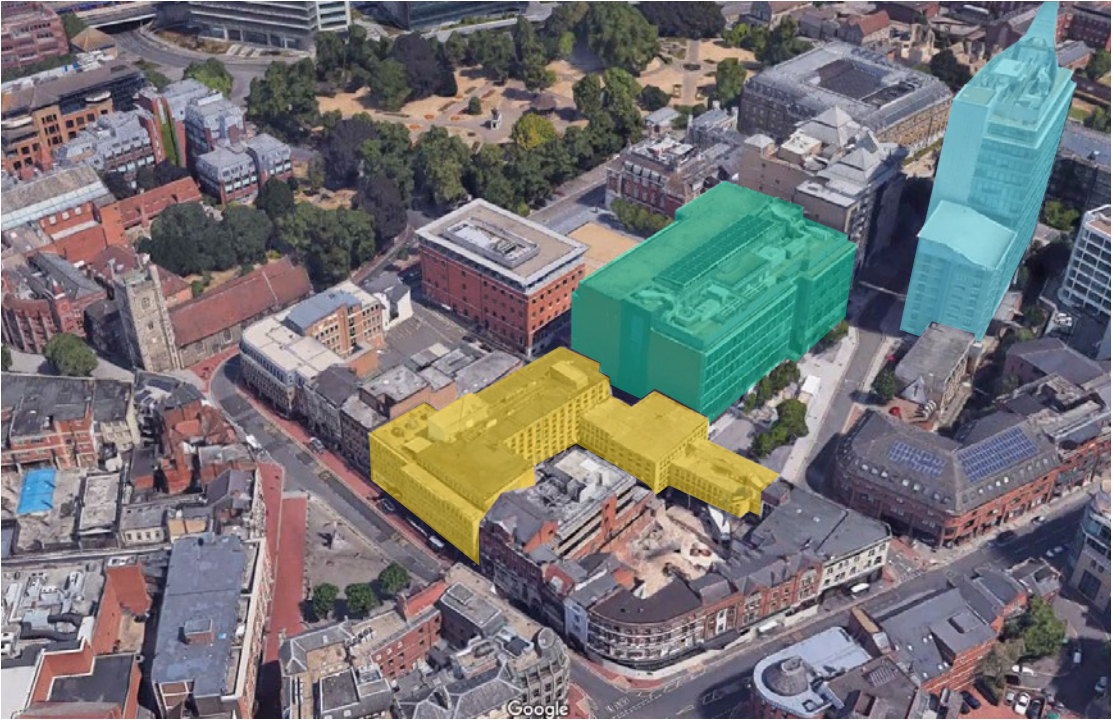
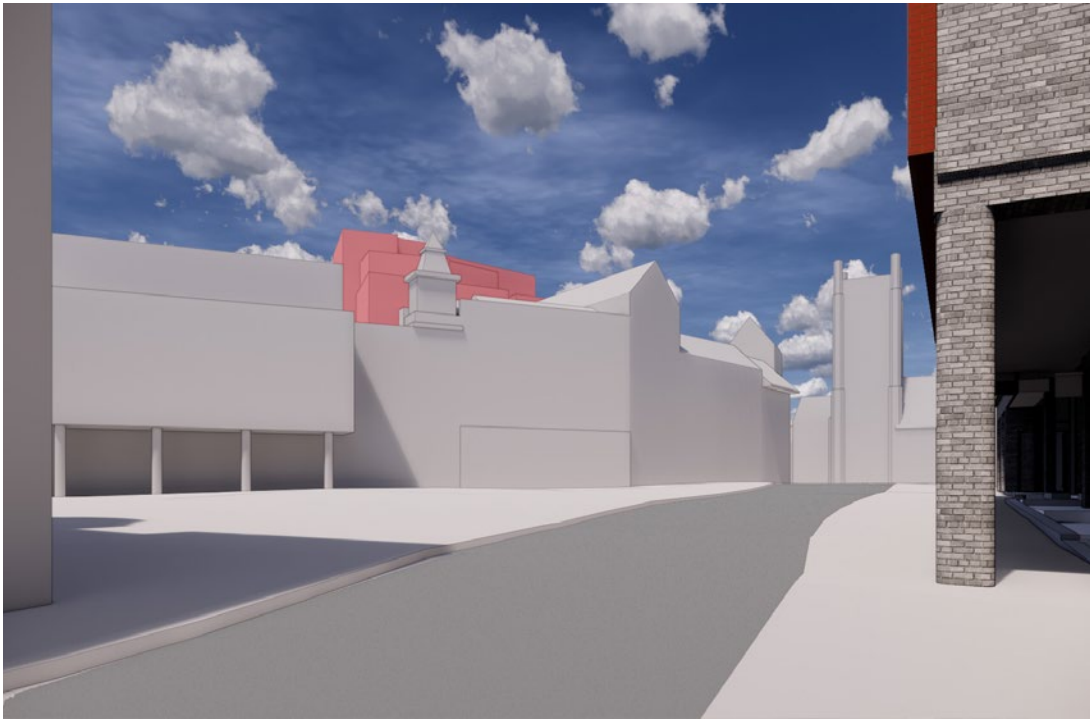


The current building at its eastern frontage has a feeling of finer grain verticality in contrast to the western Market Place facade. This is an attractive and sympathetic quality worth protecting and enhancing.

The disjointed Market Place frontage, split both vertically with a central break and horizontally with a step back and uneven height, has less scope for significant additional mass, but a sensitive infill to re-unify the facade was considered appropriate.

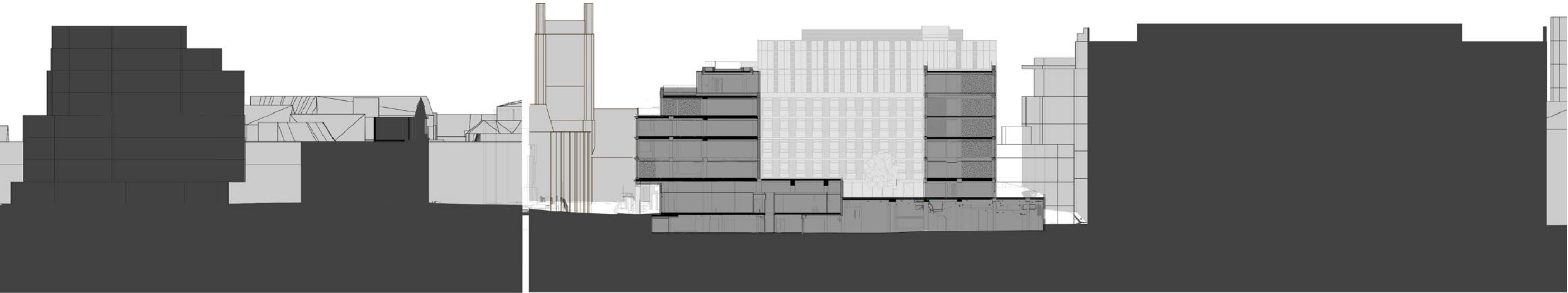
Within its immediate surroundings are much taller and bulkier buildings, to the east and west, prominent landmarks in the church and Town Hall to the north and recent development proposals for Kings Road to the south.

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 more imposing facade fronting Abbey Square, animated by replacing car parking with offices and a secondary entrance and removing an unsightly blank concrete wall
- 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
- a Market Place frontage that unifies the two block elements at roof level, stepping back to prevent the additional height becoming too dominant, but screening the central connecting block
- 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 at roof level and in the use of more sympathetic cladding materials



6-8 MARKET PLACE

T O Extra

THE MARKET HOUSE

HONEST

WATERMELON

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.

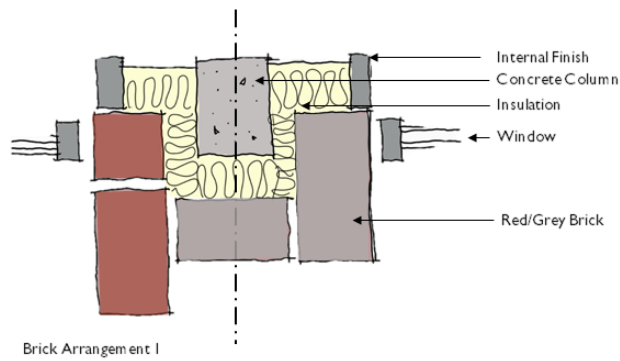
The ground floor is split into 4 distinct units and step down in relation to the slope of the site. The dentist surgery and Tesco store sit either side of the main entrance into the building, with majority of this frontage being curtain wall accompanied by signage.

At the 4th floor the floor plate reduces and is used as a roof terrace space.

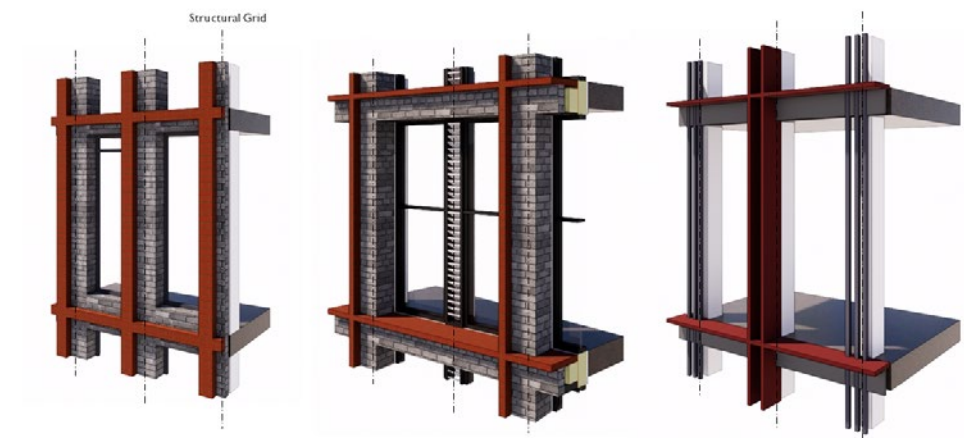
The key aspects of the proposals to alter the existing elevations are:

- 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
- 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.



Proposed Bay Option



Bay study iterations



Reading Town Hall



Michelangelos' Laurention Library



173 Friar Road



Jacksons Corner

The facade design has responded to a tightly constrained set off 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 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 through both for the new and existing elements.

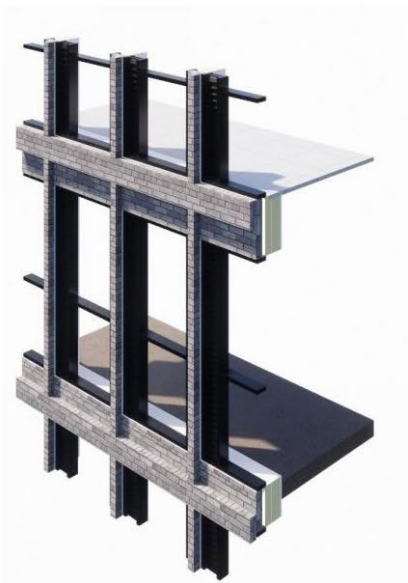
The facade approach varies depending on the orientation. The polychromatic brickwork with the rich red brick responds to the mercantile opulence of the market square. The back of the building has a more muted feel with the use of buff accent brick that ties in with the existing stock brick at the back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



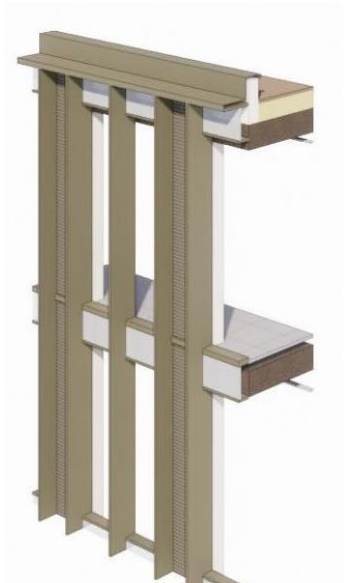
Facade Type 1 - Brickwork



Facade Type 2 - Brickwork



Facade Type 3 - Brickwork



Facade Type 4 - Curtain Wall



Facade Type 5 - Existing

Existing West Facade



Existing East Facade

